

Beercrocombe Parish Council's response to the A358 Consultation - February 2018

Options - Section 1

The Pink route is our preferred option as it has potential to provide a viable by-pass to Henlade. However, Junction 25 is likely to remain a choke point.

Local Connectivity - Section 2

1. According to paragraph 4.1.8 of the Technical Appraisal Report, Highways England requires that the Strategic Road Network, of which the Expressway will be part, must be easier to get over, under or around to ensure that roads serve communities instead of severing them. To achieve this requirement additional funding is available. Nevertheless, cost saving measures are detailed in paragraph 6.4.14 that will specifically degrade local connectivity, particularly for slow moving vehicles, i.e. farm vehicles. That is in spite of the recognition that the local industry is farming. Because of limitations of other local roads Bickenhall Lane (Grid reference ST ST294197) is particularly important for farm vehicle traffic and therefore must remain open and be connected to the stretch of existing A358 that will remain as a parallel local road to Ashill.
2. An over bridge connecting Stewley Lane to Wood Road/Kenny, Ashill, is essential, particularly for agricultural traffic serving farms that fall on both sides of the A358. Equally this route is used by traffic wishing to join the A303 west avoiding Southfields roundabout or wanting to access the Blackdown Hills area.
3. During local flooding Capland Lane is the only flood free access to properties along Capland Lane and the northern part of Stewley Lane. This is confirmed in the Environmental Constraints Plan. It is therefore essential for the western end of Capland Lane to be connected to the over bridge via the Hatch Beauchamp road.
4. Residents of Bickenhall, Curland, Hatch Green, Capland and Stewley driving to and from Taunton will face a much longer drive through country lanes to reach the Expressway at West Hatch Lane/Thornfalcon (junctions E/C). Hatch Beauchamp will experience a significant increase in traffic through the village. Similarly, Ashill will experience a significant increase in traffic through the village as local residents access and leave the Expressway at junction G for eastward journeys. This could all be avoided at a modest cost by providing:
 - Sliproads at the eastern and western ends of the remaining part of the A358 to leave/access the westbound Expressway.
 - Sliproads at the Hatch Beauchamp/Capland/Bickenhall over-bridge to leave/access the eastbound Expressway.
5. The TAR concludes that only minor improvement will be made to the Southfields roundabout, on the assumption that the Ilminster to South Petherton section of the A303 will be upgraded as part of the overall A303 improvement programme. However, the next Road Investment Scheme (RIS2), which completed public consultation on 7 February 2018, does not include any schemes to continue the A303 improvement programme. Consequently, users of the Expressway will experience lengthy delays approaching Southfields roundabout for years to come that will cause frustration, anger and accidents. A free-flowing connection to the A303 Ilminster by-pass must be part of this project.

A diagram illustrating the points made is attached.

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Proposals for improved local connectivity for Section 2

