

# Minutes

## A358 Taunton to Southfields Scheme

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<b>Title:</b>	<b>A358 – Taunton to Southfields Dualling Scheme – Community Forum 3</b>		
<b>Date:</b>	23 June 2021	<b>Time:</b>	18:00 – 20:35
		<b>Location:</b>	Microsoft Teams

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**Independent Chair**  
**Highways England**

**Somerset County Council**  
**South Somerset District Council**  
**Somerset West and Taunton Council**  
**Office of Rebecca Pow MP**  
**Neroche Parish Council**  
**West Hatch Parish Council**  
**Hatch Beauchamp Parish Council**  
**Ruishton, Thornfalcon and Henlade Parish Council**  
**Horton Parish Council**  
**Creech St Michael**  
**Ashill Parish Council**  
**North Curry Parish Council**  
**Beercrocombe Parish Council**  
**West Monkton Parish Council**  
**Trull Parish Council**  
**Buckland St Mary Parish Council**  
**Taunton Area Cycling Campaign**  
**South Somerset Bridleways Association**  
**Taunton Deane Bridleways Association**  
**National Farmers Union**  
**Broadway Parish Council**  
**Stoke St Mary Parish Council**  
**Somerset County Scouts**  
**Blackdown District Scouts**  
**British Horse Society**

**Attendees:**

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<b>Chair:</b>	Independent Chair
<b>Circulation:</b>	Those present.

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No.	Item	Actions
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<p>1.</p>	<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>The new Independent Chair introduced themselves to members of the Community Forum before running through the agenda and housekeeping rules. It was noted that proposals had been submitted to Highways England by a group of 8 Parish Councils and the Chair thanked members of the group for agreeing to speak about these at the Forum. Forum members were advised that the slides would be circulated after the meeting and a list of organisations attending the Forum would also be shared.</p> <p>The Chair invited Highways England to lead the safety moment for the meeting, which focussed on the importance of checking tyres before going on long journeys.</p>	
<p>2.</p>	<p><b>Progress so far</b></p> <p>Highways England provided an overview of the engagement that had taken place through formal channels since March 2021 – including the Community Forums, Walking, Cycling and Horse Riding (including disabled users) forum and stakeholder meetings. Highways England had taken feedback into consideration, especially on access, connectivity, impact on traffic flows and traffic modelling methodology and these would be explored further when sharing updates on the project design. The design team were reviewing proposals that had been received throughout the engagement process, but had to consider constraints around landowner engagement and overall feasibility.</p> <p><b>Joint Parish Councils’ proposals</b></p> <p>Eight Parish Councils had submitted proposals to Highways England the previous week. Highways England had committed to providing an initial response by 8 July, which would be followed with a detailed response once traffic figures had been finalised.</p> <p>An overview of the Joint Parish Councils’ proposal was provided. Since the first forum in March, Parish Councils east of Thornfalcon had been working on proposals to meet the needs of local communities between Southfields and Mattock’s Tree Green. There were 12 proposals that extended from Mattock’s Tree Green eastwards, but there had been problems in sharing proposals with other parishes whilst the route was still being finalised.</p> <p>The first proposal for the Village Road North connection (originally stated in the 2019 Scheme Assessment Report) particularly had</p>	

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<p>caused confusion and the Parish Councils wanted this connection between Village Road from Hatch Beauchamp to the existing A358 at Thornfalcon junction.</p> <p>The second proposal for review was for the northern roundabout from Mattock's Tree Green, where the proposed link to the existing A358 toward Henlade was unwarranted and would risk a rat-run through Henlade. The existing signalised A378/A358 junction at Thornfalcon should be retained and link to the northern roundabout. This proposal also included amendments to access for the Somerset Progressive School, business units and the Scout camp. Highways England's proposal to link access from there to West Hatch Lane would involve a long diversion route that would add additional stress for road users. The joint Parish Councils' proposals would involve a direct link from the Progressive School, business units and the Scout camp to the roundabout south.</p> <p>The third proposal focussed on the unsuitability of Griffin Lane which, due to safety concerns, should not be proposed for any greater use by motorised traffic.</p> <p>The fourth proposal focussed on Bickenhall Lane, which had a high traffic density made up of lorries and agricultural vehicles. It was requested that the currently proposed service road (parallel and to the west of the A358) from Ashill be extended westbound up to Bickenhall Lane and also connect to Staple Fitzpaine Road. Cost savings could likely be made under these proposals as there would be no overall need for remediation of existing local roads due to rerouting of traffic.</p> <p>The fifth proposal focussed on the Hatch Beauchamp overbridge which was considered to have a huge impact and needed to be moved 200 metres north-west where the ground rises and becomes more stable. The problems with the original bridge position included potential impacts on a local stream. The current junction at Staple Fitzpaine Road should remain as a priority or tapered junction and connected to the extended service road (described in proposal 4) so that traffic could continue to use the existing local road network. There was no reason why the service road could not continue under the overbridge, rather than bending south and back round.</p> <p>For the sixth proposal, the joint Parish Councils wanted to see new slip roads to and from the eastbound side of the carriageway with Village Road, linking to the A358. This would allow the Hatch Beauchamp overbridge to be set up as a grade-separated junction with slip road access on the eastbound carriageway. The parallel</p>	
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<p>service road should have a slip road onto the westbound carriageway north of Bickenhall Lane for traffic heading to Taunton. An existing junction on the A303 at Bower Hinton was cited as an example.</p> <p>The proposed junction at Village Road South was the joint Parish Councils' biggest priority.</p> <p>With regards to proposal 7, Stewley Lane / Stocks Lane (which connect to Capland Lane) were often flooded and not linking Capland Lane to Village Road would cause severance in Hatch Beauchamp. The group would like Capland Lane connected to Village Road.</p> <p>Proposal 8 focussed on including an overbridge that would connect Stewley Lane with Wood Road. The current connection across the dual carriageway was important to farmers and residents of Ashill avoiding congestion at Southfields roundabout. This overbridge should replace the currently proposed Stewley Link Road. There should be a slip road from the westbound carriageway to the existing Ashill Road at the position of the existing A358/Ashill Road junction; this would represent the eastern extent of the proposed parallel service road. Furthermore Highways England's proposals for Stewley Link would cut through four areas of private land.</p> <p>Proposal 9 focussed on the sewage works on the eastern side of the A358 carriageway. There should be a direct exit off the A358 rather than having a separate road.</p> <p>For Proposal 10, a new slip road connection to the eastbound carriageway should be added from Cad Road, to mitigate the rise in traffic on Rapps Road.</p> <p>For Proposal 11, the Joint Parish Councils had proposed a new connection between from the A358 and Broadway Street and also connecting this via an extended westbound slip road to Ashill junction. The A358 should be relocated slightly north/east to accommodate this. A walking, cycling and horse-path was also proposed to connect Broadway Street to the Old A358 near Hortons Cross further east.</p> <p>For Proposal 12, the Joint Parish Councils believe Southfields Roundabout should be a grade separated junction for the A303 to A358 traffic.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Parish Council's representative and invited questions from members of the Forum regarding the proposals.</p>	
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	<p>Highways England was asked if it would be sharing updated plans on the route in light of proposals being shared by the Joint Parish Councils. In response, Highways England noted that whilst they would be presenting updated plans as part of the Forum meeting, the design team have not yet had sufficient time to review the proposals in enough detail, or to speak to landowners who might be affected and so it was not possible to present a response to the Parish Councils' proposals as part of this meeting.</p> <p>In response to a question regarding the wider sharing of the Parish Council's proposals with all other forum members, this was agreed.</p> <p>Thanks were expressed by a Forum member for covering the Kenny junction, but it was added that Ashill likely didn't want a slip road at this point (for Proposal 8) owing to concerns that people would use them for rat runs.</p> <p>A question was asked regarding a proposal for Southfields roundabout that hadn't previously been covered. It was believed changes to the A303 would negatively affect access to Southfields roundabout. It was noted that this would be covered during the design update in the session.</p> <p>Another member, whilst noting that they agreed with most of joint Parish Councils' proposals, considered that the Cad Road/Broadway crossing was really important for cyclists and that further review would be needed for any slip-roads if they were carried forward.</p> <p>It was noted by a member that the Joint Parish Councils had proposed to move the Hatch Beauchamp overbridge closer to the existing Fivehead River underbridge. Clarification was sought with regards to how this would impact access for horse riders, pedestrian groups and vulnerable users. The Chair asked that in order for the Parish Councils' representatives to have time to consider this, it was responded to later in the meeting during a clarification on options for Bickenhall Lane</p> <p>Another speaker commented that the Joint Parish Council proposals would provide the option for a cycle route through to Broadway from Rapps, giving alternative provision to what the current crossing at Broadway offers. A cycle route should also be added from the Broadway junction down to Horton Cross roundabout. Highways England responded noting that any discussions on cycle routes include the term multi-user routes.</p>	<p>HE to share formal response to Parish Council proposals with all forum attendees once issued.</p>
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	<p><b>Highways England update</b></p> <p>An overview of traffic modelling methodology for the scheme was provided. A lot of the feedback had focussed on this at previous community forums and stakeholder meetings. The underlying methodology was aligned with the Department for Transport (DfT) Transport Analysis Guidance that was also determined by the projected routing patterns. Specific modelling parameters were also in place to assess how much preference different driver types had towards different routes in the network. Traffic forecasting would follow the National Trip End Model (NTEM) and Road Traffic Forecast (RTF) 2018 datasets published by the Department for Transport which considered projections in population, trip rates, employment, housing and car ownership in the wider area – these would factor in low and high growth scenarios. Highways England would also consider proposed upgrades around the strategic road network and these would be updated as new upgrade projects were approved.</p> <p>An overview was provided of data shared by the Department for Transport and how this had factored into traffic forecasting for Highways England’s proposals. Traffic levels were currently at 97% of pre-Covid levels, which was worth considering in light of existing restrictions. The Department for Transport would be publishing updated data sets that would be factored into proposals for the preliminary design to take to statutory consultation.</p> <p>An overview of the overall impact on the local and strategic road networks, including a specific breakdown of positive/negative impact on specific local roads, junctions and access points was provided. The current proposals would still ensure that the M5 was able to function below capacity. There would be a decrease in traffic between the A378 and A372 between Podimore and Mattock’s Tree Green due to additional capacity being provided on the A358 corridor for traffic entering Southfields from the A303 corridor. Henlade would see a marked decrease in traffic levels, which was especially important owing to the AQMA in place in the area.</p> <p>It was noted that the presentation would not cover traffic modelling on the intermediate junctions at Mattock’s Tree Green and Ashill junction as these are new junctions and thus designed to latest standards.</p> <p>On the M5 junction 25, current proposals were to include a segregated left-turn lane entering the northbound on-slip from Taunton and there would be a widening of the Southbound off-slip</p>	
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<p>from three to four lanes. This presentation included an overview of the 'degree of saturation' or ratio of flow to capacity (RFC) (an indication of how much spare capacity there is) at each different approach arm. Much of the feedback had focussed on the Technical Appraisal Report (TAR) from Stage 2, however the TAR had not taken into account the recent upgrades Somerset County Council have made to J25 as part of the Nexus 25 development.</p> <p>It was noted that the Nexus roundabout had been recently constructed by Somerset County Council and improvement works for the A358 would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An increased roundabout diameter and 4 lanes on northern part of roundabout</li> <li>• Four lanes from A358 (Northwest) on the entry for traffic from M5 Junction 25</li> <li>• New A358 (Southeast) approach with 3 lanes on entry / exit</li> <li>• Two lane exit to Nexus 25 development</li> <li>• Segregated left turn lane from Nexus 25 removed to accommodate three lane exit to M5 Junction 25</li> </ul> <p>These proposals were still subject to review, but Highways England was confident that the configuration would be able to accommodate wider demand.</p> <p>Work on Southfields roundabout had been progressed further following information previously shared in May's Community Forum. The proposed improvements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A segregated left turn lane from A358 (North) to A303 (East) Ilminster Bypass</li> <li>• Two lane exit to A358 (East) Ilminster Bypass</li> <li>• Third approach lane added from A303 (East)</li> <li>• A358 (West) approach widened to 3 lanes</li> <li>• Improvements to road markings including provision of spiral markings</li> </ul> <p>The arm closest to capacity was the B3168 approach from Ilminster, but that even this would still have 13% spare capacity.</p> <p>The Chair then invited questions and comments in response to the modelling.</p> <p>The first speaker noted that this was the first time the traffic modelling had been seen and that the issue extended beyond Southfields roundabout. Highways England would have to consider the impact of congestion on Ilminster and the</p>	
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<p>neighbouring villages of Donyatt, Horton and Broadway. Traffic coming from the A303 east would now be turning right at the roundabout to head north onto the A358 and this fast moving traffic would cause issues with traffic attempting to enter the roundabout from the A358 approach from Axminster and Chard.</p> <p>It was asked why a grade-separated arrangement was not being considered from the A303 east to the A358 towards Taunton, which would alleviate a lot of traffic concerns for communities in the area. There was scepticism as to whether these arrangements would work because they were based on the original roundabout design that had to be modified due to its accident history.</p> <p>It was asked how traffic modelling had taken into account the old bridges in Hatch Beauchamp and the risk of flooding from that. Highways England advised that traffic forecasts were still being developed but preliminary outputs suggested there would be no notable increase in traffic in Hatch Beauchamp, By way of response, the questioner noted that the bridges were along Village Road south. Highways England noted that although Covid 19 restrictions had limited their capacity to go on site visits some of the project team had been carrying out some survey work in the area and preparations were being made to meet stakeholders along the route.</p> <p>A request was made for speakers to identify themselves and who they represented. This was agreed going forward.</p> <p>It was noted by a representative of Ruishton, Henlade and Thornfalcon that a meeting with Highways England had been requested but has yet to take place. They would also be interested to learn of proposals to stop rat-running through Thornfalcon and Henlade. It was noted that the traffic lights at Creech Castle had been relieving pressure on the M5 and it was asked if this could be reviewed ready for the final announcement on M5 junction 25 roundabout.</p> <p>It was observed by a representative from West Hatch Parish Council that one of the issues around localised modelling had involved trading off traffic in Haydon Lane with traffic in Ash Road. It was added that Stoke St Mary Parish Council did not want traffic to go through Ash Lane to their Parish which could cause a rise in rat-running. They added that these proposals would involve re-routing traffic that could significantly impact cycling and horse riding groups, especially those at Higher West Hatch Lane and the hill from Stoke St Mary to Thurlbear. They noted that both these routes were narrow and that the hill from Stoke St Mary was often congested because of its overall width. They noted that there</p>
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	<p>needed to be a delicate balancing act between users on the new A358, old A358 through Henlade and users on Haydon Lane and Stoke Road via Stoke St Mary to access the southern side of Taunton.</p> <p>A representative from Somerset West and Taunton Council noted that all the proposals shared at different forums would have a negative impact on their ward, and that they supported what had been shared by the joint-parish councils and the suitability of Bickenhall Lane and overall impact on Hatch Beauchamp.</p>	
<p>3.</p>	<p><b>Potential design changes</b></p> <p>A member of the project team introduced themselves as the Project Manager for the design of the scheme and a breakdown of what Highways England would be providing an overview on.</p> <p>They started with a recap of the route end-to-end that had been shared at the last community forum.</p> <p><b>Village Road North connection to Mattock’s Tree Green</b></p> <p>A member of the project team provided an overview of the Village Road North connection to Mattock’s Tree Green junction. They noted that the design team had identified the need to improve accessibility around Hatch Beauchamp, particularly for walking, cycling and horse riding groups. They noted that, under the proposals, Village Road would be linked up to the existing A358 alongside a new junction to the A378 which would lead to the northern roundabout at Mattock’s Tree Green junction. They also noted that the reason Highways England were providing a connection to the existing A358 at Henlade was because the roundabout presented the best possible option for connecting all the roads and that the existing A358/A378 junction was in close proximity to the roundabout. They added that the design team were reviewing plans for access to Somerset Progressive School, Scout Camp and the other businesses, and that they had driven these roads in forming the design of the scheme.</p> <p>A representative from Beercrocombe Parish Council noted that they thought the new connection from the existing A358 from Henlade to the roundabout made it too easy for rat-running through Henlade heading east onto the A358.</p> <p>The project team also noted that the design team had to show Griffin Lane as this is an existing Somerset County Council asset that is not directly affected by the physical construction of the widened A358, however that the existing traffic modelling would be reviewed to understand if any additional traffic would be predicted to use it.</p>	

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	<p><b>Bickenhall Lane</b></p> <p>Highways England noted that they had been reviewing two possible options for Bickenhall Lane, which had been developed through discussions with landowners and comments from the walking, cycling and horse riding forums around the importance of connectivity to the Herepath and existing Public Rights of Way as well as providing a link out to the Blackdown Hills Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). They noted that the design team had understood the importance of connectivity here. They presented the 2 options under consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Option 1 would provide an overbridge with a farm access track (e.g for tractors) and provision for walkers, cycling and horse riders with Bickenhall Lane being stopped up to cars and other motorised vehicles at a suitable location along both sides of Bickenhall Lane. There would be no access to the A358 at this location.</li> <li>• Option 2 would provide an overbridge but would maintain Bickenhall Lane as a rural road open to all vehicles including walkers, cycling and horse riders. There would be no access to the A358 at this location.</li> </ul> <p>It was noted that Stoke St Mary Parish Council had serious concerns that these proposals, along with plans for Ash Road, would encourage rat-running along the route. They added that Ash Road saw high numbers of walking, cycling and horse riders who would be heavily impacted, and that the Parish Councils would probably prefer for the Ash Road connection to Mattocks Tree Green junction to not be provided. They noted that existing traffic going south from Taunton via Haydon Lane (south of J25) currently impacts the Hamlet of Haydon, and that the two sharp-right turns along that road were totally unsuitable for any potential increase in volumes of traffic. It was requested that the design team consider the impact of their plans beyond the red line boundary.</p> <p>Highways England noted that existing rat-running through Henlade is expected to decrease, as the improvements proposed to the M5 junction 25 and new A358 would provide a faster journey time. They added that the modelling had shown a potential rise in traffic through Ash Road and they were reviewing mitigation measures to assess this. The representative from Stoke St Mary Parish Council added that Highways England must take on board the feedback on Ash Road and that they did not agree with the design team's views on traffic volumes through Henlade.</p> <p>A representative from Neroche Parish Council noted that they were happy with proposals on Bickenhall Lane but asked what</p>	
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<p>measures the design team were taking to manage a potential rise in agricultural vehicles along with walking, cycling and horse riding groups and the safety mitigations this would require. Highways England commented that the proposals would include a rural road with verges, and that walkers could be connected to existing Public Rights of Way. They also noted that traffic modelling work was ongoing for the two options, but as there would be no access to the A358 this could lead to an overall decrease in traffic.</p> <p>Neroche Parish Council added that the ‘not suitable for HGVs’ signs were ignored every day and that mixing agricultural vehicles with cyclists, walkers and horse riders would be a safety risk.</p> <p>Taunton Deane Bridleways Association re-iterated the importance of access for equestrian groups over the Bickenhall Lane overbridge, noting that the existing permissive route was very well-used. Highways England noted the existing underpass at Fivehead River would be retained as part of the scheme and added that reviews were taking place to understand the level of user provision it could support.</p> <p>South Somerset Bridleways Association seconded everything that the previous speaker had said, and asked if it was possible to consider a behind-the-hedge route for walking, cycling and horse riding groups along Bickenhall Lane. Highways England noted that the road width would be about six metres wide and include verges that retained access for these groups.</p> <p>A representative from Beercrocombe Parish Council noted the Joint Parish Council’s general concerns that the proposals would result in a rise in traffic around the local road network.</p> <p><b>Village Road South</b></p> <p>Highways England provided an overview of Village Road South and noted that they had been onto site to meet with local residents on this matter. They noted that an option to move the overbridge further west (approximately 250 metres from the original proposal) is being investigated which would result in less earthworks as the relocated bridge would pass over the A358 where it is in a shallow cutting. They added that this would provide the same connectivity as presented in the previous community forum – that is there would be no access to the A358 and Village Road would also connect to Staple Fitzpaine Road and to Ashill.</p> <p>Highways England reiterated what was said about Haydon Lane, and that traffic had increased there to pre-Covid levels. It was noted that the existing proposals would not decrease traffic levels enough to the levels that had previously been suggested. A representative from Hatch Beauchamp Parish Council also asked whether there were still considerations to commit to a split-</p>
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<p>delivery for this scheme for the planning inspectorate. They were conscious that these proposals had been commented on heavily by local communities and that they were devastated by proposals for the flyover. Villagers had said that they were going to leave the village as a result of this. A member of the project team confirmed that the overbridge would be a rural country lane with mitigation measures included from Environmental specialists in the team. Hatch Beauchamp Parish Council added that Hatch Beauchamp were disproportionately affected and that they didn't understand how the route was viable. Highways England confirmed that they would work to share some visualisations around what the flyover would look like.</p> <p>Taunton Cycling Campaign confirmed that they were open to using existing parts of the local road network as a cycle route, but that going through Henlade to Thornfalcon would require some segregation and additional measures to stop traffic from speeding.</p> <p>A representative from Ashill Parish Council noted that they were 'astonished' that Highways England were not listening to the Parishes along the route, and that Ashill Parish Council would be heavily impacted by proposals to link Stewley and Park Barn Lane and asked who would be responsible in event of casualties in the route.</p> <p>Highways England confirmed were aware of the comments that had come through from the Planning Inspectorate on this issue. They added that these design proposals were not final and designed to show how changes can be implemented.</p> <p><b>Capland Link</b></p> <p>Highways England provided an overview of the southern section of Village Road and Capland Lane. They noted that Highways England were aware of flooding concerns on Stocks Lane / Stewley Lane at two existing watercourse crossings and that two options were being investigated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Option 1 would provide a new link, Capland Link, between Village Road and Capland Lane</li> <li>• Option 2 would not provide Capland Link but would incorporate localised improvements at one or both of the watercourse crossings on Stocks Lane / Stewley Lane (e.g. culvert widening or additional flood storage)</li> </ul> <p>A representative from Neroche Parish Council asked Highways England to explain the discrepancies between proposals for landowners to use any closure of Bickenhall Lane to their advantage against the wider community benefit. Highways England noted that the option for a farm accommodation track</p>	
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<p>(Option 1 for Bickenhall Lane) had been designed to cater for WCH groups as well.</p> <p>A representative from West Hatch Parish Council asked whether the delivery of this scheme would be started at the junction 25 side of the route and when construction would start in Ruishton, Thornfalcon and Henlade Parish Council. They also noted that they shared the concerns of around Haydon Lane and on connectivity around the old A358. They further emphasised that one-to-one meetings needed to progress.</p> <p>Highways England noted that one-on-one meetings were taking place alongside the community forums and that Highways England were working to hold one-on-one meetings. They added that the start date for construction works at junction 25 had not yet been confirmed and that local Parish Councils would be asked about delivery during statutory consultation.</p> <p><b>Broadway Street/Cad Road</b></p> <p>Highways England provided an overview on the southern end of the scheme through to Southfields roundabout and had observed that a lot of previous feedback had focussed on connections between these two sections of the route. They noted that they were reviewing two possible options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Option 1 would connect Broadway Street to Cad Road through a new overbridge, and that an underpass would be difficult to pursue from an engineering and flood risk perspective. A combined farm accommodation access and walking, cycling &amp; horse riding route would also be provided between this option and the Old A358 near Hortons Cross</li> <li>• Option 2 would provide a parallel link road to connect Broadway Street to Ashill Road and Thickthorn Lane. They further noted that the concept was broadly similar to what had shared earlier.</li> </ul> <p>For both options, the existing Broadway Street and Cad Road connections directly to the A358 would be stopped up. They added that Highways England had been holding conversations with landowners to understand the impact of the proposals on their current access routes to land parcels. Highways England were continuing to have ongoing discussions with landowners around these measures.</p> <p>A representative from Buckland St Mary Parish Council noted that they had forgotten to mention that Capland Lane often served as a connection point for walkers, cyclist and equestrian groups to</p>
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	<p>Hatch Beauchamp and then into Stock Road. They added that there was a bridlepath along the track that needed to be repositioned. They also added that part of the Joint Parish Council proposals to move the Hatch Beauchamp overbridge further north-west would be separate to the existing Fivehead River Underpass currently used by walkers and equestrian groups.</p> <p>A representative from Broadway Parish Council noted that the proposals being shared for this section of the route were a variant of the proposal - Broadway Parish Council preferred to move the alignment of the new road to connect Broadway Street with the Ashill/Rapps grade-separated junction. They confirmed that if Highways England were unwilling to adopt the Parish Councils proposals, they would need to have a detailed discussion about the proposal on the screen. They added that the proposals did go a significant way to alleviating existing concerns, but not far enough, namely because their proposals included an off-slip from the westbound carriageway to allow traffic to directly access Broadway from the A358. They added that their concerns arose from the fact that the primary school and medical centre nearby had a large catchment area and took a large majority of its patients from Ilminster and the existing A358, and that if the route did not have a slip road at Broadway Street, the Parish Council was concerned that all the traffic would go through very unsuitable roads in Broadway. They added that the proposed improvements to Broadway Street/Cad Road were helpful, but there were still significant issues around connectivity to the existing A358 at that point.</p>	
<p><b>4.</b></p>	<p><b>Ongoing commitment to engagement</b></p> <p>Highways England provided a breakdown of upcoming planned engagement activity up to statutory consultation.</p>	
<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>Closing comments</b></p> <p>A representative from Buckland St Mary Parish Council noted that the slides did not cover Kenny overbridge and Stewley Lane. Highways England noted that this had not been included on the slide deck because this element had not been subject to an optioneering review since the last community forum, but will be included in Highways England’s formal response.</p> <p>A representative from West Hatch Parish Council noted that a lot of requests for left-in left-out slip-roads had been proposed based on the inclusion of such left-in left-out slip-roads on the A303 Sparkford to Ilchester scheme.</p>	

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<p>Highways England noted that there was ongoing work to review the express-way design standard (GD 300), but that the A303 Sparkford to Ilchester scheme had been developed against different design standards (prior to release of GD 300) and the A358 scheme was committed to building a high-quality and safe dual carriageway.</p> <p>A representative from North Curry Parish Council noted that Highways England had committed to responding to Parish Councils on 8 July and asked if this response could be shared with other Parish Councils.</p> <p>Highways England confirmed that, for General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) purposes, they needed to confirm with the joint Parish Councils that they consented to this being shared. This was agreed.</p> <p>An electronic vote was taken to confirm that the joint Parish Councils consenting to the response being shared.</p> <p>The Chair then closed the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance and participation.</p>	<p>HE to provide a formal response to Parish Council proposals by 8 July 2021.</p>
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