

# A350 Melksham Bypass

Second Public Consultation

23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021 – 8<sup>th</sup> August 2021



June 2021

**Wiltshire Council**

# Background

- The importance of the A350 to the local economy has long been recognised by Wiltshire Council
- Primary north-south route between M4 & Dorset Coast
- One of busiest routes in Wiltshire connecting principle settlements
- Sections of the A350 are subject to high traffic volumes, congestion and delays
- Funding from DfT to prepare Outline Business Case (OBC)

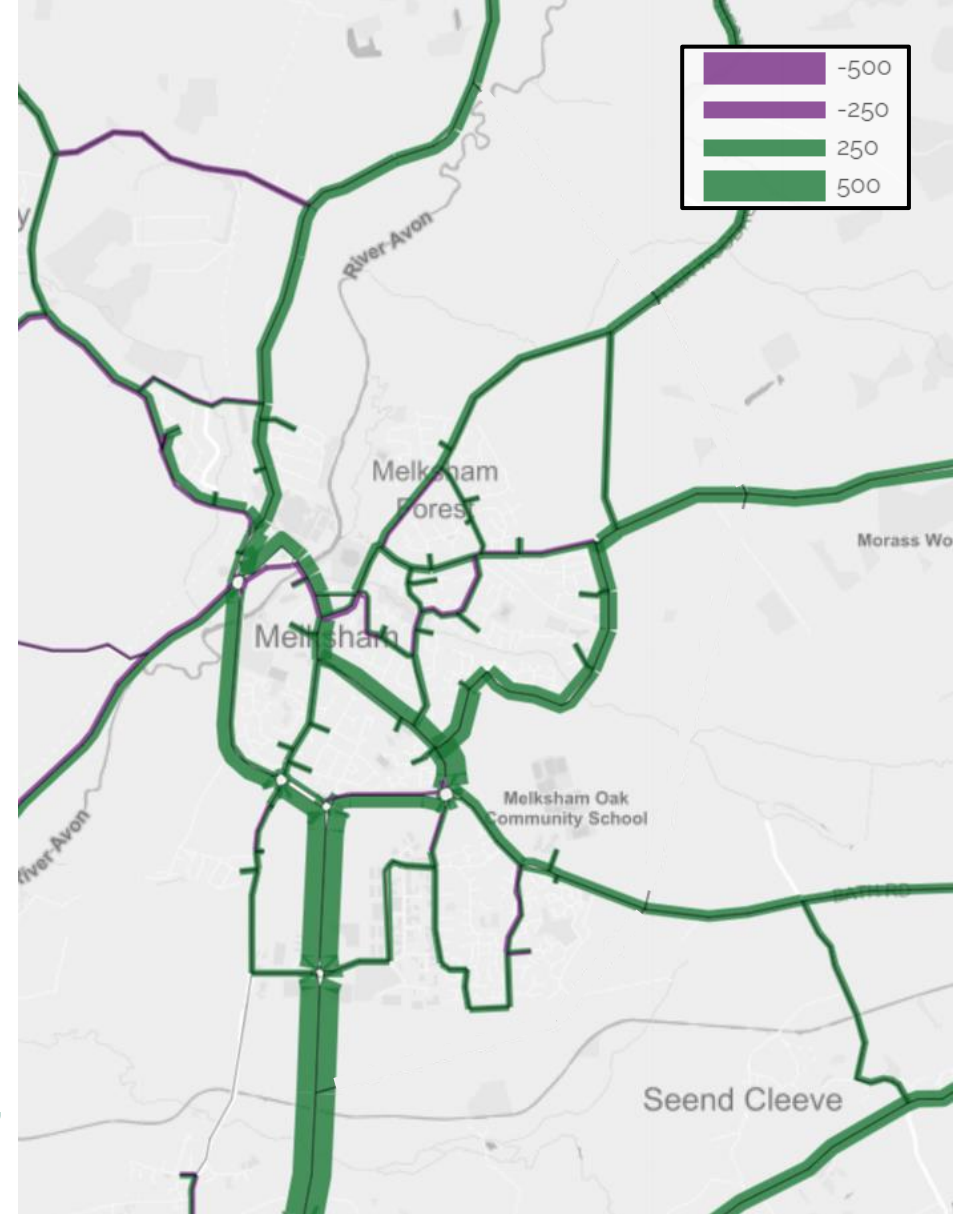
The A350 between the M4 and south coast



# Existing A350 - issues

- Slow moving traffic / variable traffic conditions
- North – south through traffic delays
- Local traffic routing
- Road safety
- Severance
- Noise & air quality
- Future traffic growth

Forecast change in traffic flows,  
2018 to 2036 (AM)

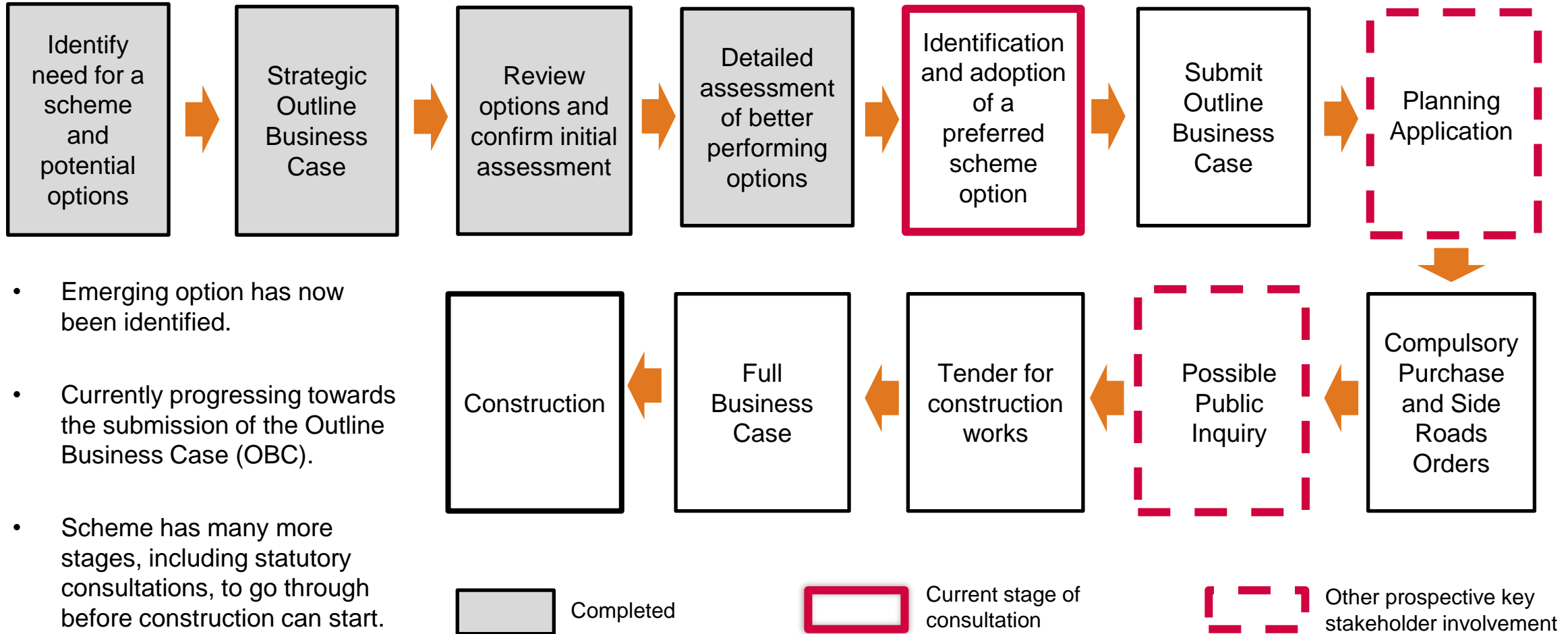


# Primary transport objectives

What are we trying to achieve?

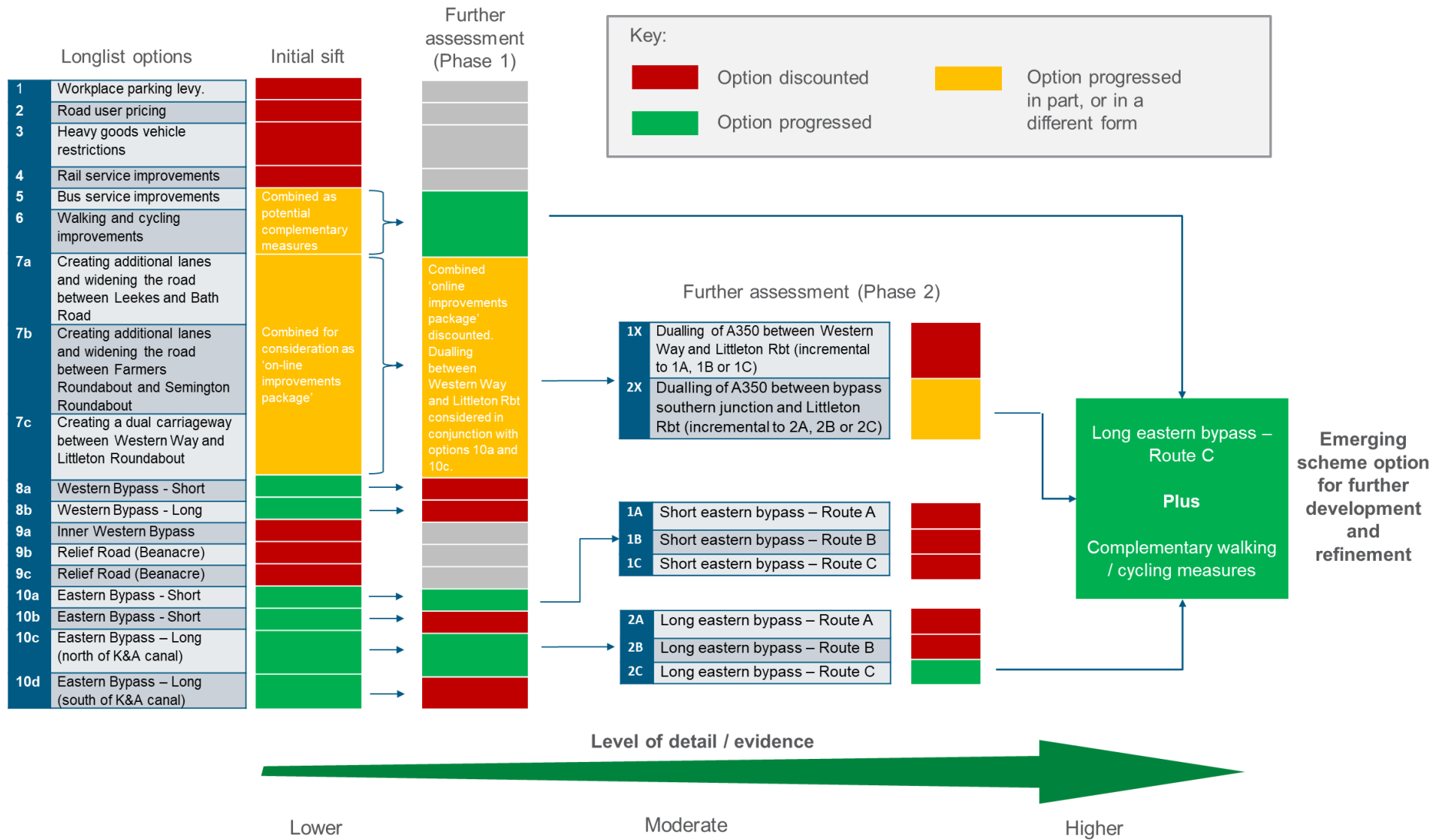
- Reduced journey times and improved reliability north - south along A350
- Reduced journey times and improved reliability east – west through Melksham
- Provide enhanced opportunities for walking & cycling
- Safety – reduce personal injury rates and severity
- Reduce the severance effect of the existing A350 route

# Scheme preparation process





# Option sifting and assessment process



# About this second consultation

The scheme is now progressing towards the submission of the Outline Business Case (OBC).

The aims of this non-statutory consultation are to:

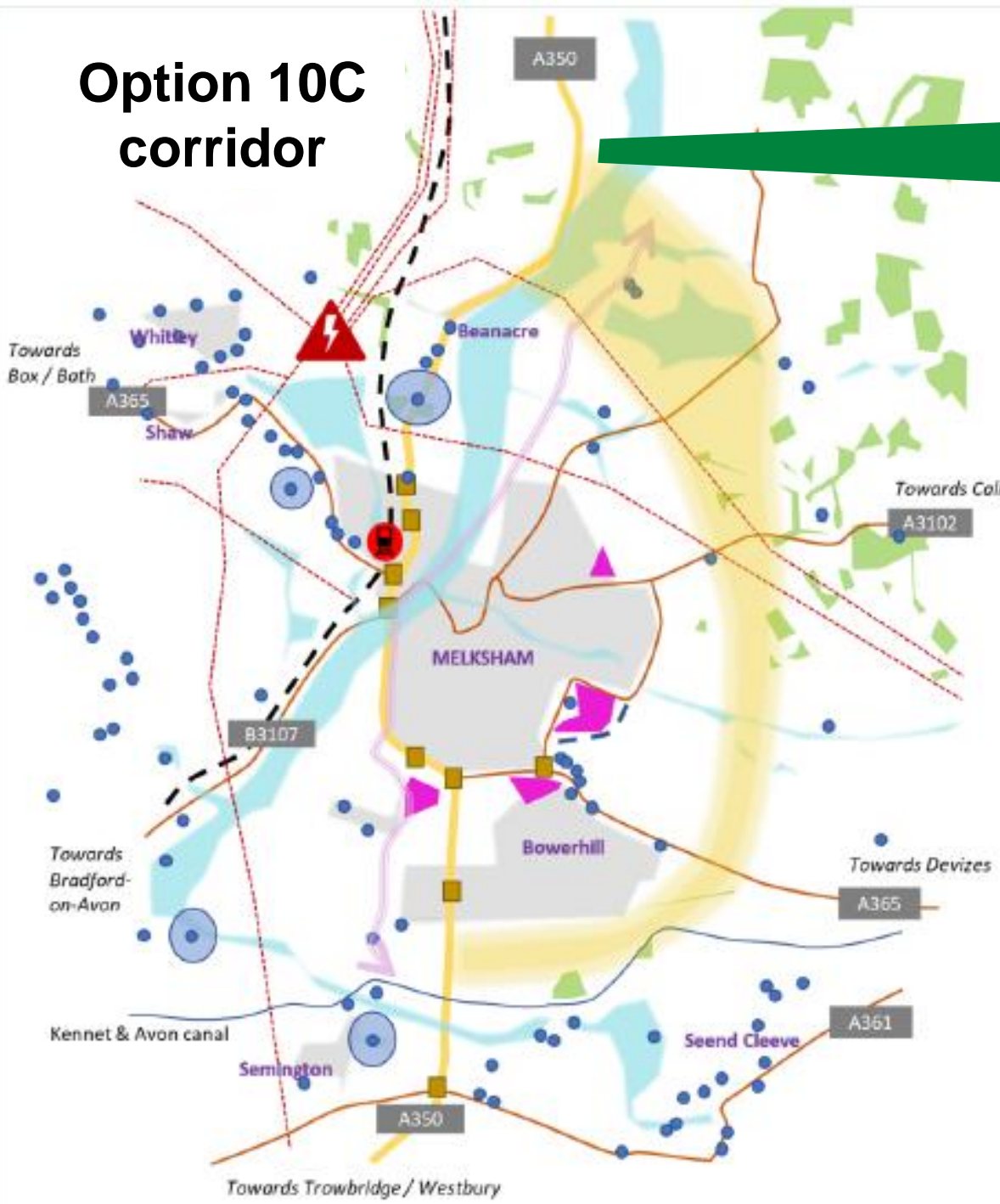
- Engage with stakeholders affected by or interested in the scheme
- Engage with potentially affected landowners
- Encourage involvement from stakeholders and build strong open relationships
- Raise awareness of the scheme and understanding for the need to improve the A350
- Inform about the single emerging option identified
- Understand stakeholder concerns, issues and suggestions
- Receive feedback on the single emerging option to allow us to develop the scheme further
- Prepare for the statutory consultation phases



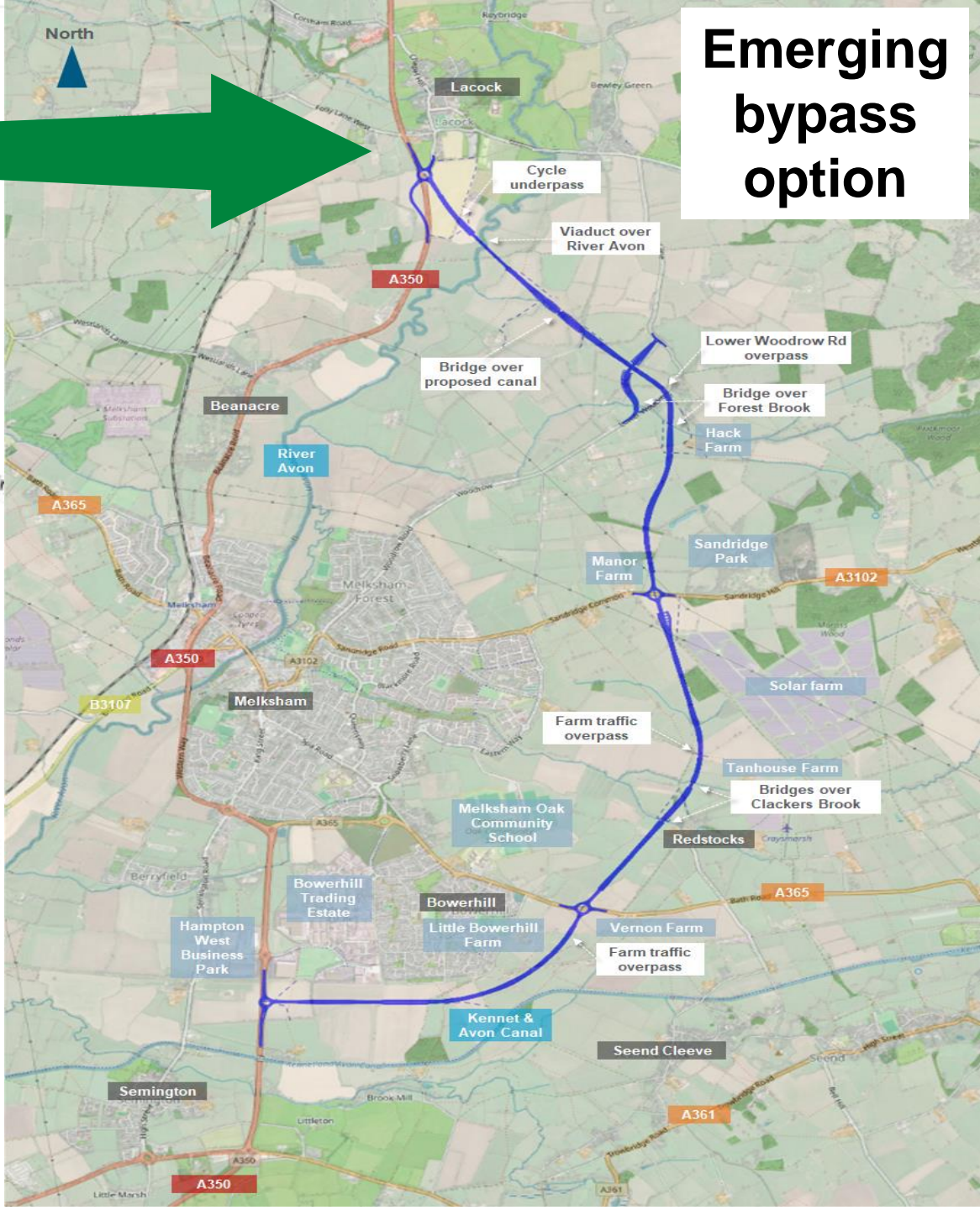


Emerging bypass option

Option 10C corridor

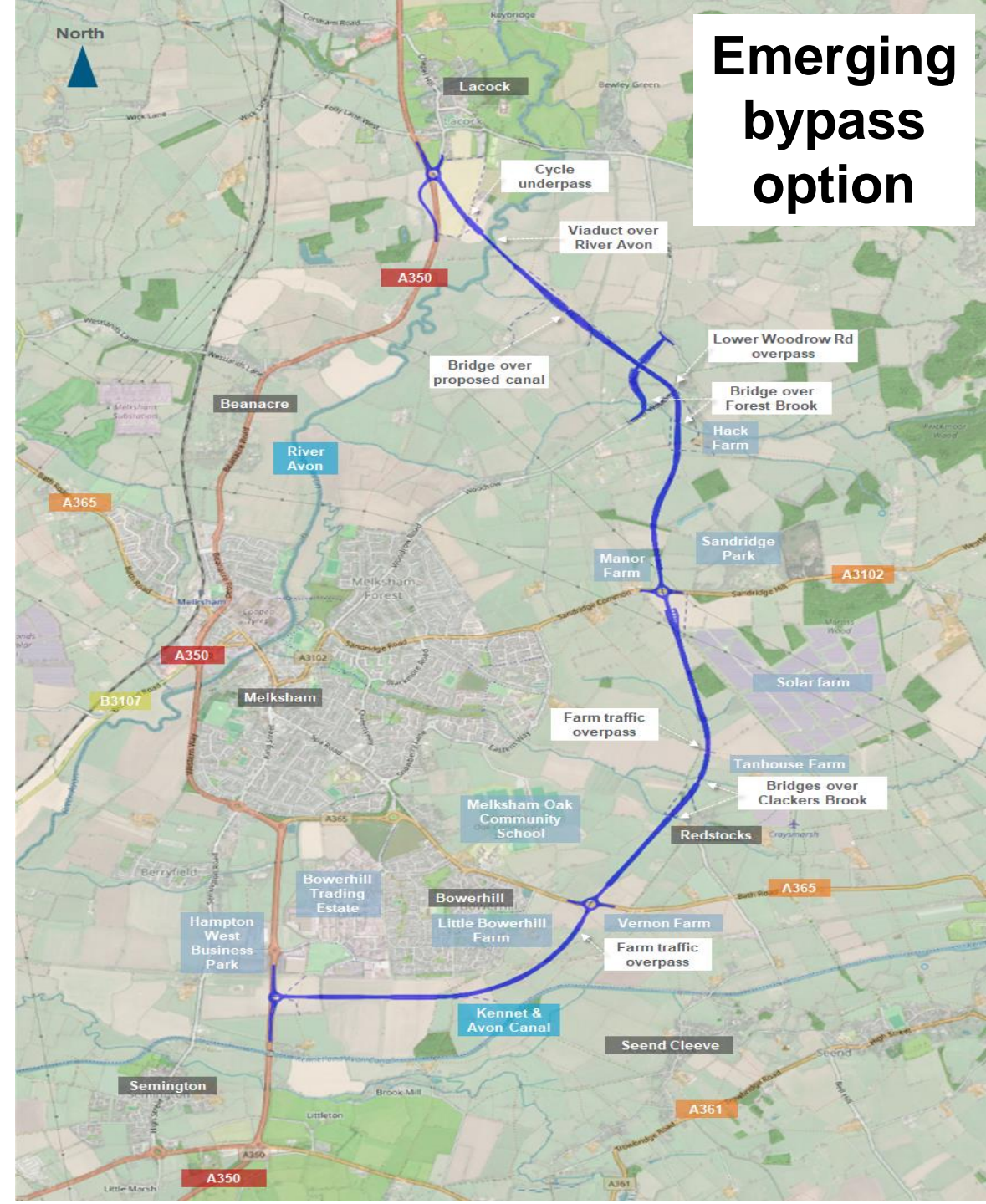


Emerging bypass option



# Emerging bypass option

- Approximately 9km long
- Single carriageway (9.3m) with scope to widen
- Generally designed for national speed limit
- Roundabout at A350 tie in north of Halfway Farm and south of Lacock village
- Long, low level viaduct needed across River Avon and flood zone
- Bridge at Wilts & Berks canal route
- Woodrow Road – no junction. Woodrow Road diverted at Hack Farm
- Bridges at Forest Brook
- Roundabout with A3102 Sandridge Common east of Manor Farm
- Alignment developed to avoid suspected buried historical settlement with archaeological interest.
- Bridges for Clackers Brook
- Roundabout with A365 west of Vernon Farm
- Route passes approximately mid way between Bowerhill and Kennet & Avon canal
- Roundabout at A350 between Littleton & Hampton Park roundabouts, to the north of the Kennet & Avon aqueduct.

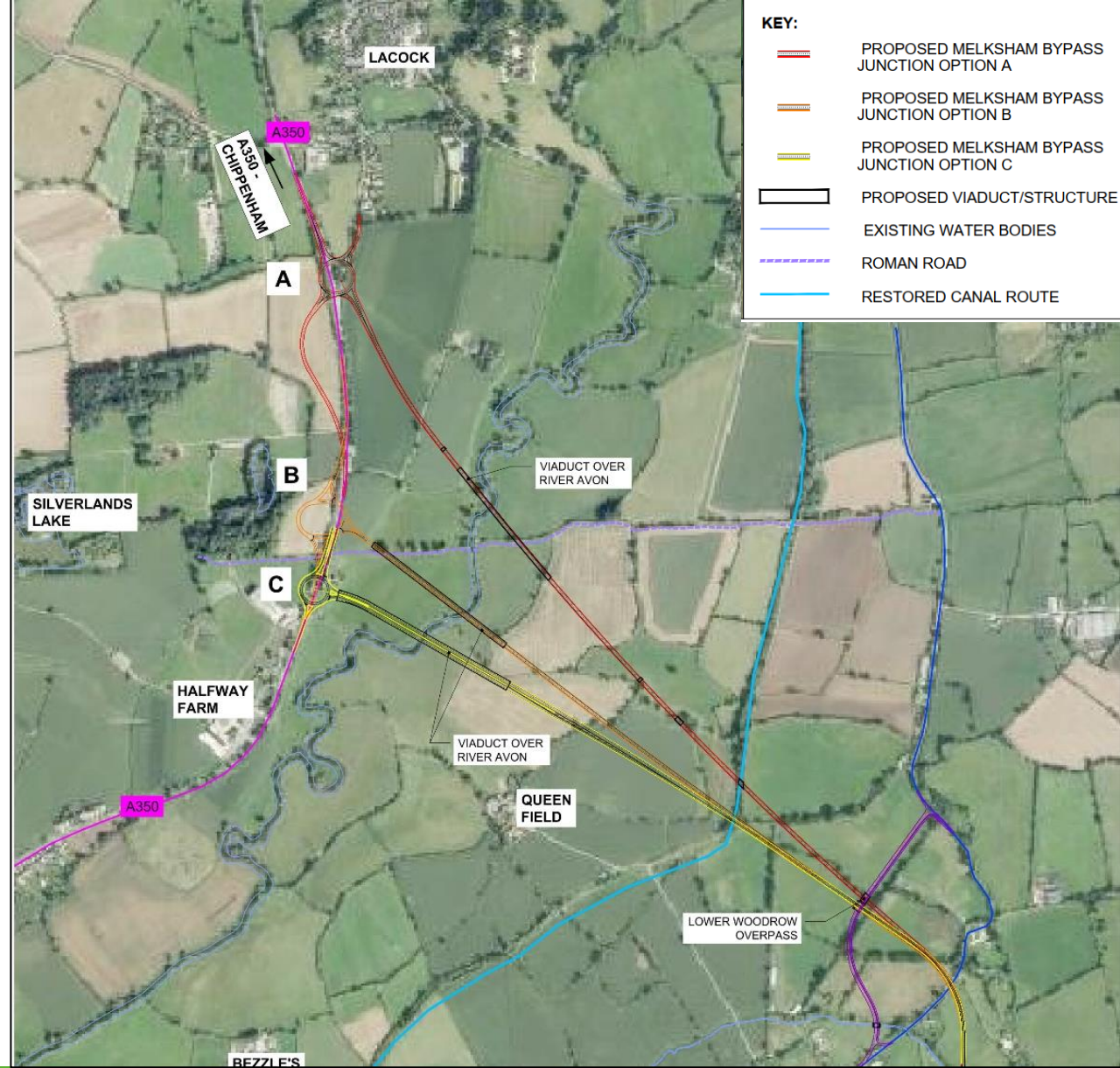


# Emerging bypass option – northern tie-in?

Potential variants to the northern tie-in arrangements and alignment

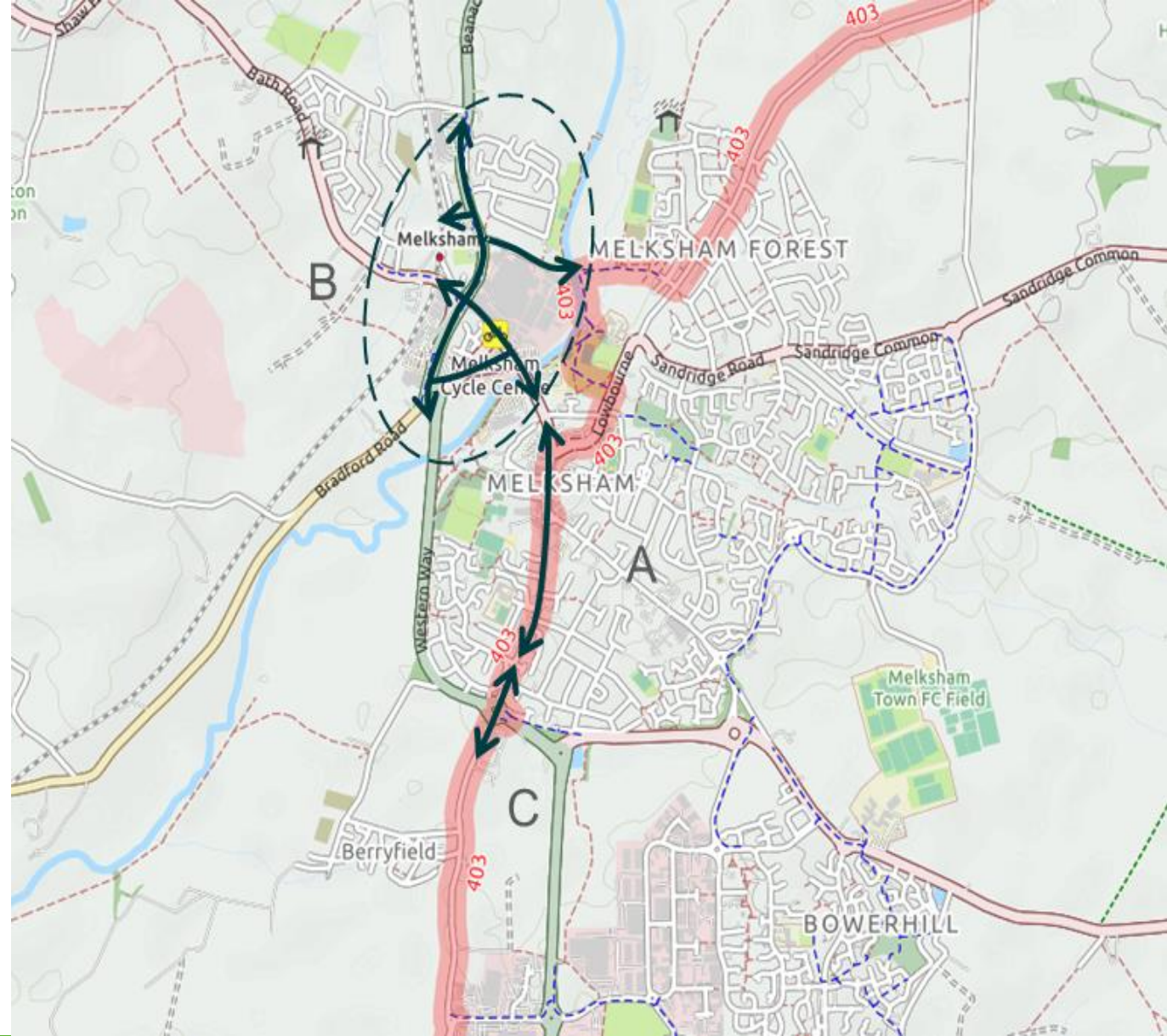
Key issues to be considered:-

- Impact on Roman Road – archaeology
- Impacts of River Avon flood zone
- Impact on properties
- Location of existing A350 junctions and access points
- Visual impact



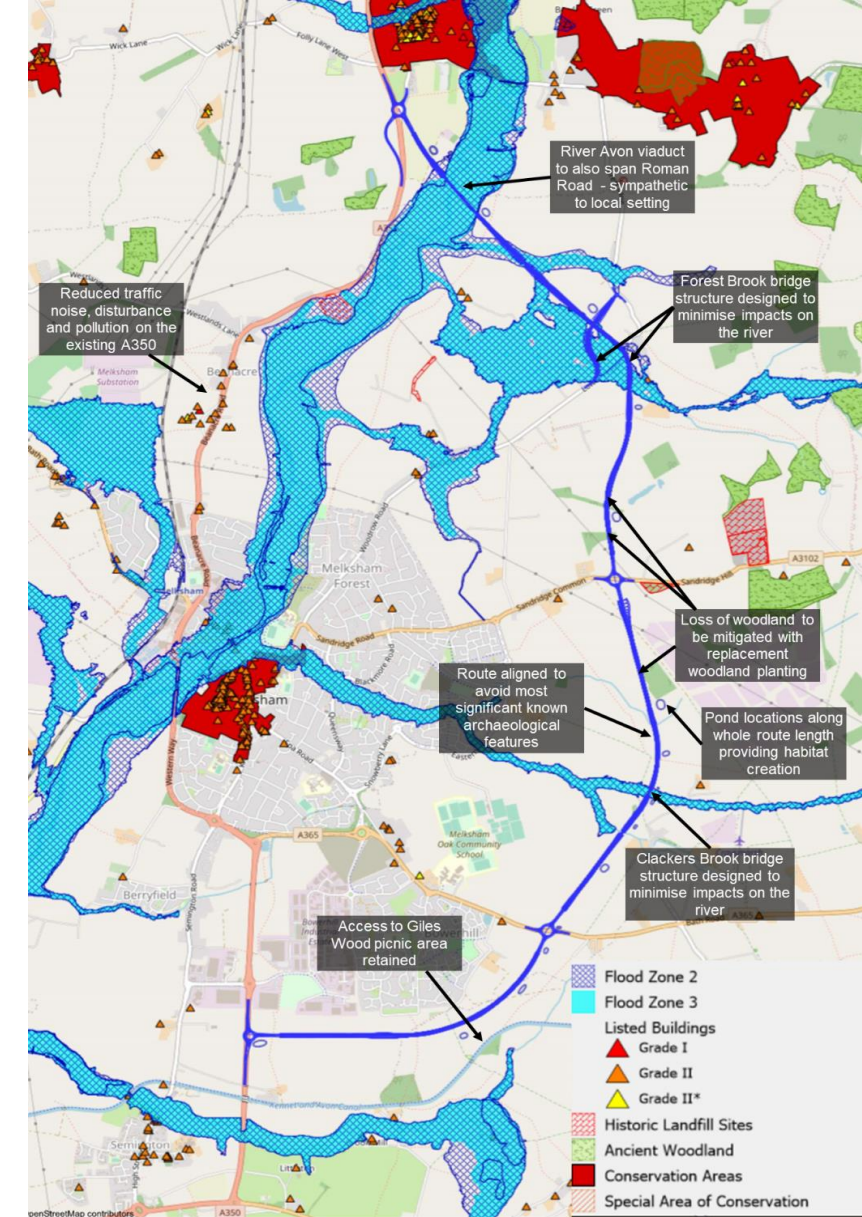
# Walking & cycling measures

- Adjustments to existing Public Rights of Way affected by the scheme
- Introduction of parallel walking cycling routes where viable and where appropriate
- Potential complementary measures:-
  - Pedestrian friendly Town Centre
  - Better access to Melksham Railway Station
  - Northern / Southern connections
  - Possible use of existing A350 corridor / link Melksham - Lacock



# Environmental matters

- Initial environmental and ecological surveys done – more investigations needed
- Some impacts unavoidable – always looking to mitigate and enhance
- Screening vegetation and hedgerows
- Attenuation ponds – opportunity for habitat creation
- Flood zone impacts
- Low-carbon alternative materials & construction
- Local sourcing of materials
- Minimise excavation and maximise re-use of material
- Noise and air quality considerations
- Access to countryside



# Please give us your views by 8<sup>th</sup> August 2021

Information on the emerging option will be available from 24<sup>th</sup> June 2021 at:

<https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/highways-a350-melksham-bypass>

Website will include:

- Information pack covering areas such as:
  - A350 route & need for the scheme
  - Transport objectives and other local outcomes
  - The scheme preparation process
  - Outcomes from previous consultation
  - Assessment work and option sifting process
  - Reasons as to why options have not progressed
  - The emerging route with notional cross section information
  - Traffic flow and journey time information
  - Provision for pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders
  - Environmental considerations
- Online questionnaire
- Series FAQs
- Background documents



# Please give us your views by 8<sup>th</sup> August 2021

This consultation provides the opportunity to gather additional information on the scheme and its potential effects and help identify mitigation measures where required.

The views of organisations with specialist knowledge of the area will be particularly important in helping to refine the proposals.

It should be noted that the consultation is not a public 'vote' for or against the scheme. A wide range of factors have to be taken into account in determining the emerging bypass option.

There will be other formal consultation stages in the future, including at the planning application and in connection with the statutory orders, but it is considered that ongoing consultation is a vital aspect in developing major projects of this type.

Your views will help us develop the scheme, and will be taken into account.



# How to give your views



You can give your views by visiting the Wiltshire Council website at:

<https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/highways-a350-melksham-bypass>



Or by emailing:

[MajorHighwayProjects@Wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:MajorHighwayProjects@Wiltshire.gov.uk)



Or writing to:

Major Highway Projects,

Wiltshire Council,

Trowbridge,

Wiltshire

BA14 8JN



# What happens next?

- Ongoing technical investigations and scheme development works
- Consultation to be launched at Melksham Area Board Meeting (23rd June 2021 7pm)
  - Runs to 8th August 2021
  - All suggestions and comments will be welcomed and will be considered
  - Responses will feed into scheme development process
- Working towards development of the Outline Business Case which will cover
  - Strategic,
  - Economic,
  - Financial,
  - Management and
  - Commercial aspects
- Adoption of preferred route & submission of Outline Business Case
  - October 2021



# Current indicative timeline

The outcome of this consultation and the development of the Outline Business Case (OBC) is expected to be reported to a meeting of Wiltshire Council's Cabinet later this autumn to consider the adoption of a Preferred Route for the scheme, and the submission of the OBC to the Department of Transport (DfT) for funding to proceed to the subsequent stages.

On the basis that the OBC is approved, and that further funding comes forward, the scheme would go through further detailed design and environmental assessment.

The scheme would require a planning application and all the related statutory processes would apply, including consultation and a full Environmental Impact Assessment.

A Full Business Case would then be submitted to central government for the final approval for funding. This typically follows planning consent.

It is currently anticipated that construction would commence in 2025, with scheme opening in 2028.

**Oct '21**

OBC submission to DfT  
(approval to proceed)

**Mar '22**

Further design and  
environmental assessment

**Winter'23**

Planning application

**Spring '24**

Full Business Case (approval  
for funding)

**Winter'24**

DfT decision point

**2025**

Construction

**2028**

Scheme opening

# Recent questions – main themes

## Why is there now only one route being considered?

- We have undertaken an assessment of the route options, taking into account the results of the previous public consultation, and reviewed the route options against the scheme objectives. Option 10c was identified as the most viable route, although there are alternative alignments at the northern end. We would welcome comments and thoughts on these alternatives through this consultation.
- Other potential options have been discounted for a range of reasons as the scheme has evolved, including not addressing the scheme objectives, design constraints, costs leading to limited value for money, technical deliverability, local impacts, and environmental matters.
- It is important that the scheme progressing through to the outline business case represents the best identified solution possible.
- If any of the other options had scored as well as Option 10c against the criteria, they would have been included in the second round of consultations.

# Recent questions – main themes

## Why not improve the existing road?

- The A350 is a regionally important north-south route which needs to have adequate traffic capacity to accommodate anticipated future growth in western Wiltshire.
- Dualling the existing route south of Farmers Roundabout would be possible, but improvements to the existing road through Beanacre and at the northern end of Melksham to the standards required to meet the needs of the major road network would have extensive adverse impacts on the built up area.
- Without the northern section also being improved there would remain a constraint on traffic flows and speeds on the route, with the environmental and safety problems remaining and worsening over time. Improving the existing route was not considered to be a viable means of achieving the transport objectives.

# Recent questions – main themes

## Is this all about house building around Melksham?

- No. The A350 Melksham Bypass is an improvement to the Major Road Network. It does not include or require the construction of houses or other developments. It is an improvement of the strategically important A350 north-south route and was one of nine priority schemes identified by the Western Gateway Strategic Transport Body. Development funding for the scheme has been provided by the Department of Transport.
- There is a separate need to consider housing provision in the area. The recent Local Plan Review consultation held between January – March 2021 proposed a requirement of 3,950 new homes at Melksham and Bowerhill for the plan period 2016 – 2036. When the number of homes already built and in the pipeline is deducted it leaves a further 2,585 homes to be accommodated.
- 17 greenfield sites were outlined, which the Council will need to assess to find the most suitable locations for these homes and no decisions have yet been made on these.
- The requirement to meet the local housing need will exist with or without the bypass.

# Recent questions – main themes

## What about environmental matters?

- The potential impacts on the landscape and the countryside will be assessed as part of the scheme development, and various mitigation measures would be considered including a package of landscaping proposals.
- This scheme will require planning consent, and as part of the planning application an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will be undertaken to identify and assess the potential environmental impacts that could arise. The assessment will need to propose mitigation measures to minimise these impacts in order to inform the planning, design and construction process.
- Consideration, and a full assessment will be completed for matters such as air quality, ecology and nature conservation, landscape and cultural heritage, and noise and vibration.
- Opportunities may arise through the design process to enhance environmental provision (e.g. attenuation ponds which may assist in developing habitats) and such opportunities will be considered.

# A350 Melksham Bypass

**Thank You**

[MajorHighwayProjects@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:MajorHighwayProjects@wiltshire.gov.uk)