

# Press release: Heritage experts welcomed to Stonehenge World Heritage Site

Highways England has today (5 March 2018) welcomed international heritage experts to show their updated plans to build a road tunnel near Stonehenge developed to minimise the impact on the World Heritage Site.

A delegation from the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) are on a three-day fact-finding mission to see how the designs of the proposed 1.9-mile long road tunnel will bring together the World Heritage Site landscape currently split by the A303 between Amesbury and Berwick Down.

Derek Parody, Highways England Project Director, said:

As well as removing the traffic bottleneck at Stonehenge and addressing the rat-running issue through villages, our proposed scheme will remove the sight and sound of traffic from the iconic monument and reduce intrusion in the wider world heritage site.

We've been working closely with heritage groups to best develop the route to minimise the impact on Stonehenge and the surrounding landscape.

These groups have been key, along with environmental, archaeological and geophysical surveys, to our building our knowledge and understanding of this unique landscape and helped us develop the design of our preferred route.

Since the tunnel route plan was announced in September, Highways England has continued to work with heritage groups including the National Trust, Historic England, English Heritage, and experts in the field, including the Stonehenge Scientific Committee – a body of leading independent archaeologists – to ensure a new route is built sensitively to the World Heritage Site.

The route was carefully chosen to avoid monuments and barrow groups, and Highways England's modified plans also included moving the position of one of the entrances to the tunnel to avoid conflicting with the Winter Solstice alignment.

A public consultation is being held until 6 April and outlines for the first time initial designs for the tunnel.

It will show how the £1.6bn scheme will restore the tranquil environment and setting of the Stonehenge monument and surrounding landscape by removing the sight and sound of the busy road.

This major investment will support economic growth and tourism in an area where congestion and slow journeys have long had a negative impact on the region's economy.

The scheme is part of a £15 billion road investment programme. The Government is committed to upgrading all remaining single carriageway sections of the A303/A358 between the M3 and M5 to dual carriageway standard, starting with three schemes: the A303 at Stonehenge, the A303 between Sparkford and Ilchester; and the A358 between the M5 Taunton and the Southfields Roundabout on the A303.

In the meantime, anyone wanting further information on the scheme and the current consultation can visit the [scheme website](#).

## **General enquiries**

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

## **Media enquiries**

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.