

A358

**Taunton to Southfields
Dualling Scheme**

Supplementary consultation –
summary of your feedback

June 2023





Thank you for your interest in this project. Your feedback is important and it has helped shape our plans so far.

In this booklet you will find a summary of the supplementary consultation, which ran from 24 May to 26 June 2022. This booklet covers how we ran the consultation, what we consulted on, and what you told us.

Our Development Consent Order (DCO) application will include a full consultation report summarising all the feedback from both the 2021 and 2022 consultations and our response. It will show how your feedback has informed the development of the project and signpost to assessment and other data, which will be included in the DCO application. The DCO application will also set out the preliminary design of the new road, the effect on other roads and the land needed for the project.

The project

The A358 Taunton to Southfields Dualling Scheme is one of several improvements on the A303 and A358 designed to make it easier to travel across the south of England from the M3 in Hampshire and the M5 in Somerset and beyond.

We plan to upgrade approximately 8.5 miles (13.6km) of the A358 between the M5 at Taunton and the Southfields roundabout on the A303 to a high-quality, high-performing dual carriageway. The route will connect junction 25 of the M5 at Taunton with the existing A303 at Southfields roundabout near Ilminster.

We've been developing plans to upgrade this section of the A358 since late 2014, when it was announced as part of the government's first Road Investment Strategy (RIS1). Since then, we've been working to develop plans to improve the A358, making the road safer and more reliable for everyone.

We've held a number of consultations in this time. In 2017 and 2018 we consulted with you on route options and your feedback helped to inform the decision on the preferred route, which was announced in 2019. In autumn 2021 we held a statutory public consultation, where we asked for your views on the preliminary design of the route.



2022 supplementary consultation

In response to feedback to the public consultation in 2021, and after further traffic modelling and environmental surveys, we made some changes to the preliminary design.

We held a supplementary consultation, which ran from 24 May to 26 June 2022, to ask for your feedback on these changes.

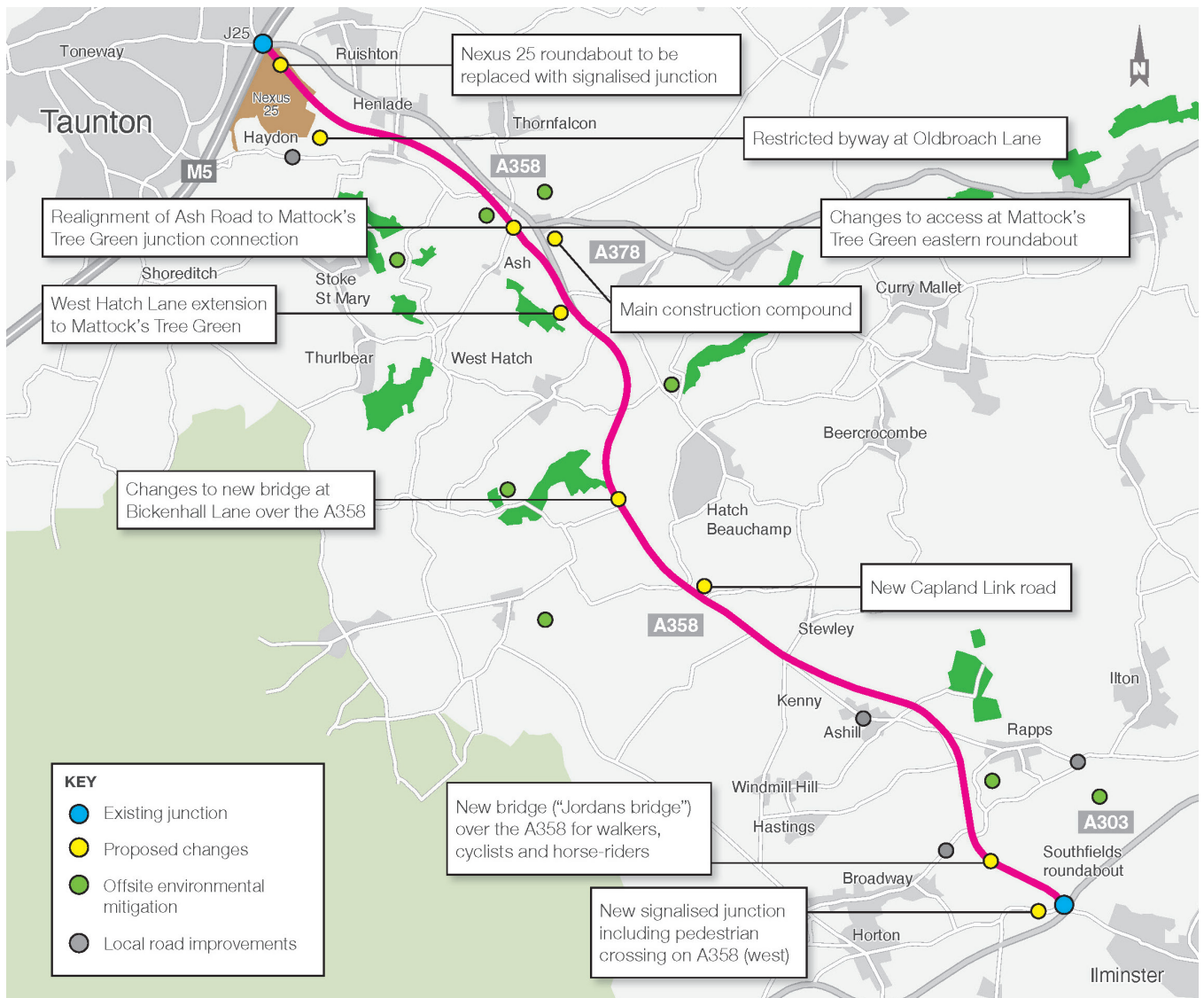
The changes we consulted on were in the following broad categories:

- transport, traffic flows and access
- walking, cycling, horse-riding and disabled user access
- environmental mitigation
- location of main construction compound

You can find further details on what we consulted on, and how the 2021 consultation feedback influenced these changes, via the project webpage at

www.nationalhighways.co.uk/a358-taunton-to-southfields, where you can view the following booklets:

- Supplementary consultation booklet
- Summary of changes booklet
- Responding to 2021 consultation feedback booklet



How we delivered the supplementary consultation

Our approach to the supplementary consultation was set out in a Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) addendum. This document, published on 24 May 2022, was developed in consultation with Somerset County Council, South Somerset District Council and Somerset West and Taunton Council and followed the approach set out for the 2021 public consultation.

By working with the local councils, we were able to draw on their expertise and previous experience and integrate their feedback into shaping the consultation.

To help raise awareness of the consultation and how to get involved we:

- sent postcards to households and businesses in the local area
- sent letters and emails to stakeholder organisations
- published notices in the local press
- put up notices in the local area

We also kept people informed about events, and how to access materials, through our project newsletter and social media.

We produced a stakeholder resource pack to raise awareness of the consultation and help us reach a wider group of people. This provided details of the consultation and ways for people to get involved. It was sent out to 65 stakeholder organisations including local parish councils, businesses, local authorities and MPs, so they could share messages about the supplementary consultation on their websites or social media channels and encourage people to have their say.

Our telephone number and freepost address were widely publicised, and digital products were also available at public events to make sure the same information was available to those with limited or no digital access.



Events

We held three in-person local events and spoke to 955 visitors.

Monks Yard

Tuesday 26 May 2022, 11am – 8pm

Somerset County Cricket Club

Wednesday 8 June 2022, 11am – 8pm

Taunton Racecourse

Saturday 11 June 2022, 11am - 6pm

We also held four online webinar events for members of the public, in addition to meetings with our stakeholders – including council members, the community forum and parish councils.

These events gave people the opportunity to view information about the scheme and talk to members of the project team.

Materials

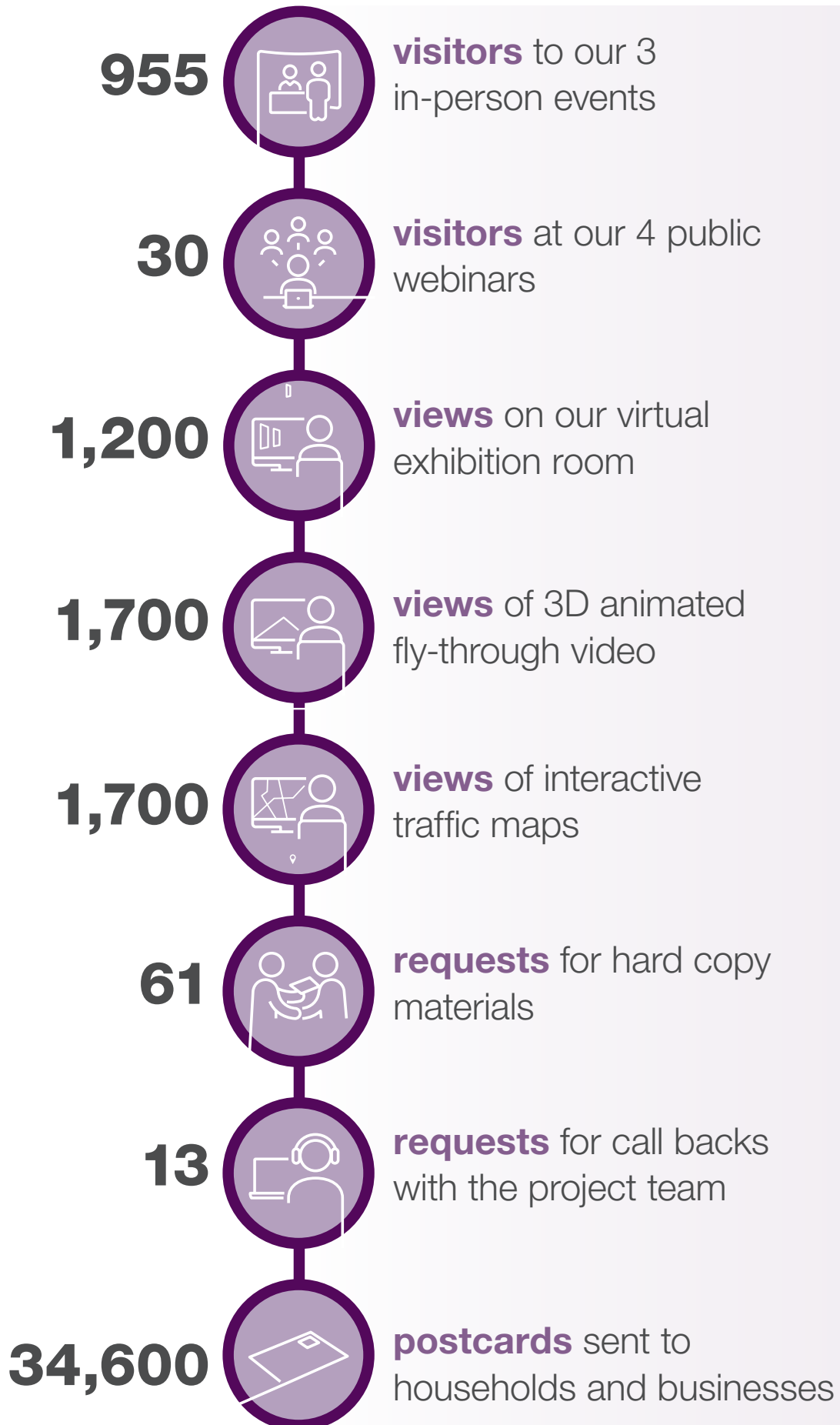
We published a range of materials to help people understand the changes made since the 2021 public consultation. This included:

- Supplementary consultation booklet
- Supplementary consultation feedback questionnaire
- Responding to feedback from 2021 public consultation booklet
- Summary of changes booklet
- Technical traffic note
- Environmental note
- Plans of the scheme
- Fly-through visualisation
- Interactive traffic webmaps
 - [traffic flow webmap](#)
 - [trip route and journey time webmap](#)
- Interactive ‘virtual consultation’ exhibition room
- Statement of Community Consultation addendum
- Public notice

All materials were available via our project webpage on the National Highways website (www.nationalhighways.co.uk/a358-taunton-to-southfields), which provided links to our [dedicated consultation webpage](#) and [virtual exhibition room](#). The layout of the virtual exhibition room was similar to our in-person events, so that people could explore the consultation materials online at a time that suited them. Paper copies of the consultation materials were also available at 11 public information points – such as local libraries - during the consultation period. People could also order hard copies of our materials via our telephone line.

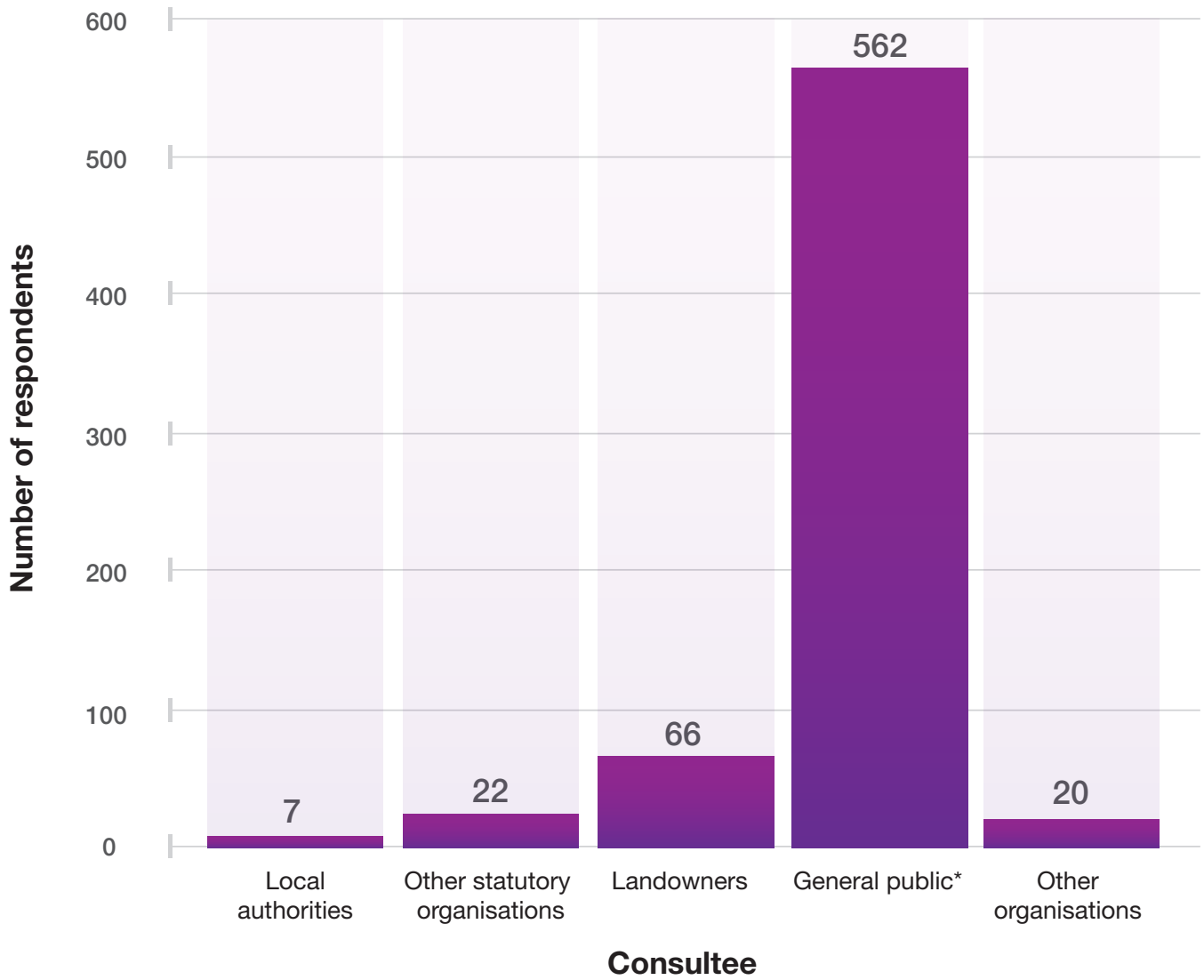


Facts and figures



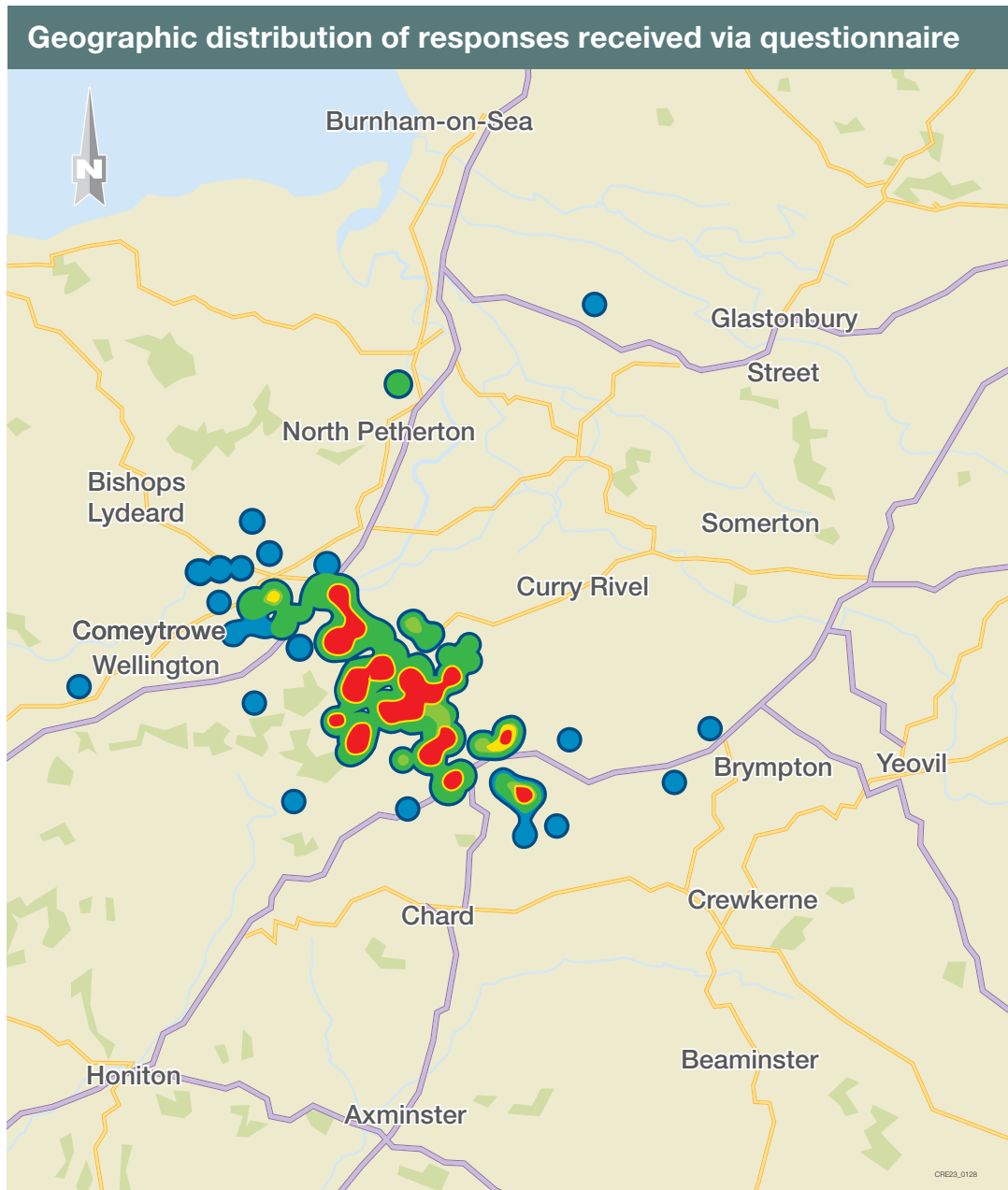
Who responded?

In total, we received 677 responses to the consultation.



* This includes 326 responses that were received on behalf of the FutureA358 campaign group. This group published a questionnaire on their own website, which included our questions, alongside additional questions that were not part of our supplementary consultation.

The majority of responses were from the local area (based on postcodes provided in questionnaire responses).



The following pages provide a summary of the responses received during the consultation.

Our DCO application will include a consultation report, summarising all the feedback from both the 2021 and 2022 consultations and our response.

Summary of feedback

Transport, traffic flows and access

Nexus 25

People supported our proposal to replace the existing Nexus 25 roundabout with a signalised junction. Other people thought that as the existing roundabout had only recently been built, it should be incorporated into our design and that replacing it so soon after building it is a waste of money.

People emphasised how important it is to make access for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders safer, and some felt that this could be better achieved by adding pedestrian traffic lights to the existing roundabout. People asked for a bridge so that the A358 reaches the junction 25 roundabout without any junction at Nexus 25.

Mattock's Tree Green junction

People supported our proposals and felt this would be an improvement and provide safer access. People were concerned that our proposals to extend West Hatch Lane to Huish Woods Lane would impact the field opposite the Somerset Progressive School, which is used by the school, and were worried about the safety of pupils crossing this road.

The new bridge at Bickenhall Lane

While there was support for our proposals to restrict vehicle access at Bickenhall Lane, others felt it wouldn't be effective. People suggested it should be either for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders only, or open to public traffic. People were worried that closing Bickenhall Lane to public traffic would increase traffic on other local roads.



Jordans bridge

While there was support for our proposals for Jordans bridge, others felt the purpose wasn't clear and that it only appears to benefit farmers. People suggested it should be made wide enough to carry vehicles, for residents to use to travel to and from work between Ashill and Ilton.

The link road between Capland Lane and Village Road

Feedback at the public consultation in 2021 and the supplementary consultation in 2022 showed support for the new Capland link road - a new road connecting Capland Lane to Village Road. People suggested the link road should be extended to the Stewley Link Road. Others didn't think the new link road was needed.

Other works to local roads

The changes proposed were:

- localised widening/passing bays on Haydon Lane and Stoke Road
- addition of passing bays on Broadway Street
- traffic calming measures in Ashill village
- changes to Cad Road/Rapps Road junction

People welcomed our proposals to improve local roads and believe the A358 upgrade would help to reduce traffic and congestion in the area. Others were concerned the upgrade would increase the volume of traffic on some local roads.

People welcomed our proposals for traffic calming and other improvements to local roads. We also received requests relating to:

- concerns about traffic speed and visibility for vehicles travelling along the Old A358 (Ashill Road) near its junction with Wood Road
- additional local road improvements, traffic calming measures and controls to restrict access to local traffic in some areas including Haydon, Stoke St. Mary and Donyatt
- concerns about the potential for rat-running through Ruishton, Creech St. Michael and along Griffin Lane

Walking, cycling, horse-riding and disabled user access



Feedback showed support for the improved connections for walkers, cyclists, horse-riders and disabled users.

We also received specific requests including:

- the footpath at High Bridge to be changed to a bridleway to provide an extra crossing for cyclists and horse-riders
- adjustments to the Stoke Road end of the new restricted byway proposed between Oldbroach Lane and Stoke Road
- a footway along Huish Woods Lane, to provide a clearer walking route from Somerset Progressive School
- changes to some public rights of way designations



Environment

Responses showed that, while you thought the environmental proposals we shared were improvements, you are still concerned about the overall effects of the project on the local environment and wildlife. You asked us to continue looking at ways to maximise biodiversity, to protect the wide variety of wildlife, habitats and woodland in the area.



Location of main construction compound

Feedback showed you're generally supportive of locating the main construction compound near Mattock's Tree Green. People were concerned about the temporary access bridge and felt this wouldn't be necessary, while others were worried about disruption to traffic flows on the A378 to Wrantage caused by construction traffic. Some people suggested alternative locations for the construction compound.

General comments

We also invited you to provide any additional comments, which were not the focus of the supplementary consultation.

Principle of development

We've summarised your general feedback and suggestions about the principle of the proposed A358 upgrade below:

- Support for our proposals to make the whole route into a dual carriageway, stating that the upgrade is essential and needs to happen as soon as possible.
- Belief that upgrades are only needed to some sections, for example Southfields roundabout and/or a bypass at Henlade.
- Concerns about the overall size and scale of the route and junctions, and that they are too big for a rural area.
- Requests for extra slip roads or access points.
- General opposition to proposals, that the upgrade is not needed at all, and/or that it doesn't provide value for money.
- Concern about damage to the environment and feel that road building is not compatible with climate change targets.
- Suggestions that improving alternative modes of transport would be a better solution than building a dual carriageway.



General Comments (continued)

Noise and visual complaints

People were concerned about noise and light pollution impacts from the new road and wanted to see more done to reduce these impacts. Suggestions included creating earth bunds (sloped embankments at the sides of the road) and planting trees and hedges to reduce the impact of noise and light from the main road.

Specifically, people were concerned that raising the A358 between M5 junction 25 and Mattock's Tree Hill could funnel noise down into the valley, which is a quiet rural area.

People thought that the sound under the Blackbrook roundabout (M5 junction 25) would be too loud and be a deterrent to walkers and cyclists. Reflective sound barriers and sound-absorbing barriers were suggested to reduce the noise here.

Impacts on property, land and businesses

We received various requests from landowners. They were mostly about either access arrangements for their land, or environmental proposals, which are located on land that they own. People have told us they are concerned about the project having a detrimental impact on the rural nature of the area and on the local farming industry.



Next steps

Your feedback has been invaluable in helping to shape the project proposals to date.

From our review of feedback to the supplementary consultation and ongoing dialogue with stakeholders, there are a small number of minor refinements that we would like to take forward. We have engaged with those with an interest in the land affected by the changes to seek their feedback.

Our DCO application will include a consultation report summarising all the feedback and showing how it has informed the development of the project. We are continuing to work with the statutory environmental bodies and local authorities to develop our environmental assessments and address topics such as climate change.

When we submit our DCO application to the Planning Inspectorate, they will have 28 days to decide whether to accept the application for examination. If our application is accepted, the Planning Inspectorate (acting on behalf of the Secretary of State for Transport) will examine the application.

The examination period lasts a maximum of six months. Following the examination, the Planning Inspectorate will report its recommendation to the Secretary of State for Transport, who will then make the final decision on whether the DCO should be granted.

We'll continue working on our design throughout this process and, if the DCO is granted, we'll then begin preparing for construction.

More information

Planning Inspectorate's website:

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk>

You can find out more information about the project using the following channels:



www.nationalhighways.co.uk/a358-taunton-to-southfields/



0300 123 5000



A358TauntontoSouthfields@nationalhighways.co.uk



www.facebook.com/HighwaysSWest



[@HighwaysSWEST](https://twitter.com/HighwaysSWEST)

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