

A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down

TR010025

Deadline 6

**8.37.3 - Responses to the ExA's Written Questions
- Alternatives (AL.2)**

APFP Regulation 5(2)(q)

Planning Act 2008

The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010

July 2019



Infrastructure Planning

Planning Act 2008

The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure)

Rules 2010

A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down

Development Consent Order 20[**]

Responses to the ExA's Written Questions - Alternatives (AL.2)

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3 Alternatives (AL.2)

Question AL.2.1

The response to ExQ1 AL.1.5 indicates that the project retains its status in the current RIS (2015-2020) and it is currently envisaged that it will not be necessary to carry it over into the next RIS period.

- i. Does that still represent the current position or is it likely that there would be a carry over to the next RIS period and a further assessment for its inclusion within that?
- ii. If so, does that have any implications for compliance with the National Policy Statement for National Networks (NPSNN), and hence the ExA's approach to the consideration of alternatives?

Highways England response

- i. **Does that still represent the current position or is it likely that there would be a carry over to the next RIS period and a further assessment for its inclusion within that?**
 1. The Government's RIS funding process is the means by which DfT allocates funds to Highways England to cover the costs of Highways England's programme of work over 5-year periods. The process was set up in 2015 to coincide with Highways England's creation as a government-owned company, with RIS1 (first funding period) running from April 2015 to March 2020 and including funds for the development and design of the A303 Stonehenge scheme. The future funding of the scheme post development consent (if granted by the Secretary of State) will be either via RIS2 and RIS3 allocations or via a separate funding allocation to be determined by the Government. Please see the answer to CA.2.13 for further detail.
 2. If the future funding of the Scheme is not via the RIS2 allocation, Highways England is expecting a separate source of funds to be made available by Government to accompany the Secretary of State's decision on the Scheme.
- ii. **If so, does that have any implications for compliance with the National Policy Statement for National Networks (NPSNN), and hence the ExA's approach to the consideration of alternatives?**
 3. The source of the funding does not have any implications for compliance with the National Policy Statement for National Networks and the ExA's consideration of alternatives. As set out in paragraph 1.21 of the NNNPS, the Road Investment Strategies set out the investment programme and funding strategy for projects and are not options appraisals in and of themselves (see also the Applicant's response to the CBA's Written Representation at paragraph 21.1.16 with regard to the status of RIS and the SEA Directive [REP3-013]).

4. Paragraph 4.27 of the NNNPS sets out that where projects have been subject to full options appraisal in achieving their status within a RIS, options need not be considered by the ExA. This is what occurred for the Scheme - a full options appraisal was carried out and its status within RIS1 was achieved.
5. This position would not be changed in the event that the source of funding of the Scheme after the end of RIS1 was not RIS2. As set out in paragraph 4.27 of the NNNPS, “proportionate option consideration of alternatives will have been undertaken as part of the investment decision making process” and so the position remains that “it is not necessary for the Examining Authority and the decision maker to reconsider this process, but they should be satisfied that this assessment has been undertaken”, no matter the source of funding of the scheme after RIS1 comes to an end

Question AL.2.2

The response to ExQ1 AL.1.6 provides details of the costings which supported the decision to reject the longer tunnel route options.

Have there been any changes to those costings since that time or to the pro-rata comparison per metre of the different tunnel length options?

Highways England response

1. Written Question AL.1.6 refers to the long tunnel options at an early stage in the options identification and selection process as referred to in the Environmental Statement, Chapter 3 Assessment of alternatives [APP-041], Table 3.1 Development of the preferred route, Stage 2. The assessment carried out at this stage can be found in the Technical Appraisal Report [REP1-031] chapter 7. The costings referred to were current at the time the relevant decision was taken at Design Fix C not to progress the longer tunnel options.
2. The options identified at Design Fix C were then developed in sufficient detail to inform the public consultation carried out in January 2017. As a result of this consultation the tunnel alignment was modified for the preferred route announcement with the western portal moved from south-west to north-west of Normanton Gorse.
3. At this stage the option of the longer tunnel was revisited (see written Question AL.1.29 [REP2-024]). Updated cost estimates were used to inform this revisit.
4. The current, most up-to-date, costing data for overall additional cost and pro-rata comparison per metre of different tunnel length options can be found in Highways England's response to Written Question AL.1.30 [REP2-024].

Question AL.2.3

The response to ExQ1 AL.1.29 states that:

“There is no evidence that the additional investment required to extend the tunnel length would deliver meaningful additional benefits to the WHS that would justify the additional cost”.

- i. Has the Applicant’s position changed in relation to the additional benefits to the WHS that an extension of the tunnel length would achieve during the course of the examination?
- ii. Please confirm that the figures of an additional £264 million for the cut and cover option and £578 million for the bored tunnel extension represent up-to-date costings.

Highways England response

1. Highways England’s position remains unchanged: the benefits of an extension to the proposed tunnel would not justify the additional cost. Various benefits of a tunnel extension have been presented during the examination to date but these have already been included in the option identification and selection process carried out prior to the application. The benefits and dis-benefits of a tunnel extension, including the heritage benefits to the WHS, were presented in response to written question AL.1.29 [REP2-024] and this assessment remains unchanged.
2. Highways England confirm that the cost estimates of £264 million for the cut and cover option and £578 million for the bored tunnel extension represent the most recent and up-to-date costings. See also the response to written question AL.1.30 [REP2-024] which breaks each of these figures into construction cost and operation and maintenance cost.

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