

The Rt Hon Dr Andrew Murrison MP  
House of Commons  
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Dear The Rt Hon Dr Andrew Murrison MP

### **RIS3 Pipeline: A303 Phase 2 upgrade**

In March 2020 the Government published its second [Road Investment Strategy \(RIS2\)](#), which covers investment in and management of the strategic road network (SRN) from April 2020 to March 2025.

In RIS2 the Government reaffirmed its commitment to a high-quality connection to the south-west, including the delivery of the A303 Stonehenge (Amesbury to Berwick Down), A303 Sparkford to Ilchester and A358 Taunton to Southfields schemes. I am pleased to say that construction on the Sparkford to Ilchester scheme is already underway.

RIS2 also identified a pipeline of 32 schemes for initial development during the second Road Period (2020-2025) so that they could be considered for construction in a future RIS. One of the RIS3 Pipeline schemes named in RIS2 is the 'A303 Phase 2 upgrade'. RIS3 Pipeline schemes are not committed for delivery, but initial development of the schemes in the current Road Period will help to inform the Government's investment decisions for RIS3 (2025-2030) and beyond.

I am writing to let you know that the scope of the A303 Phase 2 upgrade scheme identified for initial development as part of the RIS3 Pipeline will be South Petherton to Southfields.

Figure 1 below shows the location of South Petherton to Southfields relative to the currently committed schemes on the A303/A358 corridor and the remaining potential future improvements along the route.

The South Petherton to Southfields scheme presents opportunities to address safety concerns along this section of the route, enhance the resilience of the SRN to the south-west and is complimentary to the adjacent A358 Taunton to Southfields project.



**Figure 1. Scheme location on the A303/A358 corridor**

Whilst this will be good news for many of our customers and stakeholders, I recognise that for others the section between Wylde and Mere may have been the preference for this initial development activity.

Upgrading the A303/A358 corridor is a significant undertaking, requiring the adoption of a sequential approach which minimises impacts on users of the route and is proportionate to funding available at a national level. Preparation for subsequent corridor improvements will need to await future Road Periods.

Initial development of the South Petherton to Southfields scheme is expected to start in Spring 2022 and will follow the same approach as the other schemes in the RIS3 Pipeline, all of which remain uncommitted at this time.

Ministers are expected to take a view on the progress of the RIS3 Pipeline schemes following completion of the initial development work. For South Petherton to Southfields this is anticipated to be in 2023-2024.

A decision to progress the South Petherton to Southfields scheme to construction in a future RIS period will be considered through the RIS3 development process. In addition to considering the viability of the scheme in value for money terms, its alignment to emerging 'themes' for RIS3 will be assessed (such as levelling up and decarbonisation), as well as its contribution to RIS3 strategic outcomes set out in the Department for Transport's (DfT's) RIS3 approach document, [Planning Ahead](#).

Could I also take this opportunity to remind you that the engagement period for interested parties to help inform our emerging route strategies, which will assess the current performance and future pressures and opportunities on the SRN, has been extended until the end of December. More information on route strategies can be found in our approach document [Vision for route strategies: Planning for the future of our roads](#).

This allows all interested parties to provide feedback on how our strategic roads should be developed. If you wish to submit further information or evidence you can email us at [routestrategies@highwaysengland.co.uk](mailto:routestrategies@highwaysengland.co.uk) before the end of December, whilst the [online feedback tool](#) will also remain open until this date.

The evidence identified through the route strategies process will be vital for the development of RIS3 and beyond, allowing informed decisions to be made on recommendations for potential future scheme options across the whole of our network.

Any queries relating to the A303 Phase 2 upgrade scheme should be directed to Wayne George, National Highways Head of Scheme Planning and Sponsorship at [Wayne.George@highwaysengland.co.uk](mailto:Wayne.George@highwaysengland.co.uk).

Yours sincerely



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