

Minutes

A303 Stonehenge – Amesbury to Berwick Down

Title:	Scientific Committee		
Date:	05 October 2017	Time:	10:30 – 16:30
Location:	Holiday Inn, Solstice Park, Amesbury, Wiltshire SP4 7SQ		

Attendees:

Scientific Committee

Professor Sir Barry Cunliffe
Dr Mike Allen
Professor Oliver Craig
Professor Tim Darvill
Dr Andrew Fitzpatrick
Professor Vince Gaffney
Professor Nicky Milner
Professor Mike Parker Pearson
Mike Pitts
Dr Josh Pollard
Julian Richards
Professor Clive Ruggles
Colin Shell

HMAG

Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger (Wiltshire Council)
Clare King (Wiltshire Council)
Phil McMahon (Historic England)
Heather Sebire (English Heritage)
Ingrid Samuel (National Trust)

Secretariat

Andrew Clark (Highways England)
Leslie Smith (Highways England)

Presenters

Derek Parody (Highways England)
Andrew Holmes (AAJV)
Neil Macnab (AmW)
Andrew Manning (Wessex Archaeology) – pm session
Alistair Barclay (Wessex Archaeology) – pm session

Apologies

Nicola Snashall (National Trust)

Chair: Derek Parody/Sir Barry Cunliffe

Agenda Item	Action
Review and Discussion of Terms of Reference and Working Arrangements	
Terms of Reference <ul style="list-style-type: none">All attendees confirmed that that they did not have any contracted affiliation with any other organisation for the provision of advice relating to the Stonehenge WHS or the scheme being promoted by Highways England. It was requested that any such affiliations be made known to the committee if they occur.The committee agreed to record that membership of the committee does not imply any form of agreement to the A303 Stonehenge scheme proposed by Highways England.A discussion was held over the composition of the committee. Highways England explained that those asked to be on the committee were chosen to cover a wide variety of relevant specialisms based on advice received from a variety of heritage organisations.The committee had been constituted to represent individuals' views and not those of organisations or organisations that members may be part of.It was noted that HMAG has already been involved in providing advice to Highways England as part of their statutory consultees' role.Concerns were raised that HMAG would filter the committee's advice. HMAG confirmed that they would not filter the range of views expressed by the committee and that the committee's views would be made public through the publication of the minutes of any Scientific Committee meeting.It was agreed that the committee can ask for specific third party advice to	

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<p>ensure relevant expert advice can be incorporated into the committee's advice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject to some minor amendments, the Terms of Reference of the Scientific Committee were agreed. The revised Terms of Reference are attached to these minutes. • The committee discussed the creation of a dedicated website that would hold all the documentation relating to the committee and its workings. The information of the website would be made available to anyone wishing to access it. • Further consideration needs to be given to the handling of working documents v publically accessible documents. • MK-P agreed to look at options for the creation of the website. • A proposal that David Field should be invited to the Scientific Committee was accepted. Highways England will invite David onto the committee. • With respect to press releases, it was agreed that the committee should be consulted on any proposed releases by Highways England, with the chair having final 'sign off' on any press release. • The frequency of meetings was discussed. It was agreed that a programme of regular quarterly meetings should be set up with additional meetings arranged on specific topics as required. • Discussion was held on the meetings' quorate. It was agreed that a quorate would be reached with a minimum of 7 members of the committee attending, not including members of HMAG. • Consideration will be given to future meetings being held in suitable city centres with a train station for ease of access. 	<p>M P-K</p> <p>Highways England</p> <p>Highways England</p>
<p>Presentation by Highways England of;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The design development to date, including key constraints and likely principal asks of the committee. The scheme programme, process and constraints. 	
<p>Through the presentation Highways England explained that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The scheme needed to balance the four scheme requirements of transport, economic growth, cultural heritage, and environment and communities • The route had been modified from that taken to consultation to address issues raised as part of the consultation process • The line of the preferred route had been chosen to minimise direct impact on buried archaeology • The A303 must remain open throughout the construction phase as there are no suitable diversion routes • Highways England will be seeking advice from the committee on the portals' design and road infrastructure through the WHS and how best to mitigate the impact on the OUV of the WHS. • Highways England will present visualisation of the options for consideration by the committee. • The scheme is working to a programme that has statutory consultation commencing in February 2018 with the DCO submission in September 2018. 	<p>Highways England</p>
<p>Q&A on presentation</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The committee asked whether the western portal could be located outside of the WHS. Highways England explained that due to topographical constraints (the portal needs to exit in a hill face); the nearest alternative portal location would be over 500m to the west of the existing Longbarrow roundabout. • This would add another 2km to the length of the tunnel and add over £600m to the cost of the scheme. This would make the scheme unaffordable and would reduce the value for money assessment (Benefits to Cost Ratio) of the scheme below the threshold required for it to progress. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The committee expressed the view that the benefits to the WHS of a longer tunnel would outweigh the additional construction costs due to the unique setting of the WHS. It was a once in a lifetime opportunity that warranted the additional expenditure and that the opportunity should exist to present this argument to the government. • In discussion it was noted that by promoting a tunnel solution, the government is already committing to spend over £1bn on heritage improvements to the WHS above the do minimum solution of an at-grade dual carriageway through the WHS. • A discussion was had regarding the setting of the barrows in the vicinity of the A360 junction. It was agreed that diverting the A360 to the west of the existing junction will improve the setting of these barrows. • Highways England introduced the concept of green bridges to provide connectivity across the new A303. The committee recommended that a suitable location for one of these bridges would be at the Longbarrow Junction along the line of the existing A360. • The committee asked whether the width of the bridges and their frequency could be extended to provide more coverage of the new A303 through the WHS. • Highways England explained that there are limits on the width of the bridge before it is considered a tunnel. At the meeting this length was given as 200m, subject to further confirmation. <i>Post Meeting Note – “A road tunnel is a subsurface highway structure enclosed for a length of 150m, or more” - ref: DMRB, Vol 2, Section 2, Part 9, BD78/99, clause 1.2.</i> • A discussion took place on whether the road through the WHS at the western end should be in cut to hide the traffic from critical views or at existing ground level, and whether if in cut the cut slopes should be formed of soft green slopes or engineered vertical walls. • Having the new road at existing ground level would allow part of the existing A303 to be used as the eastbound carriageway in the final road layout. This would minimise the amount of new construction within the WHS. • The committee was of the view that having traffic visible would not outweigh the benefit of re-use of the existing carriageway and would have a greater adverse impact on the OUV. • Having the road raised above existing ground level such that the existing archaeology is protected below the new road construction was also not considered a suitable option for similar reasons. • Minimising the footprint of the road within the WHS was a key requirement. • The committee therefore ruled out the use of soft cut slopes through the WHS as these would more than double the width of the cut, and advised that the cut should be formed with vertical walls. • To soften the visual impact at the top of the walls, a short height of soft slope would be desirable. • Highways England will present the visual impact of the scheme in cut through the WHS with the incorporation of green bridges where the bridges provide beneficial mitigation to any adverse impacts and seek the committee’s further views at a future meeting. 	<p>Highways England</p>
<p>Presentation on archaeological work done to date</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andrew Holmes presented the extent of the geophysical work (Gradiometer and targeted Ground Penetrating Radar) undertaken through the Options Phase of the scheme leading to the announcement of the Preferred Route. • Andrew Manning then presented the results of the trial trenching field evaluation. • Copies of the available Geophysical and Evaluation reports were handed over to the members of the committee. 	

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Q&A on presentation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The committee challenged the amount of top soil sampling that had taken place during the trial trenching and there was a general view that the percentage sampling should have been higher.• It was agreed that the Evaluation Strategy would need to include an agreed top soils sampling standard for future work.	
Outline discussion of Archaeology Principles and Strategy going forwards	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A draft of the proposed Archaeological Evaluation Strategy is to be issued in the next few weeks for review and comment by the committee.• It was agreed that any soil disturbance to any areas in the WHS will be subject to appropriate archaeological investigation.• Following earlier discussions it was agreed that 4% soil sampling should be the minimum.• Committee members with specialist views and experience of soil sampling were asked to forward their ideas to M P-K• The committee would also like other testing methods such as Geochemical, Resistivity and Electro Magnetic techniques to be considered within the strategy.• Walkover surveys and hill wash methods (rain or artificial wash) were advised.• There was agreement that all reports on archaeological investigations undertaken are to be prepared in line with appropriate publication standards within three years of completion of the excavation works.	Various
AOB	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Phil McMahon raised the need for immediate work on the Wilsford G1 barrow and that the evaluation strategy for this work will be circulated to the committee for comment in the near future.• Phil McMahon offered a full landscape tour to supplement the shorter tour that had been organised for the day. A selection of dates will be provided.	Phil McMahon
Tour of the site	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Following the meeting a number of the committee members were taken on a tour of the site to view the landscape from various critical viewpoints and to begin to get a better understanding of where the proposed new road will sit within the Stonehenge landscape.	