

Press release: Upgrades to the A31 at Ringwood backed

Proposals for a multi-million pound upgrade to improve journeys for the 77,000 drivers who use the A31 at Ringwood in Hampshire each day have won backing in a public consultation, Highways England announced today (Friday 17 November).

91% of people who responded to the non-statutory consultation backed the need for the improvements, which will widen the A31 between the Ringwood and Verwood junctions, increase capacity at Ringwood junction and bring it in line with current safety standards by directing all local traffic via the junction instead of turning directly on to the dual carriageway. Facilities for cyclists and pedestrians will also be improved.

Today's announcement paves the way for work on the upgrade to start in the 2020/21 financial year, subject to statutory processes.

Highways England Project Manager Jens Reinke said:

This section of the A31 is used to make more than 77,000 journeys every day, and we've developed these plans to make real improvements to journeys.

I would like to thank everyone who took part in the consultation. It's great to see that there is such strong backing for improvements to this heavily congested section of the A31 at Ringwood. These plans will lead to the road being safer and supporting access for people getting to Ringwood town centre not only in the car but also on foot or by bike.

We are aware of people's concerns about the closure of the West Street junction to the A31 and have listened to feedback. Around 76% of respondents agreed with the proposal to close the junction for safety reasons, with around 14% preferring for it to stay open. We will now continue to look at the design of the West Street closure into next phase of the project.

The plans include:

- increasing the westbound carriageway of the A31 from two lanes to three between the Ringwood and Verwood junctions
- replacement of the two bridges over the River Avon and Bickerley Millstream to accommodate the westbound third lane
- closing the junction with West Street and the A31 to motorised vehicles
- closing one of the Fish Inn pub's entry/exit points on the A31
- improvements to the existing cycle and footpaths along the A31

A public consultation on the option was held from 23 June to 4 August 2017. Nearly 500 responses were received during this consultation. Information events were held at Ringwood Town Council for the public and stakeholders including local authorities, landowners and businesses, so people could look at the plans and speak to members of the project team.

91% of people who responded to the consultation questionnaire said they agree improvements are needed at Ringwood. 91% also said they are concerned about safety on the A31, with the same number also concerned about congestion or delays along this stretch. 75% of respondents understand the justification for options 2 and 3 being rejected.

A copy of the consultation report and announcement flyer can be found on the [Highways England website](#), where anyone interested in the scheme can also sign up to receive updates.

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.