

PRESS STATEMENT
by
THE STONEHENGE ALLIANCE*

2 October 2019

Fate of Stonehenge World Heritage Site in the balance!

The formal examination of the A303 Stonehenge Scheme ends today. A panel of five Planning Inspectors, known as the Examining Authority, has held eleven public hearings on different aspects of the Scheme and accepted numerous written representations from objectors and supporters.[1] Over the next 3 months the panel will write up its findings and make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Transport who will have a further 3 months in which to make a final decision on the Scheme.

Leading experts in the archaeology of Stonehenge, supported by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS-UK) and the Council for British Archaeology, brought evidence to the Examination to show that the Scheme would permanently damage Stonehenge's surrounding archaeological landscape. Specialists for the Stonehenge Alliance gave compelling reasons for rejecting the Scheme outright, covering such subjects as ecology, geology, transportation, value for money and climate change. [2]

The proposals for the A303 at Stonehenge would involve extensive road cuttings, gouged through the chalk to accommodate new dual carriageways. The twin portals of a c.3km road tunnel would be located well within the WHS. There would be massive junctions at the WHS boundaries. To the east, a flyover would descend over the renowned Mesolithic site of Blick Mead. To the west, a major interchange would be constructed close to one of the most important groups of upstanding prehistoric burials in the UK.

Historic England, English Heritage, Wiltshire Council and the National Trust continue to support Highways England's claim that the Scheme would help to protect the World Heritage Site (WHS) and its outstanding universal value (OUV) in opposition to UNESCO's World Heritage Committee which says the Scheme should not go ahead as it stands.

However well-designed, the devastating impact of the road engineering would scar this iconic landscape for ever.

*The Stonehenge Alliance is supported by:
Ancient Sacred Landscape Network; Campaign for Better Transport;
Campaign to Protect Rural England; Friends of the Earth; and
RESCUE: The British Archaeological Trust

Kate Fielden, Vice Chairman of Rescue, says:

“The A303 Scheme not only poses a severe threat to the WHS but also to our heritage generally in the UK, since those whose responsibility is to care for such places are prepared to allow destruction of a World-famous landscape. We must hope that the Examining Authority will not recommend approval of the Scheme.”

Notes

[1] The documentation submitted to the Examination can be seen on the Infrastructure Planning Inspectorate’s website [here](#).

[2] For a summary of the different aspects of the Stonehenge Alliance’s case against the A303 Scheme, please see [here](#).