

Keeping you up to date with improvements to the A303/A358 route corridor

Autumn 2016

Welcome to our first newsletter about plans to improve the A303 / A358 corridor.

Getting from A to B along the A303 / A358 has never been harder. So much traffic uses the road that it just can't cope – some 3.9 million journeys a year up and down the A303 alone. At peak times a journey that should take ten minutes takes around an hour.

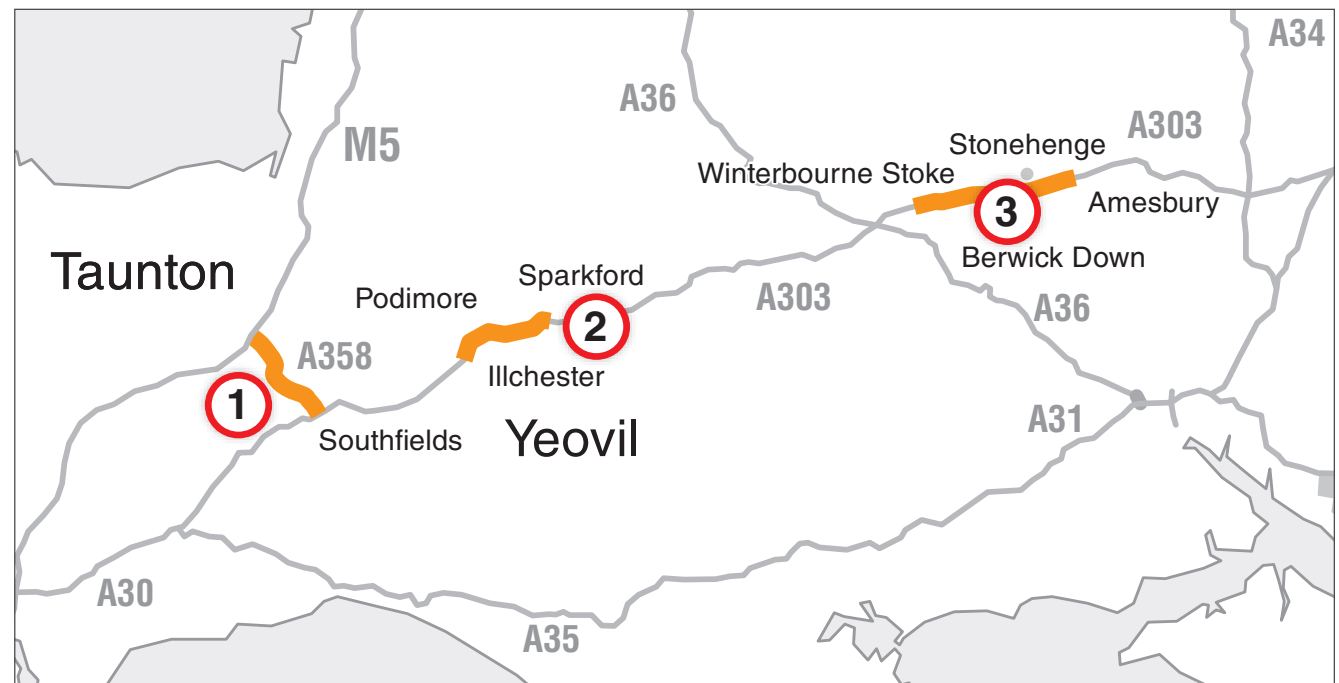
In December 2014, the Government announced £2 billion of funding to deliver improvements along the A303/A358 corridor starting with:

- ① dualling the A358 between Taunton and Southfields
- ② dualling the A303 between Sparkford and Ilchester
- ③ ongoing proposals for the A303 between Amesbury and Berwick Down

These improvements will:

- Create a modern, safe and reliable route which can cope with traffic levels for years to come

- Boost the economic growth and opportunities in the South West by creating capacity for more jobs and homes
- Improve the environment for people, wildlife and visitors with more biodiversity, better quality of village life and reduced impact on Stonehenge and the World Heritage Site.



The story so far

A303 Stonehenge

The 8.1 mile section between Amesbury and Berwick Down is one of the most difficult and sensitive. It runs just 165m from Stonehenge, one of the most iconic heritage sites in the world, and a national treasure.

Some 24,000 vehicles travel this stretch of road every day – jumping to 29,000 on a summer weekend.



Transport and safety

Traffic, noise and air pollution affect the vitality of other villages – particularly Winterbourne Stoke, which the road effectively slices in two. A dual carriageway will reduce journey times and improve safety, as well as decreasing the amount of rat-running through communities like Larkhill, Bulford and Shrewton.



Economy and opportunity

The A303 is vital for the South West peninsula, forming a strategic link with the South East. Improving journey times would help make the South West more competitive nationally by providing better access to markets, jobs and skills.

Environment and community

A more sensitively designed A303 will reduce the impact of congestion, noise and pollution on local communities, as well as giving us the chance to enhance other protected natural sites along the road's corridor.

UNESCO World Heritage Site

The A303 passes just 165m from Stonehenge. A better road layout will enhance the World

Heritage Site in its natural tranquil setting, reuniting the Stones with their surrounding ancient monuments.

In 2014 Prime Minister David Cameron announced £2bn funding to create an expressway, including a tunnel as an option for the A303 Amesbury – Berwick Down. Although funding is in place for a tunnel at least 1.8 miles in length, feasibility studies have shown a number of options could be pursued. So that's where we are now: our working assumption is a tunnel but we have a responsibility to work out which of the options – tunnel or otherwise – are viable and provide the best solution.

We're preparing to go to public consultation in early 2017 when you'll be able to view information about the proposed options and have your say.

A303 Sparkford – Ilchester

Currently making up around 3 miles of congested single carriageway, we're developing proposals to make the A303 between Sparkford and Ilchester a dual carriageway. This will create a stretch of approximately 30 miles of dual carriageway between Mere and South Petherton.

Transport and safety

By relieving congestion, dualling the road will provide more reliable journey times, making life easier and safer for those who rely on the road.

The proposals will include safer local access provisions for pedestrians and cyclists.



Economy and opportunity

A modernised and reliable road that reduces delays will help make the South West more accessible for tourism and business, unlocking economic growth for the region.



Community

A free-flowing road will make life safer for those who cross and live alongside the route.

A358 Taunton – Southfields

Around 10 miles long, the A358 between Taunton and Southfields links the M5 with the A303, providing a vital connection for business and tourism to the South West. We're developing proposals to create a dual carriageway link from the M5 near Taunton to the A303.



Transport and safety

The A358 is currently a mix of single and dual carriageway with a number of existing junctions, some with poor visibility, and private access roads. The proposals would provide a quality dual carriageway, including new and replacement slip roads, junctions, and road

bridges which will improve journey times and safety.

Economy and opportunity

Roads are the backbone of the UK economy so an improved link between the A303 and the M5 will help make the South West more competitive with the rest of the country. Shorter journey times cut transport costs, giving businesses better access to markets, suppliers and skills.

Environment and community

We are working with the community to understand how the local land is used with the aim of providing a more accessible and integrated network for all road users. This will enable safe movement across and alongside the network, reducing disruption to local communities.



Progress to date

We held several information events along the route in February 2016 to introduce the three schemes and explain the project process and timelines. Feedback that was captured at the events can be viewed on our route corridor webpage:

<http://www.highways.gov.uk/roads/a303a358-work-to-create-an-expressway-to-the-south-west>

Since February we've been developing different options for each scheme.

We're currently assessing all the options based on criteria set out by the Government to help us understand whether they meet objectives, their impact on the environment, and the affordability of each route.

To help inform this process we're surveying noise, agriculture, soil, landscape and views, ecology, air quality, and archaeology, so you might see us out and about over the next few months.

Find out more

Visit our webpages for a central source of information about the schemes and to find out when you can have your say, or call or email us to find out more.



A303 Amesbury – Berwick Down

Find more information:

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A358 Taunton – Southfields

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