



Department
for Transport

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Dear Sir or Madam,

PLANNING ACT 2008

REVOCATION OF THE A303 AMESBURY TO BERWICK DOWN DEVELOPMENT CONSENT ORDER 2023

1. I am directed by the Secretary of State for Transport (“the Secretary of State”) to say that consideration has been given to the proposed revocation of the A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down Development Consent Order 2023 (“the DCO”).
2. The DCO granted consent on 14 July 2023 to National Highways Limited to undertake works for the construction of a new two-lane dual carriage way for the A303 between Amesbury and Berwick Down in Wiltshire (“the Proposed Development”). The key elements of the Proposed Development are:
 - a northern bypass of Winterbourne Stoke with a viaduct over the River Till valley;
 - a new junction between the A303 and A360 to the west of, and outside, the Stonehenge World Heritage Site (“WHS”), replacing the existing Longbarrow roundabout;
 - a tunnel approximately 2 miles (3.3km) in length past the Stonehenge stones; and
 - a new junction between the A303 and A345 at the existing Countess roundabout.
3. On 22 October 2025 the Secretary of State gave notice of and publicised her intention to make an order to revoke the DCO in accordance with regulations 55 and 56 of the Infrastructure Planning (Changes to, and Revocation of, Development Consent Orders) Regulations 2011 (as amended) (“the 2011 Regulations”). The proposed Order does not involve Environmental Impact Assessment development (within the meaning given by regulation 2(1) of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017).
4. The proposed revocation is made under section 153 of, and paragraph 3(1) and (7)(b) of Schedule 6 to the Planning Act 2008. This letter is the statement of reasons

for the Secretary of State's decision in accordance with regulation 58 of the 2011 Regulations. In accordance with regulation 58(3) the Secretary of State is required to publish the statement in such manner as she thinks appropriate. This statement will be published on the DfT website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/proposed-revocation-of-the-a303-amesbury-to-berwick-down-development-consent-order-2023> .

Summary of the Secretary of State's decision

5. The Secretary of State has decided under section 153 of, and paragraph 3(1) and (7)(b) of Schedule 6 to, the Planning Act 2008 to make an order revoking the DCO.

Consultation

6. The Secretary of State notified interested parties of the proposed revocation of the DCO on 22 October 2025. The deadline for receipt of any representations of the proposed revocation was 21 November 2025.
7. The Secretary of State has considered the representations received in response to the notice and does not consider that any further information needs to be obtained.

Consultation responses

8. There were 236 responses to the notice issued by the Secretary of State, 181 supported the revocation, 49 objected to it and 6 were neutral.
9. One of the objectors was Danny Kruger MP for East Wiltshire, who wrote to the Secretary of State on behalf of his constituents to oppose the revocation of the DCO, stating it would worsen ongoing traffic and safety problems in villages around Stonehenge caused by rat-running and traffic diverting from the A303, stating local roads are not designed for high traffic volumes, leading to delays and safety risks for residents. Mr Kruger referred to a number of locally approved schemes that relied on the delivery of the A303 that may not be able to go ahead if the DCO is revoked. Finally, he mentioned that revocation of the order would waste public expenditure and require future schemes to restart the consenting process at additional cost.
10. Other points of objection to revocation included;
 - The impact on congestion, safety and communities including;
 - without the DCO the existing traffic congestion will continue, with severe delays on the A303, especially in summer/holiday periods, with long-standing congestion problems dating back decades.
 - The DCO addresses rat running through Shrewton, Larkhill and other villages when traffic on the A303 is slow or closed due to serious road incidents running through Shrewton, Larkhill and other villages
 - The DCO improves pedestrian safety and outdated village roads unable to cope with diverted traffic.

- existing issues arising from how the road is currently used will persist in the absence of the DCO, particularly in relation to local air quality, noise levels, and disruption to the community.
 - Impacts on the World Heritage Site including;
 - the DCO improves the landscape, restored tranquillity, and connected rights of way.
 - that United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) previously accepted that the amended scheme would not harm the site.
 - Economic importance including;
 - the A303 is considered a major strategic route to the South West, congestion undermines productivity, tourism, business confidence and investment which the DCO addresses.
 - connectivity from the DCO would deliver billions in gross value added and thousands of jobs, and the revocation harms the region's long-term economic prospects.
 - the withdrawal of the scheme is seen as a waste of significant public money. It was suggested that £170m+ has already been spent on planning, archaeological work, and scheme preparation, the proposed revocation means starting from scratch in future projects. Additionally, there was criticism that the proposed revocation wastes “years of work, investment, and consultation”. Concern and frustration were raised that individuals, charities, and local authorities invested substantial time and resources into the DCO application.
11. Those in support of the revocation raised the following:
- relief that the proposed revocation ends uncertainty.
 - support that revocation protects the Stonehenge World Heritage Site addressing concerns that the scheme would have caused irreversible harm to Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site.
 - the DCO is considered to have impacts on the environment, climate and carbon emission including emissions from construction and induced traffic and seen as inconsistent with climate goals and net zero commitments.
 - many argue funds should be redirected to rail improvements or cheaper, less intrusive road options.

Consideration

12. Following the Government's announcement on the 29 July 2024, the A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down scheme has been cancelled due to insufficient funding being available to proceed with the project.
13. If the DCO for the A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down is not revoked it will remain in place until 4 August 2028 when it will expire if no development has taken place. However, in that time the land would continue to be blighted and would be affected by the existence of the DCO and the DCO's accompanying powers of compulsory

purchase that place uncertainty on affected landowners. Affected landowners might therefore be able to apply for their blighted land to be purchased at full unblighted market value creating a significant financial commitment for National Highways.

The Secretary of State's overall conclusion and decision

14. The Secretary of State has considered the responses received during the consultation on the proposed revocation of the DCO. Whilst the majority of the representations supported the revocation, the Secretary of State has also taken into account the concerns raised by objectors. However, the withdrawal of funding means that the scheme cannot proceed at this time, as previously stated in paragraph 9. Whilst it is noted that some interested parties consider that the DCO should be retained, in the event government policy changes, the DCO and its associated compulsory purchase powers in these circumstances would risk continued land blight, create unnecessary uncertainty for affected landowners, and expose National Highways to potential significant financial liability. In light of these factors, the Secretary of State has determined that exceptional circumstances exist which make it appropriate to exercise the power to revoke the DCO. The Secretary of State acknowledges Amesbury Town Council and Wiltshire Council's and other interested parties' representations in which they requested clarification regarding the 'exceptional circumstances' referenced in the notice proposing the revocation of the DCO.
15. The Secretary of State has concluded that the 'exceptional circumstances' justifying revocation of the DCO arise from four principal considerations as follows;
 - I. there has been a substantial change in the scheme's deliverability. In particular, the absence of secured funding, and the lack of a realistic prospect of such funding being put in place, means that the project is no longer capable of being implemented within any reasonable timescale. The DCO therefore no longer serves a practical or effective purpose.
 - II. national and regional transport priorities have evolved since the DCO was made, and the scheme no longer aligns with current strategic policy objectives or investment priorities. In this context, the continued safeguarding of the scheme would not reflect the present policy framework or the most effective use of land and resources.
 - III. revocation would remove the planning blight that continues to affect the land in question. The ongoing existence of the DCO has constrained the ability of landowners and local planning authorities to bring forward alternative proposals, resulting in prolonged uncertainty and limiting the beneficial use of the land.
 - IV. revoking the DCO would support improved planning outcomes by releasing land previously safeguarded for the scheme, thereby enabling alternative infrastructure or development proposals to come forward that better reflect current needs, are capable of delivery, and make a more effective contribution to meeting local growth objectives in accordance with the development plan.

16. The Secretary of State's decision to revoke the DCO is in line with the Government's decision made on 29 July 2024 not to proceed with this scheme. Removing the associated legal and planning constraints allows land previously safeguarded for the scheme to be made available for alternative uses, while acknowledging that some areas will remain in their current condition. This greater flexibility will help unlock opportunities for local growth and infrastructure investment that might otherwise have been delayed or restricted.
17. For all the reasons set out in this letter, the Secretary of State has decided to revoke the DCO.

General considerations

Equality Act 2010

18. The Equality Act 2010 includes a public-sector equality duty. This requires a public authority, in the exercise of its functions, to have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (e.g. age; sexual orientation; sex; gender reassignment; disability; marriage and civil partnerships; pregnancy and maternity; religion and belief; and race) and persons who do not share it; and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
19. The Secretary of State has had due regard to the need to achieve the statutory objectives referred to in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and is satisfied that there is no evidence that approving the revocation will adversely affect the achievement of those objectives.

Human Rights Act 1998

20. The Secretary of State has considered the potential infringement of human rights in relation to the European Convention on Human Rights by the proposed revocation. The Secretary of State considers that the revocation of the DCO would not contravene any human rights as enacted into UK law by the Human Rights Act 1998.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

21. In making a decision the Secretary of State has had regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing biodiversity and, in particular, to the United Nations Environmental Programme Convention on Biological Diversity of 1992 in accordance with the duty in section 40(1) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 as amended by section 102 of the Environment Act 2021. The Secretary of State notes that there will be no new environmental effects as a result of the revocation of the DCO, and as such considers that no further action regarding the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity is required.

Challenge to the decision

22. The circumstances in which the Secretary of State's decision may be challenged are set out in the note at the Annex to this letter.

Yours faithfully,

Natasha Kopala

Head of Planning Infrastructure Planning Unit

LEGAL CHALLENGES RELATING TO DECISIONS MAKING CHANGES TO DEVELOPMENT CONSENT ORDERS

Under section 118 of the Planning Act 2008, a decision under Section 153 of, and paragraph 3(1) and (7)(b) of Schedule 6 to the Planning Act 2008 to revoke an Order granting development consent, can be challenged only by means of a claim for judicial review. A claim for judicial review must be made to the High Court during the period of 6 weeks beginning with the day after the day on which the Order making the change is published. The A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down Development Consent (Revocation) Order 2026 is being published on the DFT GOV.UK webpages at the following address:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/proposed-revocation-of-the-a303-amesbury-to-berwick-down-development-consent-order-2023>

These notes are provided for guidance only. A person who thinks they may have grounds for challenging the decision to make the Order referred to in this letter is advised to seek legal advice before taking any action. If you require advice on the process for making any challenge you should contact the Administrative Court Office at the Royal Courts of Justice, Strand, London, WC2A 2LL (020 7947 6655).