

## A303 & Rat Running - Update

### **1. Purpose of the Report**

1.1. To update the board on the actions taken on this matter since the 30 January 2014.

### **2. Background**

2.1 This has been a local priority for many years, but since recent escalation of rat running and congestion associated with the opening of the Stonehenge Visitor Centre, the board agreed to more aggressively pursue this matter since its meeting with community representatives in July 2013.

### **3. Update**

#### **3.1. Dual or Tunnel**

John Glen MP was instrumental in securing a time for parliamentary debate on this topic on the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2014. The full script for the debate can be accessed via this [link](#). Essentially, MPs of constituencies affected by congestion on the A303 were of one voice in calling for action and investment in a scheme that would once and for all solve the issues on the A303.

Currently, a government feasibility study is looking into the options for improving matters on the A303. This is due to conclude at the end of this summer. However, the expectation is that no decisions will be taken this side of a general election, and in the context of there being less public funding available.

#### **3.2. Multi-Agency Meeting – 24 March 2014**

The board met with representatives from the police, highways agency, affected parish councils, local interest groups, English Heritage, National Trust, Wiltshire Council Highways and Rights of Ways to discuss what was being done to minimise disruption and delays around the visitors' centre, particularly mindful of the looming spring holidays. Verbal update on the outcome of this meeting to be reported to the board on the 27<sup>th</sup>.

#### **3.3. Board's Meeting with the Highways Agency on the 31<sup>st</sup> January**

Cllrs Noeken and Wright met with the Highways Agency earlier this year, specifically to discuss the concerns raised by local residents regarding the Countess Roundabout, i.e. traffic light calibration, yellow hatching.

This meeting has helped to establish a direct dialogue with key Highways Agency officers. Whilst yellow hatching is not something the Agency can agree for major trunk roads, now that traffic flows have normalised since the redesign of this roundabout, it will be carrying out a study to check the calibration of the signal controls, and the scope to add “give way”, “keep clear” and other appropriate signage.

Cllrs also asked HA officers to investigate the possibility of adding electronic signage onto the A303 (perhaps as far east as Andover) to indicate to traffic that congestion levels were low at Countess Roundabout, and so to minimise rat running.

#### 3.4. Bund Idea.

Cllrs put forward a suggestion to English Heritage that a bund be built around the stones to minimise the slowing down of travellers on the A303 which is one of the contributors to congestion. The following response has been received:

*“Some have proposed that the existing A303 should be shielded from Stonehenge by some form of wall, fence, bund or band of trees. These proposals would not be consistent with national and local plans and policies, and would do nothing to screen the A303 as it climbs King Barrow Ridge in line with Stonehenge. Such mitigation would conflict with the World Heritage Site Management Plan’s aim to return the area to open downland, and would, in itself, form an intrusive feature alien to the chalk downland landscape character.” Reiterated from an earlier report.*

#### 3.5. Speed concerns in villages affected by this traffic

*Larkhill* – the local councillor is working with the Community Area Transport Group (CATG) and the Traffic Engineer to identify the most suitable measures that will reduce traffic speeds on The Packway.

*Shrewton* – Speed Indicator Devices have been allocated to the A360 and B3086

*Winterbourne Stoke A303 and Stapleford A36* – these being Highways Agency roads the CATG is pursuing an agreement with the HA for the positioning of SIDs on these routes.

#### 3.6. Traffic Flow Monitoring on Routes Surrounding the A303 Stonehenge Visitor Site

An update on this will be available for the meeting.