



Department for Transport

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London, SW1P 4DR

Telephone:
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(NOTE: All representations should be submitted by email to the Planning Inspectorate at the address below)

To:

Highways England, Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England ("Historic England"), Wiltshire Council, Council for British Archaeology, International Council for Monuments and Sites – UK, Stonehenge and Avesbury World Heritage Site Coordination Unit, Campaign for the Protection of Rural England, The National Trust, English Heritage Trust and Department for Digital, Culture Media and Sport

16 July 2020

Copy recipients:

The Consortium of Archaeologists and the Blick Mead Project Team and the Stonehenge Alliance

Dear Sir/Madam

Planning Act 2008 and The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010

Application by Highways England ("the Applicant") for an Order granting Development Consent for the construction of a new two-lane dual carriage way for the A303 between Amesbury and Berwick Down in Wiltshire.

REQUEST FOR COMMENTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

The Examining Authority ("ExA") submitted on 2 January 2020 a Report and Recommendation in respect of its findings on the above Application to the Secretary of State for Transport ("the Secretary of State").

In accordance with section 107 of the Planning Act 2008, the Secretary of State had until 2 April 2020 to make a decision on the Development Consent Order ("DCO") Application. In order to allow for further work

to be carried out before the Application was determined, the Secretary of State set a new deadline for a decision on the Application of 17 July 2020 in a Written Ministerial Statement¹ laid in Parliament on 29 April 2020.

However, following a recent archaeological discovery by the Hidden Landscapes Project (see Gaffney, V. et al. 2020 A Massive, Late Neolithic Pit Structure associated with Durrington Walls Henge, *Internet Archaeology* 55. <https://doi.org/10.11141/ia.55.4>) within the World Heritage Site in June 2020, the Secretary of State has received further representations from the Consortium of Archaeologists and the Blick Mead Project Team dated 25 June 2020 and also the Stonehenge Alliance dated 26 June 2020, which cite the discovery and are published alongside this letter. The Secretary of State has decided it would be appropriate to consult on the archaeological discovery and the representations received before determining the Application. He has therefore set a new deadline for a decision on the Application of 13 November 2020 in a further Written Ministerial Statement² laid in Parliament on 16 July 2020.

The Secretary of State would be grateful if all recipients of this letter could provide any comments they have on the matters raised in the Hidden Landscapes Project report and representations relating to the archaeological find at the World Heritage Site available at the following links:

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/document/TR010025-001960>

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/document/TR010025-001961>

In light of the archaeological find, the Secretary of State would welcome the views of **the Applicant, Historic England, Wiltshire Council and other recipients** on:

- implications of the archaeological find for the Development and any harm it may cause to the World Heritage; and
- implications for the Applicant's Environmental Statement, including the Heritage Impact Assessment, and the proposed Detailed Archaeological Mitigation Strategy.

The Consortium of Archaeologists and the Blick Mead Project Team and The Stonehenge Alliance are also invited to submit any further representations they wish to make on the above matters.

To assist the Secretary of State, any reliance on information containing in previous representations made either during or since the examination should also include the relevant document reference number(s).

The deadline for any response is 13 August 2020.

Given the coronavirus (COVID 19) emergency, the Planning Inspectorate are currently unable to accept hard copies of consultation responses. Responses to the matter outlined in this letter should therefore be submitted by email to: A303Stonehenge@planninginspectorate.gov.uk. If you will have difficulty in submitting a response by the consultation deadline, or difficulty in submitting a response by email, please inform the Case Team.

The responses will be published on the project page for the A303 Stonehenge DCO on the Planning Inspectorate's website as soon as possible after the above deadline at:

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/south-west/a303-stonehenge/>.

The Secretary of State appreciates that the information being requested is of a specialist nature. In these circumstances, he exceptionally believes it would be appropriate to allow a further period of 3 weeks from publication so that consultees have the opportunity, if they wish to do so, to provide final comments on the responses that have been submitted. The Secretary of State will therefore write to consultees again once the responses have been published.

¹ <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2020-04-29/HCWS212/>

² <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2020-07-16/HCWS385/>

This letter is without prejudice to the Secretary of State's decision whether or not to grant development consent for the A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down road scheme, and nothing in this letter is to be taken to imply what that decision might be.

Yours faithfully

Natasha Kopala
Head of Transport Infrastructure Planning Unit