

**Proposed text for Section 4d of National Highway's feedback questionnaire:  
Southfields roundabout.**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
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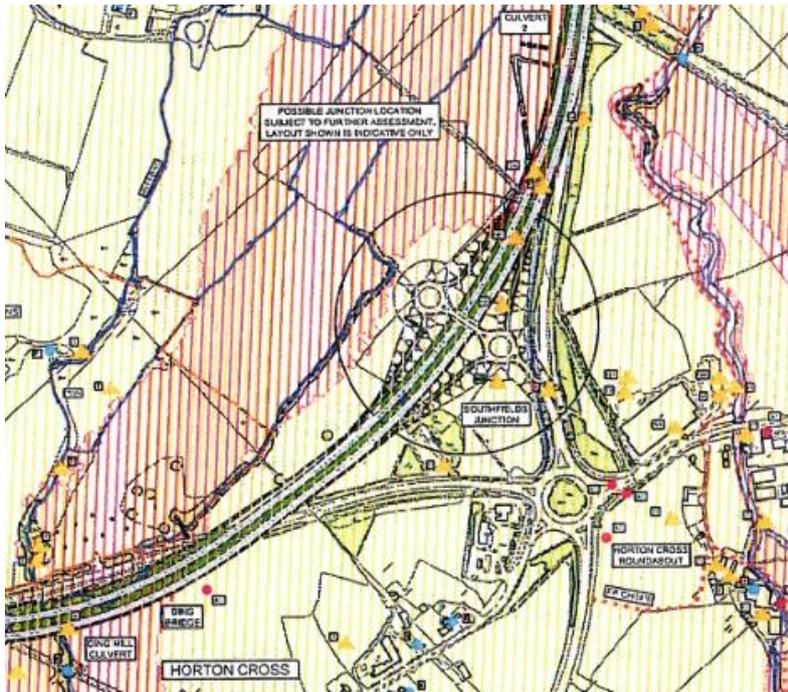
Reasons for response to 4d.

The current route of the A358 (West) presents 2 significant problems for motorists. These are the congestion, pollution and safety issues at Henlade and the regular congestion experienced at Southfields roundabout. National Highways' proposals provide a solution to the first of these, but will make the second worse. In the process they also ignore at Southfields roundabout the engineering design standards they are imposing elsewhere along the route.

Presently at Southfields roundabout, traffic on the A303 (East) Ilminster Bypass travelling to Devon and Cornwall passes in front of the B3168 (Ilminster) before taking the A303 (West) towards Honiton. With this arrangement and with current levels of traffic, there is already congestion at peak and other times on all 5 approach legs of the roundabout. National Highways' proposal is to re-route the west-bound A303 traffic around the roundabout towards Taunton and so across in front of 3 approach legs. In the process, and for the only time since the M3, this takes such traffic away from the geographically shortest route on the national highway network to Honiton and the South West. The result of this, combined with the major increases in traffic National Highways predict by the 2043 design year and the creation of 3 circulatory lanes rather than the present 2, will be to make traversing the roundabout more challenging for vehicles emerging from the B3168 (Ilminster), the A303 (West) and the A358 (South). That will result in increased congestion, particularly on the B3168 (Ilminster) and the A358 (South) approach legs. It also provides west-bound A303 traffic with the opportunity to take the logical, shorter and presumably in future less busy A303 (West) route, defeating one of the purposes of the A358 improvement.

Nor will the provision of a segregated left turn lane off the A358 (West) approach to the roundabout significantly improve matters. The diversion of traffic from the South West peninsular heading to the A303 (East) via junction 25 of the M5, coupled with the increases in traffic predicted by National Highways, will substantially increase the number of vehicles approaching the roundabout. This, with the shortness of the segregated left-hand turn lane as it leaves the A358 (West) and joins the A303 (East) and the sharpness of the curve in the segregated lane, will cause congestion on that lane, potentially spilling back onto the A358 (West).

The answer to these problems is to build a grade-separated junction at Southfields, separating long-distance from local traffic by providing a seamless connection between the A303 (East) and the A358 (West). Minimal changes would then be required to the roundabout and west-bound traffic would be more easily encouraged to the M5 rather than the A303 (South). Such an arrangement has already been proposed by Highways England in 2007, as the graphic below shows:



National Highways' refusal to agree to this not only condemns local communities in the area to even more congestion at the roundabout, but it also encourages rat-running along local roads for the foreseeable future. This has implications not considered by National Highways for communities like Donyatt and Sea.

Significantly, as already explained in the answer to Question 1a, it also ignores the standards enshrined in GD300 which National Highways is imposing elsewhere on the route. National Highways' decision to build the route as a Level 2 Expressway requires junctions at either end to be grade-separated, as stated in E/6.9 of GD300. At Southfields, National Highways will not be meeting their own obligatory standards. In the absence of either justification or explanation, National Highways should revert to the grade-separated junction at Southfields for which plans already exist and for which local support is forthcoming.

Instead of the limited changes proposed by National Highways at the roundabout, all the following design changes to the roundabout are essential were a grade-separated junction not to be provided.

### **A358 (West) traffic approaching the roundabout**

As a strategic route in the national road network, it is anticipated that a high proportion of the traffic heading towards Southfields roundabout from this direction would use the proposed segregated left turn lane to head east onto the A303 Ilminster Bypass. Considering the speed reduction and consequent reduced traffic flow caused by the acuteness of the segregated lane curve at the roundabout, the following measures would help to alleviate the possibility of tailbacks on the dual carriageway:

1. The addition of a significant length of auxiliary lane (similar to that shown in CD 122 Figure 3.30b Layout A option 2 - Single Lane auxiliary diverge) rather than the taper diverge currently proposed;
2. The introduction of speed reduction measures for traffic approaching both the segregated left turn lane and the A358 approach to the roundabout;
3. The introduction of real-time congestion warning signage.

**A303 (East) Ilminster Bypass traffic leaving the roundabout**

4. For the same strategic reasons as mentioned above, a substantial length of parallel merge lane at the end of the segregated left turn lane should be introduced so that east-bound vehicles exiting Southfields roundabout itself can merge with the potentially dominant segregated left turn lane traffic up to and past the first right hand curve of the eastbound A303.

**A303 (East) Ilminster Bypass traffic approaching the roundabout**

5. The proposed third approach lane at the roundabout would reintroduce the failed and subsequently amended original design of the roundabout. Additional speed reduction, improved signage and other safety measures should be implemented if this third approach lane were nonetheless to be implemented.

**A358 (South) traffic approaching the roundabout**

6. The proposed third approach lane should be converted into a segregated left turn lane so that all traffic joining the A358 (West) can merge rather than giving way at the roundabout. National Highways should address the impact of a third lane on the safety of vehicles leaving and entering the services off the A358 (South) at this point.

**Additional proposals at the roundabout**

There is already significant congestion at peak times and other times on each of the approach legs to the roundabout. No significant physical change to the roundabout itself is proposed. However, the proposed creation of a third circulatory lane on parts of the roundabout would mean that traffic seeking to enter the roundabout from the B3168 (Ilminster) and A358 (South) approach legs would have to cross in front of 3 lanes of traffic rather than the current 2. This would create a significantly more challenging traverse of the roundabout for local vehicles than is currently the case with a lower volume of traffic than National Highways project for the future. To cope with this, the following additional measures are needed at the roundabout.

7. The permitted speed on the roundabout should be reduced from the current national speed limit to 40-mph, as is the case of the 40-mph limits at the South Petherton and Amesbury roundabouts on the A303.
8. In order to give traffic from lower priority roads, namely the B3168 (Ilminster), the A303 (West) and the A358 (South), a safer and fairer opportunity to use the roundabout, traffic signals (either full-time or part-time) should be installed, as is already the case at Amesbury and Podimore roundabouts on the A303.
9. Subject to the implementation of the first 2 proposals for the roundabout, the vertical profile of its central island comprising banks and foliage should be lowered so that traffic joining the roundabout has better visibility and consequently longer decision times, compensating to some extent for the increased volume and, potentially, speed of traffic from the A303 (East) joining the A358 (West).

(4) To address a fundamental flaw in the scheme proposals, the opportunity should be taken to provide a grade-separated junction at Southfields, permitting A358 (West) and A303 (East) through-traffic to be separated from local traffic. Without this, the aim of reduced and consistent travel times will not be achieved, even if the design changes proposed above were to be implemented.