

## Public Interest Test

### EIR2024/01040

The National Highways Annual report and accounts 2024 (For the financial year ended 31 March 2024) states that the Full Business Case for the A303 Stonehenge (Amesbury to Berwick Down) was approved by the National Highways Investment Committee in 2024. Please supply me with the Full Business Case as approved.

### Environmental Information Regulations 2004 exception

Regulation 12(4)(d) - Material in the course of completion, unfinished documents, and incomplete data

#### *Factors supporting disclosure*

There is a clear public interest in:

Providing accurate information about the scheme in order to inform international public debate.

The strategic, economic, financial, commercial, and management dimensions of the scheme.

The impact the scheme would have had on the UK economy, sustainability and the environment, the local landscape, cultural heritage and the community.

National Highways evidencing and being accountable for the way in which public money has been used to progress the scheme, the decisions made at each stage of the scheme, and the reasons for those decisions.

National Highways evidencing the criteria and processes used to assess the options considered during the scheme.

#### *Factors supporting non-disclosure*

It is not in the public interest for National Highways to disclose the requested information because:

The draft Full Business Case (FBC) referenced in the National Highways Annual report and accounts 2024 (for the financial year ended 31 March 2024) is at this time material in the course of completion and therefore an unfinished document.

Although the scheme was cancelled on 29 July 2024, the outcome of the legal challenge against the Secretary of State's decision to grant the Development Consent Order is not yet known.

When the legal process is complete and a decision has been made, the financial, commercial and management dimensions of the draft FBC could change.

The draft FBC was conditionally approved by the Department for Transport on 2 October 2023 subject to the conclusion of the legal proceedings being in favour of the DCO.

The draft FBC was not submitted to HM Treasury. HM Treasury approval will not now be sought because the scheme has been cancelled.

On completion of the legal proceedings the draft FBC will be updated. The completed draft FBC will then be available on request. We expect this to be approximately one month after we receive the legal decision.

If the draft FBC was to be released at this stage it would present a misleading and incomplete picture of the scheme, and the commercial and DCO positions. This would result in uninformed public discussion and debate.

Responding to public reaction would represent a significant and unnecessary diversion of public resources and hinder National Highways from completing the FBC.

**Conclusion:**

It is not in the public interest to release this information. There are compelling arguments for withholding the information which outweigh the arguments supporting its release.

**Date of PIT:** 3 October 2024