



Department  
for Transport

# Shaping the future of England's strategic roads (RIS2)

## Personal details

1. Are you responding as: \*

☐ an individual? (Go to question 4 below)

Y  
on behalf of an organisation?

## Organisational details

2. Your organisation's name?

Chideock Parish Council, West Dorset

3. What category best represents your organisation?

☐ Representative group

☐ Transport provider

☐ Highways England supplier

☐ National public sector body

☐ Local public sector body

☐ Local or combined authority

☐ Local Enterprise Partnership

☐ Business

☐ Charity

Y Other organisation:

Parish Council

## Initial report proposals

4. Do you think Highways England's proposals will deliver what users of the SRN want? \*

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't know

## Different way

5. If you answered no, what could be done differently?

## Initial report proposals

6. Do you think Highways England's proposals will deliver what businesses want? \*

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't know

## Different way

7. If you answered no, what could be done differently?

## Initial report proposals

8. Do you think Highways England's proposals meet the needs of people affected by the presence of the Strategic Road Network? \*

☐ Yes

☒ No

☐ Don't know

## Different way

9. If you answered no, what could be done differently?

Broadly and generally the Parish Council's answer is Yes, but for the A35 specifically, would like to see a more tailored approach for A-roads such as the A35 which are just marginally fit to be included in the SRN.

- More specific measures, priority and funding are necessary on rural sections of major A routes, to deal with noise and air pollution through small rural villages.
- Chideock Parish Council suggests special funding for pilot schemes to implement Average Speed Cameras (where speed or acceleration raises NO<sub>2</sub> levels), and low emission zones, in rural villages to directly reduce NO<sub>2</sub> levels where they are above the legal limit.

## Initial report proposals

10. Do you agree with Highways England's proposals for:

	Yes	No
the four categories of road and the development of Expressways (initial report sections 4.4.3 and 5.3.6)	Y	<input type="checkbox"/>
the operational priorities (initial report section 5.1)	Y	<input type="checkbox"/>
the infrastructure priorities (initial report section 5.2)	Y	<input type="checkbox"/>
the investment priorities (initial report section 5.3)	Y	<input type="checkbox"/>
a local priorities fund (initial report section 5.3.8)	Y	<input type="checkbox"/>
the future studies (initial report section 5.3.11)	Y	<input type="checkbox"/>
the designated funds (initial report section 5.4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	N
the performance measures and targets (initial report section 6.3)	Y	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you said no to any, what could be done differently (referencing the topic)?

- Broadly and generally, the Parish Council's answer to designated funds (5.4) above, is Yes, but is concerned that the report text reads "designated funds could be used", and regrets that there is no dedicated fund to deal with air pollution problems on Trunk Roads, specifically where there is an Air Quality Management Area.
- This appears to be inconsistent with the statements in the penultimate paragraph of the report (Consultation Document Section 1.1) – "The Department in partnership with Defra has published a plan for tackling roadside NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations. The plan will ensure the UK meets the legal limits for NO<sub>2</sub> in the shortest possible time".
- After more than a decade of NO<sub>2</sub> limit exceedance on Chideock Hill on the A35 westbound through Chideock, the DfT, Defra, Highways England and West Dorset District Council have singularly failed to ensure legal limits are met on this part of the A35 Trunk Road.
- Chideock Parish Council suggests a specific part of the fund be dedicated to meeting the legal limits for NO<sub>2</sub> by 2020.
- In respect to performance monitoring (6.3) the Parish Council endorses the proposals that targets be set and that Highways England "should be penalised for missing targets".

11. Are there any other proposals that you do not agree with? \*

☐ Yes

☐ No

## Disagreed proposals

12. State the proposals you disagree with and what could be done differently?

## Future needs

13. Do you agree with Highways England's assessment of the future needs of the strategic road network? (See Initial Report section 4.4.) \*

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't know

# Future needs alteration

## 14. If you answered no, how would you change the assessment?

- Broadly and generally, the Parish Council's answer is Yes, but for the A35 specifically, is not convinced that the road is fit for current purpose, far less any long-term future increase in traffic volumes or traffic mix. Many stretches are substandard.
- The Parish Council would therefore like to work in partnership with Highways England (especially after the DBFO contract expires in 2026, and in anticipation of no renewal) to more precisely and specifically determine the purpose of the A35 Honiton – Dorchester, both now, and in the short term (to 2026), and in the long term beyond 2026 up to the end of RIS3 in 2030.
- The Parish Council would also like to see a more precise and specific study of the relationship of the A35 and the A303 in terms of long-distance strategic function, both short and long term, with a view to positively planning for major shifts of long distance strategic through traffic away from the A35 and onto the A303 or M4 / M5.
- In this regard, the Parish Council welcomes and strongly supports plans for the A303 and A31 upgrades to expressways. This would appear to meet future needs admirably, with the right long term strategic approach.

## Aims

**Our 5 aims, central to how we aspire to measure success in Road Period 2 (2020 to 2025), are:**

**economy**, providing investment that yields increased productivity and economic output

**network capability**, we need a network that can meet future demands on it and support growth for the long term

**safety**, England has some of the safest roads in the world and the SRN is the safest part of all, per mile driven, however this is no cause for complacency and we remain committed to reducing deaths and injuries on our nation's roads

**integration**, very few journeys start or end on the SRN, almost all will use other transport networks, we will therefore seek new opportunities for linking the SRN with local roads, major roads and other modes of transport

**environment**, it is vital that we continue to drive the transition to a decarbonised network that is environmentally and locally sensitive, we will continue to tackle the negative external impacts of the SRN, and aim for RIS2 to make a positive contribution to the environment and air quality

## 15. How far does the initial report meet the government's aims of:

	1 - doesn't meet aim2 at all	2	3	4	5	6	7 - completely meets aim
economy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Y	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
network capability?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Y	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
safety?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Y	Y	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
integration?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Y	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
environment?	Y	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Which aims could Highways England do more to meet and how?

- For the A35 Honiton – Bere Regis, a series of origin / destination studies for each section between towns (Honiton / Lyme Regis / Bridport / Dorchester / Bere Regis) to verify the actual functions of each section in regard to SRN or MRN.
- For the A35 through Chideock, a study to establish a pilot scheme for a Low Emission Zone between the 30 mph limits, and a proposal for funding and implementation, which the Parish Council would very much like to see by 2020.
- On safety, it has, for example, been impossible to obtain the installation of a safety barrier rail outside the disabled exit from Chideock Village Hall.
- If these sorts of measures cannot be funded, a MRN status should be assigned.
- A means of monitoring HGVs and lorries for overloading, brake and tyre failure and other maintenance issues is urgently required to the West of Chideock Hill. Despite two Escape Lanes on the hill, Chideock residents have experienced in recent years 5 run-away lorries careering into the village and two further large vehicles catching fire in a predominantly thatched Main Street. resulting in one fatality, other injuries, two demolished properties, damage to other properties and vehicles, and trauma caused to those affected by these events. Since 2004 Chideock Parish Council has been meeting with Highways Agency / Highways England and DVSA / VOSA and gained support from other parishes requesting a facility for testing the safety of large vehicles before their drivers negotiate this steep winding hill into the centre of the village.

## Other questions

16. Do you think there should be any change in the roads included in the SRN? (See consultation document, section 1.3) \*

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't know

# Roads

17. Which roads would you propose are added to or removed from the SRN, and why?

- The A35 Honiton – Bere Regis, or at least the section Honiton – Dorchester, to be removed.
- The A35 does not serve a fully strategic national purpose but has characteristics more akin to a series of sections of major regional or local roads, which would be best managed locally as part of the proposed MRN.
- A Parish Poll recently conducted, on 17 August 2017, in Chideock showed a majority of those voting to be in favour of de-trunking of the A35 to allow more local control of traffic and the noise and air pollution impacts.
- The A35 Honiton – Bere Regis is subject to a DBFO contract which expires in 2026 and would enable a de-trunked MRN road management regime to be implemented in RIS3 2025-2030.

## Other questions

18. Is there anything else we need to consider when making decisions about investment in the network? \*

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't know

## Other factors

19. What other factors do you want considered?

- The same Parish Poll (Q 17) did not support a bypass through Chideock Parish (where there is a declared Air Quality Management Area) as a solution to the air pollution above legal limits.
- The Parish Council would suggest a formal review in RIS2 of the fitness of the A35 Honiton – Dorchester as a strategic road in terms of both condition and function as a strategic connector and through route.
- The traffic volumes between the M27 and the M5 show very significant variations section by section (M27, A31, A35 Bere Regis to Dorchester, A35 Dorchester to Bridport, A35 Bridport to Lyme Regis, A35 Lyme Regis to Honiton), very significantly decreasing from east to west.
- The A35's function as a strategic link between the major ports of Southampton and Plymouth is not borne out by the traffic flows.
- Access to airports at Bournemouth and Exeter similarly show a regional and local link rather than any strategic function.
- Between Bournemouth / Poole and Weymouth / Portland and their ports, the flows are to the north, requiring regional / strategic northward connections, with the A35 only providing short sections for north access.

## Analysis balance

20. Does the analytical approach taken have the right balance between ambition, robustness, and proportionality? (See chapter 6 of consultation document) \*

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't know

## Different balance

21. What do you suggest we do differently?

- Broadly, Chideock Parish Council believes that the balance is generally about right but would like to see a more formal integration of MRN proposals into the overall strategic plan in due course.
- The Parish Council suggests that a MRN of middle tier roads, between the SRN and local roads, has an absolutely essential role to play in delivering regional and local connectivity for the benefit of the local and regional economy and businesses, while giving more local control and participation in setting priorities for operation and management.
- Chideock Parish Council strongly supports the concept of a network of major roads to provide integration between the SRN and local / regional roads for the benefit of the local economy and businesses.
- The Parish Council welcomes this proposal for the opportunity it will bring to draw Highways England into closer practical strategic and operational working, if not partnership, with Local Highway Authorities, for the benefit of local communities in rural areas.

## Final comments

22. Any other comments?

- Chideock Parish Council welcomes and endorses secure five-year funding periods as the basis for a transparent strategic plan for managing the SRN for the long term 2020 – 2040.
- The Parish Council particularly endorses the creation of a NRF financed directly from VED for accountability and stability.
- The Parish Council welcomes and endorses the acknowledgement of the connection between the SRN and local roads, and the formal embodiment of their interdependence in the new category of MRN, especially the possibility of commitment of the RIS NRF to invest in the MRN.
- The Parish Council welcomes the possibility of de-trunking acknowledged in the report, particularly in the context of a new category of MRN roads and a possible funding stream, which will ensure that transfer of a road from SRN to MRN is now feasible in a way that was not possible in the 1990s.
- The Parish Council specifically welcomes the commitment to tackling roadside NO<sub>2</sub> pollution so that exceedances are brought within the legal limit in the shortest possible time (this is a particular problem in Chideock).
- As a small rural village (population circa 550) roughly halfway between Dorchester and Honiton on the western end of the A35 Trunk Road, Chideock has suffered from separation, noise, vibration and pollution for the past 2 decades without respite or prospects of effective solutions and welcomes all new measures for mitigating impacts on rural communities.
- In May 1999 Chideock Parish Council was instrumental in forming the A35 Communities Initiative, bringing together all the Town and Parish Councils on the A35 from Honiton to Dorchester. A highly respected report was produced in October 1999 describing in detail the problems and possible solutions for the A35 Honiton to Dorchester.



- Eighteen years later, many of the solutions are still to be actioned, although the A35 Communities Initiative Report formed a significant input into the Millennial A35 Route Management Strategy which guided priorities for management of the route for the first decade of the millennium.
- Chideock Parish Council welcomes the opportunity through the RIS process to re-engage with Highways England South West in the review and re-statement of the communities' problems on the A35 with a view to formulating a prioritised, funded plan for the RIS2 period 2020 – 2025.
- As included in responses to earlier questions, the Parish Council's priorities for the A35 (so long as it remains part of the SRN) are for a Low Emission Zone and for Average Speed Cameras to replace the two existing GATSO speed cameras at either end of the village.
- By way of background and supporting information, Chideock Parish Council includes the following extracts from Chideock Parish Council A35 Working Group briefing reports of September / October 2017: -

## **1. The Problems of the A35 in Chideock: -**

- a) Poor Air Quality from emissions and brake dust
- b) Noise and Vibration from vehicles, especially empty HGVs, going over ill-fitting manhole covers
- c) Community Separation arising from absence of footways in places
- d) Traffic volumes, Speed, and acceleration uphill
- e) Difficulties at junctions and entrances in joining or crossing the main traffic flows
- f) Narrowness and adverse slope of some existing footways.

## **2. Actions already implemented over the past 2 Decades: -**

### **2.1 Air Quality.**

- a) Declaration of an AQMA and production of an AQM Action Plan.  
Monitoring over the past decade has identified acceleration uphill westbound as the primary source of NO<sub>2</sub> pollution. The area under Air Quality Management has been reduced to remove the centre of the village east of the bridge, but it has been extended uphill westwards and further monitoring tubes installed. This area remains over the legal NO<sub>2</sub> limit.
- b) No action has been taken on measuring Brake Dust and no monitoring has been undertaken downhill eastbound towards the bridge.

### **2.2 Noise and Vibration.**

- a) Manhole covers have been reworked from time to time over the past 2 decades but have never been made level enough to prevent noise from empty HGVs. No major works have been undertaken on the walls of the chambers, and while repositioning the chambers and their covers away from wheel tracks has been requested on many occasions, the Utility Companies consider the expense prohibitive.
- b) Vibration of the solid foundations of older properties and to a lesser extent from cellars close to the road or from chambers under the manhole covers has not been monitored, and no mapping of the hot-spots has been undertaken.

### **2.3 Community Separation.**

- a) So far one Pedestrian Crossing has been installed by the Shop to allow signal-controlled crossing of the road. This has only partially succeeded since there are several disconnected and quite separate lengths of road where there is no pedestrian footway. There is the further difficulty in that the road is not wide enough at points to allow a footway to be constructed. In places, white edge lines have been painted, but the width is insufficient for safe walking. Further action on community separation is required. There have been persistent requests over several years for 2 -3 more pedestrian crossings.

### **2.4 Traffic volumes, Speed, and acceleration uphill.**

- a) No direct action has been taken on traffic volumes over the past 2 decades and volumes have increased in line with national and regional economic growth. Alternative routes have been considered but no direction signage has ever been installed despite requests to both Dorset County Council and Highways England over the past decade. While a bypass would remove all non-village traffic, there has been for more than the past 2 decades, a bitter division in the village over both the need for a bypass and its route. There has been no assessment of the economic impact of the loss of non-village local traffic on the shop, public houses and other village businesses.
- b) Traffic speeds have been controlled by the installation of 2 fixed cameras at either end of the village, plus a Vehicle Activated Sign for westbound traffic in the centre of the village to prevent "surfing" between the cameras. For a time, data on traffic speeds and volumes hour by hour was available from an induction loop monitor at the western end of Bilberry Close in the centre of the village. The data from this confirmed that there is no significant "surfing" through the centre of the

- village, and the data monitoring and publication has been discontinued.
- c) Speed limits have been reduced to the east of the village, but no action has been taken so far on speed limit harmonisation to the west of the village. No study has been undertaken to establish whether there is a link between higher speeds and greater acceleration uphill westbound out of the village, and the level of pollution as traffic proceeds uphill from the 30-mph limit.
  - d) Traffic volumes have increased over the past 2 decades, and road improvements have been made on some key sections and at key junctions along the route between Honiton and Dorchester. However, no assessment has ever been undertaken on the volume of traffic relative to the road's maximum carrying capacity. While the route overall may be carrying a relatively average volume for the type of rural A-road, the carrying capacity at key pinch points in the villages of Wilmington, Morecombelake, Chideock, Bridport East Road, and Winterbourne Abbas has not been measured.
  - e) While the latest South West Route Management Strategy Report describes the A35 as part of the strategic road access to the South West Peninsula, the previous RMS from the time of the Millennium described it as of only Regional and Local significance. Given the nature of the road, the significant drop-off of volumes east to west, and its limited carrying capacity, a re-assessment of the function of the route relative to its characteristics is overdue, but over the past 2 decades this has been largely ruled out by the existence of a private DBFO Contract with Connect Road Operators to maintain the road, funded by Shadow Tolls based on volume of traffic, with higher charges for larger, longer vehicles.
  - f) De-trunking was considered 2 decades ago but was not supported by Dorset County Council, although Devon County Council was willing to take on their part as a County Road. In the millennial RMS the A35 was considered to be primarily a Local and Regional Road, but the DBFO contract was new, so any cancellation would have attracted prohibitive cost penalties, and De-trunking at that time was not feasible. However, the contract expires in 2026 and there is a possibility that control might be returned to the County (or Unitary) authorities at that point. A de-trunked road would allow much more control at the local, even village, level over speed limits, vehicle restrictions, further traffic calming measures, and alternative routes, particularly if it was to become part of the proposed MRN.
  - g) While some limited assessment of the transfer of traffic to an upgraded A303 has been undertaken in the past decade or so, no recent data is available to Chideock Parish Council, and there have been no recent Origin / Destination Studies of A35 traffic, especially HGVs, which might identify type, mix and volume of long distance through traffic which could divert from the A35 to the A303. Neither has there been any information on the level of traffic within the local Dorset area using the A35 to access routes north from the coastal ports which, although lesser in volume and impact, might nevertheless reduce traffic through the pinch-point villages on the A35.

## **2.5 Difficulties at junctions and entrances in joining or crossing traffic flows.**

- a) While some work has been done on key junctions such as Miles Cross, no action has been taken over the past 2 decades on other junctions such as Quarr Lane or Eype Down Road, except to cut back vegetation periodically. In Chideock, no action has been taken on entrances, or the Duck Street and North Road junctions, although various schemes were proposed by the Parish Council and the community over the past 2 decades. Similarly, no action has yet been taken on the entrance to Bridleway 20 at Bullen's Lane, in the centre of the village, despite repeated requests for an improved visibility splay at a point where there is no footway.
- b) Insofar as the A35 serves as a Coastal Route for Tourist Traffic westbound, there have been no studies on the seasonal nature and flows of such traffic, or the needs of the many coastal Caravan Parks and holiday businesses, particularly between Bridport and Lyme Regis, or the specific difficulties at junctions and entrances.

## **2.6 Narrowness and adverse slope of existing footways.**

- a) No action has been taken over the past decade despite several requests. Even if a second pedestrian crossing is installed, the footways that currently exist are too narrow in places, and the adverse slope towards the road is a safety hazard both for people who are not so able, and for wheelchair users. It is not clear whether engineering standards for a de-trunked and hence County or MRN Road might allow a narrower vehicular carriageway to facilitate continuous, wider footways for pedestrians on both sides of the road all the way through the village.
- b) This is just one detailed instance demonstrating that sections of the A35 Trunk Road generally are below standard and not fit for purpose.

## **3. Action Options for The Future: -**

There are 3 levels of timeframe for action, implementation of solutions, and resolution of Problems of the

A35 in Chideock: -

### 3.1 Immediate or Overdue.

- a) Too many of the actions over the past decade, far less the past 2 decades, fall into this category, and continuous monitoring at each Parish Council meeting, and between meetings, already takes place. The action options point to a more robust, even aggressive, approach to delivery authorities, who have fobbed off Chideock Parish Council's requests and suggestions over the past 2 decades, with only limited success in dealing with the underlying problems. A Higher Priority is essential.
- b) In particular, the AQMA Action Plan needs to be updated, and each action set a final date for resolution of the particular aspect of the problem, with monthly monitoring at Parish Council meetings and a Quarterly Progress and Action meeting with West Dorset District Council / Highways England.
- c) The Low Emission Zone and Average Speed Cameras fall into this category, as does a second pedestrian crossing together with other separation issues.
- d) Harmonised speed limits to the West of Chideock all the way to Morcombelake also fall into this category, together with any extensions of the 30 mph limit westwards uphill from the present boundary to deal with the NO<sub>2</sub> levels above the legal limit.
- e) All immediate or overdue actions should be set for completion by 2020 at the latest, bearing in mind that in some cases actions have already been stretched out over one or even 2 decades.

### 3.2 Short Term for Implementation in RIS2 2020-2025.

- a) Both Short Term and Long-Term Action Options need to be set in the context of the Implications of the 17 August 2017 Parish Poll, from which a clear set of actions and timescales can evolve. The community need is for the evaluation of options and the adoption of a set of clear priorities which Chideock Parish Council can take to Highways England and the Delivery Authorities, to reach an agreed, funded Implementation Programme.
- b) The Aim is to have Highways England South West include Chideock Parish Council's Short-Term Action priorities in the RIS2 Initial Report Proposals for funding allocation and implementation in the 2020 – 2025 period.
- c) There are possibly only 2 major actions which will reduce traffic volumes, pollution, and nuisance on the A35 through Chideock, and they are a by-pass, or de-trunking the A35. Short term actions are required as a pre-requisite to determining any long-term options and actions which will remove or substantially mitigate the A35 problems. A Parish Poll held in August 2017 resulted in support for a bypass outside the village boundary and de-trunking.
- d) Before any position can be taken on a by-pass north of the Parish of Chideock, the Parish Council would need to know more about the long-term function of the A35 as one of the two access routes to the South West Peninsula. There are doubts about the fitness of the A35 to provide any more capacity than the current volume of traffic, and immediate discussions with Highways England are essential to ascertain Highways England's intentions in this regard for both RIS2 and RIS3.
- e) Thus, any A35 bypass anywhere between Bere Regis and Honiton needs to be set firmly in the context of its use and function through to 2030 and beyond as a major part of the SRN carrying through traffic into the South West Peninsula. Since upgrading the A303 is already a priority for RIS2, this may constitute a virtual "bypass" of the A35 for traffic accessing the South West Peninsula from London and the South East. It is not clear what capacity the M4 / M5 and A39 / A30 / A38 has to serve the Peninsula from both London / South East and Birmingham / Midlands, or what increases in capacity are anticipated in the RIS2 and RIS3 periods. Data on current and anticipated Traffic Flows across this network from Highways England is an essential prerequisite to planning the long-term future of the A35 relative to the A303.
- f) For more local and regional traffic originating within the South West, the problem for Chideock is traffic from the Poole – Portland Ports and businesses in the hinterland travelling to Exeter / Plymouth and beyond. For them, the alternative A37 / A30 / A303 to the southwest is not particularly cost effective, but the A37, A358 to the M5 northwards is feasible compared to continuing west on the A35 to pick up the M5 at Exeter. Any other south – north traffic out of Dorset is not relevant to the Chideock stretch of the A35, being primarily to the east of Dorchester. A series of Origin / Destination studies (Q 15) are essential.
- g) It is also unclear what intra-regional traffic moves between the Southampton area and the South West Peninsula using the M27 / A31 / A35 / A30 to access the M5 or the A38. It has been Chideock Parish Council's understanding for the past 2 decades that this traffic is divertible via the A303, and proposed A303 upgrades will facilitate this, so are strongly supported.
- h) De-trunking is a valid option after 2026 during the RIS2 period, so the question of a de-trunked A35 either Bere Regis – Honiton, or Dorchester – Honiton, needs to be addressed following the

RIS2 Initial Report. This would give local control over traffic from 2026 and might dovetail in neatly with A303 upgrades, so a major change in signage and route planning / Sat Nav apps is essential to support re-routing. There is some indication that, unlike the millennial proposal, this time full maintenance funding would be available to the local County / Unitary Highways Authorities for a de-trunked MRN road.

- i) De-trunking is a particularly valid Short-Term option from 2026 if the projections for traffic volumes on the A35 Dorchester – Honiton show signs of exceeding the capacity of the A35, especially in the village pinch-points west of Dorchester which effectively limit the capacity of the entire route.
- j) Origin and Destination data is an essential pre-requisite to inform even the short-term priorities, and funding should be made available immediately in the run-up to 2020, as well as funding for annual studies in the 2020 – 2025 RIS2 period to refine the long-term actions which may be included as priorities in RIS3 2025 – 2030.

### **3.3 Long Term for Implementation 2025 – 2030 in RIS3.**

- a) Any Bypass option is long term since the Highways England Strategy for the A35 as an access to the South West Peninsula from Bere Regis westward is unclear, both in terms of the capacity of the A35 through its village pinch-points, and the improvements in the capacity of the A303 during RIS2 2020 – 2025. A clear Highways England South West Policy / Strategy statement is essential before the Parish Council can take a position.
- b) The 17 August 2017 Parish Poll rules out a bypass through the Parish, so any northern route below the A303 is problematic, and not of primary concern to Chideock Parish Council.
- c) While the A356 Dorchester / Crewkerne / Chard / A30 to Exeter might be considered an alternative route to the A35 from the A37 junction at the west end of Dorchester, the communities on this route, like Chideock, have resisted all proposals for upgrades / bypasses through their parishes, so such proposals are problematic. Indeed, these communities have successfully argued for more than a decade that, as with the A35, capacity limitations through villages and towns rule out the possibility of any upgrade to the road or increase in traffic flows and volumes.
- d) It is not clear that Highways England regards the A35 as one of two primary access routes to the South West Peninsula, rather than a secondary inter-regional road, or even just an intra-region / local road. The Parish Council asks whether Highways England regard the A35 as a SECONDARY, back-up access for the A303 and the M4 / M5, and what, if any, significance Highways England might place on Southampton / Plymouth through traffic via the A35 rather than the A303. It is not clear what, if any, function the A35 west of Dorchester has as a northward Feeder road from the coastal ports in Dorset.
- e) If, and only if, Highways England regards the A35 as a primary access route with sufficient significance to merit upgrades, say in RIS3, on the scale and scope of the RIS2 improvements to the A303, will they be able to make a case for bypasses and other upgrades or improvements to the A35. In the past 2 decades, they have never made any case for such schemes, so the assumption, which now needs to be formally confirmed, must be that Highways England has no major plans, short term or long term, for upgrading the A35. The more relevant question is whether it is their intention to downgrade the A35, holding traffic volumes at broadly current levels, and consequently hand it over to County / Unitary Highway Authorities after 2026, when the Highways England contract with Connect Balfour Beatty ends.
- f) If, and only if, traffic volumes west of Dorchester increase in the period up to 2025 to such an extent that capacities through village pinch-points reach their limits, might there be a case for amenity bypasses to remove traffic through the villages. In this regard Chideock is not the only case, and at a current cost of £32 m - £40m per mile, such bypasses would not be justified if Highways England did not regard the road as a key access route to the South West Peninsula forming part of a long-term strategy.
- g) These issues need to be discussed at a high level with Highways England personnel involved in long-term planning and strategy for the SW Regional Trunk Road Network both prior to the implementation of the RIS2 Initial Report for the South West, and subsequently. Quarterly meetings, including the MP for West Dorset, are recommended. To some extent the initiative for any bypass proposals for any village west of Dorchester now passes from Chideock Parish Council to Sir Oliver Letwin MP and Highways England, and Chideock Parish Council remain as witness and persistent monitor of progress until a long term formal strategy emerges from Highways England / DfT.
- h) Over the past decade the long-term solution to reduction of pollution in Chideock has been to rely on national Government policy achieving a shift to less polluting diesel engines. However, this has proved to be a major error as diesel engines create higher levels of NO<sub>2</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub> pollution. So, for the next decade through to the RIS3 period, part of the long-term action could be to discourage diesel traffic and encourage hybrid or all electric vehicles. Chideock Parish Council



might at least set out its long-term expectation of Highways England and central Government in this regard, with local / regional targets for the RIS3 period, if not sooner.

- i) The introduction of an LEZ in the Immediate Actions for implementation by or before 2020 would in effect create a Charging Zone or Toll Road for HGVs registered as creating emissions exceeding EU ECO-5 levels. The suggested £50 charge should be sufficient to incentivise road haulage operators to divert to the A303, so the effect should be measurable during the RIS2 period 2020 – 2025 as the improvements to the A303 are delivered. Thus, provision should be made in RIS2 to monitor the extent of any transfer of traffic from the A35 to the A303.
- j) For the long term RIS3 2025-2030, Chideock Parish Council should expect that an LEZ will have been implemented and proved effective. However, HGVs are not necessarily the major source of NO<sub>2</sub> pollution, so the long-term action for 2025 – 2030 should be to introduce an ULEZ (Ultra Low Emissions Zone) covering cars and vans as well as HGVs to EU ECO-6 standards, which set even lower limits for noxious emissions. Chideock Parish Council might therefore support the continuation of EU pollution standards in the UK after Brexit, or UK standards which are equivalent. This might be easier to achieve on a de-trunked A35, and if the MRN has higher anti-pollution priorities than the SRN.
- k) In the 2025 – 2030 period the proportion of hybrid and all-electric cars might be expected to be significant in the total number of vehicles using the A35, with the consequent reduction if not elimination of pollution or at least NO<sub>2</sub> exceedances. Thus, the trends measured up to 2022 in the run-up to RIS3 will be one of the key performance indicators which will determine how much campaigning will be required to ensure RIS3 delivers an end to problems of the A35 in Chideock.
- l) Lastly, it might be observed that over the past 2 decades, Chideock Parish Council and the people of Chideock have tended to focus on solutions (speed cameras, speed limits, pedestrian crossing, pollution monitoring, repairs to man-hole covers, additional signage, and the like) rather than insisting that the delivery authorities eliminate the problems (increasing volumes of traffic, noise, vibration, pollution, separation, and safety). Going forward for the next decade the challenge to Highways England, Dorset County Council, West Dorset District Council, Defra, and the Department for Transport, is to eliminate the problems by devising, funding, and implementing whatever solutions will achieve this goal. Chideock Parish Council's task is simply to ensure they do.