



This response has been written by Nicholas Lyes, RAC Public Affairs Manager, on behalf of RAC Motoring Services

About the RAC

With more than eight million members, the RAC is the oldest and one of the UK's most progressive motoring organisations, providing services for both private and business motorists. As such, it is committed to making driving easier, safer, more affordable and more enjoyable for all road users.

The RAC, which employs more than 1,500 patrols, provides roadside assistance across the entire UK road network and as a result has significant insight into how the country's road networks are managed and maintained.

The RAC is separate from the RAC Foundation which is a transport policy and research organisation which explores the economic, mobility, safety and environmental issues relating to roads and their users.

The RAC website can be found at www.rac.co.uk.

In September 2016, the RAC published its latest annual [Report on Motoring](#).

RAC Response

https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/cip/a303-stonehenge/supporting_documents/s160530%20Feedback%20Form%20Questions%202016.pdf

1. To what extent do you agree with our proposed option? (Strongly agree)

Comment: The RAC strongly supports plans to ease congestion on a stretch of road that is a notorious bottleneck on one of the two major routes linking the South West of England to London and the South East. The situation is at its worst in the summer months when traffic volumes are boosted by holiday traffic, by visitors to Stonehenge and by those travelling to 1-off events such as the Glastonbury Festival. Much of the A303 is now dual carriageway with 2 lanes/carriageway and there is an urgent need to bring those few remaining sections of single lane carriageway up to that of the bulk of the A303. The proposals to turn the A303 between the M3 and the M5 near Exeter into an Expressway, with a uniform minimum standard along its entire length requires that the bottleneck around Stonehenge must be removed. The need to upgrade this section of the A303 has been recognised for many years and the RAC is now keen that Highways England begins work as soon as practically possible.

With traffic levels now at record highs, respondents to this year's survey for the RAC's Report on Motoring 2016 identified 'traffic congestion and slower journey times' as the 4th highest overall motoring priority, up from 9th in 2015. This illustrates the sense of urgency that motorists attach to projects such as this that tackle the most congested sections of the strategic network.

The RAC also believes that by cutting congestion, local air quality will also improve, and the tunnel will help reduce noise for nearby residents in the area.

2. To what extent do you agree with our proposed location of the eastern portal? (Strongly agree)

Comment: The RAC is unable to comment on the choice from an engineering perspective but from a user perspective, the proposed location of the Eastern Portal seems sensible. The final choice should take account of the preferences of local residents and those most affected by the levels of congestion and pollution.

3. To what extent do you agree with our proposed location of the western portal? (strongly agree)

Comment: RAC is unable to comment on the choice from an engineering perspective but from a user perspective, the proposed location of the Eastern Portal seems sensible. The final choice should take account of the preferences of local residents and those most affected by the levels of congestion and pollution.

4. Of the two possible routes for the Winterbourne Stoke bypass which do you consider is the best route?

Option 1N – A northern bypass of Winterbourne Stoke Option 1S– A southern bypass of Winterbourne Stoke (No preference)

Supporting comment: The RAC would be content with either option but would encourage Highways England to opt for that which is regarded by those living in the area as least disruptive to the local environment and that the is most likely to bring the best long-term benefits.

5. 5. What are the most important issues for you as we develop our proposals for the A303/A345 Countess junction?

RAC Comment: This section of road has been identified as a major bottleneck as it is the first roundabout encountered by those travelling west from the M3. The RAC would support plans to separate traffic, which may include a flyover or an underpass as this seems likely to be the best way to improve traffic flow and reduce congestion. The proposal is also consistent with longer term plans to designate the A303 as an Expressway.

6. What are the most important issues for you as we develop our proposals for the A303/A360 Longbarrow junction?

RAC Comment: The requirement for such a junction follows automatically from the decision to upgrade this section of the A303 to dual carriageway and to by-pass Winterbourne Stoke. We therefore support plans to separate traffic going east-west along the A303 from traffic going north-south along the A360.

7. Do you have any other comments?



To summarise, the RAC strongly supports plans to reduce congestion along this stretch of the A303. The RAC's 2016 Report on Motoring has identified increasing congestion and longer journey times as major concerns. The Report also found that when motorists were asked to prioritise different types of investment in the Transport infrastructure, investing in targeted improvements of major roads ranked 3rd out of 13 possible types of investment. 70% of motorists also agreed that motorway and high speed carriageway journey times are becoming less predictable. 73% agreed that much tougher steps should be taken to reduce traffic congestion. The RAC would be willing to provide more regional specific data to Highways England on these specific areas should this be of interest.

Please address any comments or further contact to:

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