

Nature conservation and biodiversity

Construction of the scheme would cause loss of woodland and hedgerow habitats in several locations. The northern section of new road would pass through the Woodlands East of Hindhead Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI), with removal of substantial areas of plantation woodland. There would also be substantial woodland clearance in Tyndall's Wood and Nutcombe Down.

The existing A3 passes through the Devil's Punch Bowl Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), part of the internationally important Wealden Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA). The closure of the existing A3 across the SSSI and its restoration to heathland would eliminate existing severance, remove pollution from road run-off and vehicle emissions and reduce noise levels. This would provide major benefits for the SSSI and a range of associated species including reptiles, badgers and rare heathland birds.

Key features of the scheme include: restoration of heathland along the existing A3 through the Devil's Punch Bowl; creation of areas of new woodland, heathland, grassland and wetland in Boundless Cope and Tyndall's Wood; and the translocation of protected species at risk prior to construction. Also provided would be Badger overpasses, rope 'bridges' for Dormice and Bat boxes. The Exchange Land would be managed to enhance biodiversity by restoring heathland and broadleaved woodland.



Hilary Nightingale

These measures, combined with the benefits of removing the existing A3 over Hindhead Common, would, on balance, provide significant benefits for a variety of wildlife and would enhance the conservation status of the SSSI and SPA.

Community severance

The villages of Hindhead, Grayshott and Beacon Hill and the Nutcombe and High Pitfold areas are at present adversely affected by severance due to traffic on the A3.

The Published Scheme would, in general, lead to substantial reductions in community severance for persons walking, cycling and riding in the study area. It would also facilitate local traffic movements, mainly household car trips, especially between areas to the west and east of the existing A3. The Scheme would lead to significant reduction in flows on alternative routes currently used as rat runs. However, this change would also cause an increase in traffic flows on several roads leading to the A3. The Scheme would improve the opportunity to enhance bus service reliability and hence the attractiveness of public transport. Overall, the Published Scheme would reduce community severance.



Land use

The main land uses within the A3 corridor are public open space, built development, schools, forestry and agriculture. Land would be required where common rights still apply at Bramshott Common. This would be mitigated through provision of exchange land.

Forestry would be adversely affected, as about 40% of the Forestry Commission land would be taken in Boundless Cope and Blackhanger. Six farms would be affected of which one, a poultry farm, would be unable to continue operation. Four farms would lose small proportions of land and one would only be affected in terms of access. Forestry and farming would be eligible for compensation. There would be some land lost from school grounds, mostly woodland, which would be mitigated by accommodation works and compensation. There would be small land losses from several residential properties, some of which are already owned by the Highways Agency.

Recreation

The area provides for a variety of recreational user groups including cyclists, pedestrians, equestrians, carriage drivers, trail riders and off-road vehicles, using rights of way, permissive routes and extensive areas of public open space. However, the A3 degrades enjoyment of Hindhead Common and is difficult and dangerous to cross.

The Published Scheme would benefit recreation by removing the A3 from the Common and by providing new underpasses, bridleways, cycleways and local roads. Conversely there would be localised adverse impacts in areas adjacent to the south and north portals, affecting users of Tyndall's Wood and Boundless Cope. Loss of public open space in Tyndall's Wood and Hindhead Common would be compensated for by provision of Exchange Land. The scheme includes several locations where the trunk road can be crossed safely, as well as provision of the Boundless to Thursley Link road and an underpass for the Greensand Way near Thursley. On balance the Published Scheme would have a significant beneficial impact upon public open space, rights of way and recreational use.

Water

The Published Scheme would cross a major aquifer which supplies two public water supply boreholes in Hindhead and numerous springs around Gibbet Hill and in the Devil's Punch Bowl. Some springs provide water to private households and farms. The tunnel would be aligned and constructed to avoid adverse effects on the water table. Small streams with sources around Gibbet Hill and in the Devils Punch Bowl would not be directly affected by the scheme.

Drainage of the new road would be designed to meet national standards set by the Environment Agency and would also remove polluting discharges from the existing A3. Run-off from the new road would be treated where it was discharged to streams or to infiltration ponds. In areas with limited land availability the road would drain to soakaways. These mitigation measures ensure the scheme would provide a moderate benefit to the water environment.

Geology and soils

The geology and soil of the study area is made up of superficial deposits of peat, organic matter and clays and sand overlying sandstones from the Lower Cretaceous age. The Devil's Punch Bowl is recognised as a Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Site (RIGS), due to the scale of the spring-eroded valley landform.

The soils are typically sandy and free-draining, with a shallow topsoil layer. The scheme would ensure appropriate conservation of soil resources by adherence to a detailed soil management strategy. Limited evidence of soil contaminants has been found. Any contamination encountered during construction would be dealt with in an environmentally appropriate manner.



Vehicle travellers

The new dual carriageway with clear signing would provide safer journeys with significantly less delay and disruption. Travellers would enjoy a considerably enhanced service and experience less stress than they do at the moment. The lighting, signing and information services within the tunnel would aid and inform tunnel users.

The extent and nature of views from the new road would be significantly different from those along the existing A3, which is generally enclosed by woodland or development. The current fleeting, partial views across the Devil's Punch Bowl would be lost to A3 travellers. The tunnel would be a distinctive feature of the route. Fences or earth mounds to reduce noise would largely contain views out, except for some oblique forward views as the road travels through Boundless Valley. In time, the planting proposals would recreate the largely wooded character along the route.

Air quality

As a result of improving vehicle design, emissions of pollutants and particles from road traffic will decline significantly between today and the opening year of 2009. The Published Scheme would alleviate local congestion with subsequent reduction in emissions. The impact of the Scheme in terms of health effects on the local population and sensitive ecology would be positive. None of the air quality objectives would be breached as a result of the Scheme at residential properties or public rights of way. The majority of local residents would experience a reduction in exposure to traffic-related air pollution.



Cultural heritage

An archaeological and cultural heritage study has revealed a range of sites of archaeological and historical interest. However, the overall archaeological potential for the route is low. There are eleven Listed Buildings and structures close to the route.

The scheme would have a moderate or slight adverse effect on some of the surviving elements of this historic landscape, including parts of the boundary bank to Hindhead Common in Boundless Valley. There would be a positive effect on the visual setting of parts of the built heritage.



Noise and vibration

Noise from the existing A3 affects every building within several hundred metres and spreads well into Hindhead Common and the Devil's Punch Bowl where traffic can be heard in most areas.

To minimise noise from the new road noise barriers or earth mounds would run along both sides from Bramshott Chase to the tunnel. There would also be extensive earth mounding north of the tunnel. All newly constructed roads would be surfaced with a thin wearing course which would noticeably reduce noise.

The scheme would achieve a moderate noise reduction to the south of Hindhead Crossroads and a substantial reduction to the north. The tunnel would restore tranquility to large areas of Hindhead Common and the Devil's Punch Bowl, with greatest benefits close to the existing A3. However, there would be some local increases in noise in Tyndall's Wood and Boundless Valley.

Noise levels have been predicted for over 700 houses. On opening, about 320 would benefit from perceptible decreases in noise, of which 45 would be moderate or substantial. Some 240 would have perceptible increases in noise, of which 8 would be moderate or substantial. If the scheme is not built, noise levels would continue to rise, with perceptible increases at some 190 houses and decreases at only 14.

Local business including tourism

The majority of businesses that would be directly affected by the scheme are located in the three villages of Hindhead, Grayshott and Beacon Hill. There are 186 businesses in the area, of which 45 are located on or very close to the existing A3. The majority of businesses are either service or retail activities. Tourism in the area is mainly generated by visitors to the National Trust land and Hindhead Common in particular.

The majority of these businesses would not be significantly affected by the scheme. The most sensitive area is Hindhead centre to the north of Hindhead Crossroads. The two petrol retail businesses on the A3 would lose pass-by trade and may close. The seven retail and hotel businesses would also lose pass-by trade once the Scheme is open. However, they would benefit from improved accessibility and potential regeneration of the area, so the net impact would depend on the scope to adapt to the new business environment. There is potential for increased tourism to Hindhead Common which could partly mitigate against lost pass-by trade and lead to the creation of new jobs in the area.

Further information

The Secretary of State has published draft Orders and Notices for the Scheme. These draft Orders seek the legal authority to construct the new Trunk road and to carry out alterations to existing roads, public rights of way and accesses affected by the new road.

The Secretary of State will publish a further draft Compulsory Purchase Order for land and rights required for the scheme, as well as a further Notice of Intention to provide a certificate that adequate exchange land is to be provided for common land required for the Scheme from Hindhead Common.

Copies of the draft Orders and the full Environmental Statement may be inspected free of charge at the following locations from 19 May 2004 to 2 July 2004:

Highways Agency
Major Projects (South)
Federated House
London Road
Dorking
Surrey
RH4 1SZ

Surrey County Council
County Hall
Penrhyn Road
Kingston-upon-Thames
Surrey
KT1 2DN

Hampshire County Council
The Castle
Winchester
Hampshire
SO23 8UJ

East Hampshire District
Council
Penns Place
Petersfield
Hampshire
GU31 4EX

Waverley Borough Council
Information Centre
Council Offices
The Burys
Godalming
Surrey
GU7 1HR

Waverley Borough Council
Haslemere Local Office
Lion Green
Haslemere
Surrey
GU27 1JB



Grayshott Library
Small Village Hall
Headley Road
Grayshott
Hampshire
GU26 6TZ

Sub Post Office
6, Tilford Road
Hindhead
Surrey
GU26 6TD

Sub Post Office
Beacon Hill Road
Hindhead
Surrey
GU26 6QL



Your views

If you wish to support or comment on or object to the draft Orders, put forward alternative proposals or comment on the Environmental Statement, you should write to the A3 Hindhead Team at the Highways Agency address not later than 2 July 2004.

Copies of the Environmental Statement may be purchased from the Hindhead team at the Highways Agency address, at the following prices:

Volume 1	Main Text	£40
Volume 1A	Figures	£60
Volume 2	Supporting Information	£40

Copies of the full Environmental Statement are also available on CD, price £5.



What happens next

A Public Inquiry is to be held before an independent Inspector, starting in September 2004. All those who have responded will be notified individually at least six weeks beforehand and notices will appear in the local press.

All comments received will be made available to the Inspector, who may decide to make them public. Publicity will be given to any alternative proposals received.

Following any Public Inquiry, the Secretary of State will consider the recommendations made by the Inspector in his report before deciding whether or not to proceed with the scheme.

safe roads, reliable journeys, informed travellers



A3 Hindhead Scheme



Explanation of the May 2004 Scheme and Non-Technical Summary of the Environmental Statement



May 2004



Introduction

The A3 Hindhead project would complete the dual carriageway link between London and Portsmouth. It would provide a new 6.7 km length of dual two-lane carriageway from Hammer Lane on the Surrey Hampshire border north to Boundless Road near Thursley. A tunnel would take the A3 past Hindhead and under the Devil's Punch Bowl. Closure of the existing A3 across Hindhead Common and around the Devil's Punch Bowl is an integral part of the scheme.

This Non-Technical Summary incorporates the revisions to the scheme set out in the supplementary draft Orders published in May 2004. The principal changes are the deletion of the Boundless Road junction, the addition of the Boundless to Thursley Link Road and amended local access arrangements at Hazel Grove.

This leaflet describes the revised Published Scheme and summarises the Environmental Statement (ES) which is published in accordance with Directives 85/337/EEC and 97/11/EC as applied by Section 105A of the Highways Act 1980 as amended by the Highways (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1999. The ES supports the draft Orders published for this scheme and describes the proposals, their main effects on both the man-made and natural environment and the measures developed to mitigate adverse effects. The ES contains the findings of a detailed and comprehensive study of all environmental aspects of the scheme and its setting. Its purpose is to ensure that all those consulted, including the public, understand the proposals and are given the opportunity to express an opinion on them before the Secretary of State decides whether to proceed with the scheme.

In general terms, the scheme would have a beneficial environmental impact. There would be considerable adverse impacts from the site clearance, construction and operation of the scheme, particularly through the Hazel Grove / Tyndall's Wood area and through the Boundless Valley. However, these would be offset by the beneficial influence of removing the A3 around the Devil's Punch Bowl, reducing congestion and community severance, improving recreational access and enhancing the habitat value of the area.

Need for the scheme

The A3 trunk road is a high standard dual carriageway road except in the area of Hindhead, where it is a single carriageway only. This section of road currently carries around 28,400 vehicles on an average day of which about 10% are heavy goods vehicles; this is above the normal flow range for a single carriageway. Regular congestion is experienced, particularly at the signal controlled crossroads with the A287 in the centre of Hindhead, causing significant amounts of traffic to divert onto other local roads, including unsuitable country lanes, to avoid the queues. The high traffic flows and congestion also create environmental and access problems for the local communities and businesses.

The A3 has a poor horizontal and vertical alignment with restricted visibility as it climbs around the rim of the Devil's Punch Bowl. South of Hindhead crossroads the alignment is better but there are several junctions and many private accesses causing conflicts between local and through traffic. The road has a high accident rate, with serious accidents causing closure of the entire road for several hours.

The A3 passes through environmentally sensitive areas including the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Devil's Punch Bowl Site of Special Scientific Interest, which is also part of the Wealden Heaths Special Protection Area under the EU Birds Directive. Much of the area is owned inalienably by the National Trust for the benefit of the nation. These designations place a severe constraint on options for improving the A3 without conflicting with Government Policy on minimising the impact of transport schemes on environmentally sensitive areas.



History of the scheme and alternative routes

The need for improvements to the A3 through Hindhead has been recognised for many years. Between 1970 and 1976 a route strategy study was undertaken for the A3 between Guildford and Petersfield. Work on the resulting on-line proposal for Hindhead stopped in 1979 following a review of the trunk road programme.

In 1983 some nine alternatives for the A3 were investigated, but assessment showed that only one, the Red Route, had a positive economic value. This route went around the north and west side of the Punch Bowl, crossing the Smallbrook Valley. In March 1987 public consultation on the Red Route was met with opposition. Two alternatives were suggested: a 'Scenic Route' which ran on-line north of the Punch Bowl bend and bypassed Hindhead to the south; and an 'Outer Western Route' which ran further west, crossing Ludshott Common SSSI. However, these had less support and the Red Route became the Preferred Route in July 1988. Subsequent environmental surveys showed that this route would have substantial adverse impacts and as a result a modified Scenic Route known as the Yellow Route was developed.

Consultation on the Red and Yellow Routes in 1992 found public preference for the Yellow Route, but rejection of both by nearly all the environmental bodies. A thorough review of options was then carried out which included cut and cover or bored tunnels. This led, in March 1993, to the announcement of the Modified Yellow Route including a 1.7 km bored tunnel as the new Preferred Route. In December 1995 work on this scheme was suspended.

The Roads Review of 1998 led to a study into whether tolling could help deliver the environmental and economic benefits of the scheme. In 2000, this study concluded that tolling was not viable, but that the scheme itself was. The scheme entered the Government's targeted programme of improvements in 2001.

Policies and plans

The Published Scheme complies well with policies and plans, from national through to local level, both statutory and non-statutory. This arises from careful route selection, good design incorporating beneficial mitigation measures and early consultation with the main interested parties. The incorporation of a tunnel and removal of the existing road across Hindhead Common would bring many benefits that ensure compliance with policy.

Landscape

The majority of the Published Scheme lies within a landscape designated at both national (AONB) and county (AGLV) levels for its exceptional scenic qualities. The dramatic local topography, heathland and pine woodland has made the Devil's Punch Bowl and Hindhead Common a famous beauty spot. The local landscape also possesses strong cultural associations linked with the historical remoteness and wild nature of the heathland commons, which attracted late Victorian and Edwardian notable figures to the area and gave Hindhead a contemporary reputation for cultural and literary sophistication.

The Published Scheme would have a significant impact upon the local landscape, despite the provision of a tunnel, particularly in Tyndall's Wood and Boundless Valley where extensive vegetation removal and earthworks would alter the attractive semi-natural character of these heavily wooded valleys. However, whilst locally significant, these landscape impacts would be effectively contained by surrounding woodland and the steep-sided nature of the valleys.

Conversely, taking traffic under Hindhead Common and closing the existing A3 around the Devil's Punch Bowl would restore a sense of remoteness and tranquillity to this high quality landscape and valued beauty spot. The removal of traffic would also help to reconnect the fragmented heathland landscapes within the Devil's Punch Bowl and Hindhead Common, currently severed by the existing busy A3.

The proposals include extensive earth mounding and grading of side slopes to screen views of traffic and fit the scheme into the landscape. Planting of woodland, hedgerows and heathland would take place in the first available season.

The initial landscape benefits of the scheme would just outweigh the adverse landscape effects within Tyndall's Wood and Boundless Valley. In time, the adverse impacts would reduce as planting becomes established, increasing the beneficial landscape impact. On balance, there would be less traffic on roads past residential properties, which would benefit the local townscape, particularly in Hindhead centre where a more pleasant and versatile environment can be created.

In 2009, 97 properties would have an adverse visual impact, whilst 90 would have a beneficial visual impact. By 2024, 75 properties would have an adverse visual impact, with the degree of impact reduced in many cases, whilst 129 would have a beneficial visual impact. Some properties would be adversely affected by lighting, although local conditions would limit significant adverse impacts to only 6 properties.

More footpaths would be adversely affected by views of the scheme than would benefit from the closure of the existing A3 through the Devil's Punch Bowl. However, the area of public open space from which views would benefit from the scheme would be greater than that from which views would be degraded and these benefits would also apply to the paths and viewpoints that are the most popular.



The published scheme

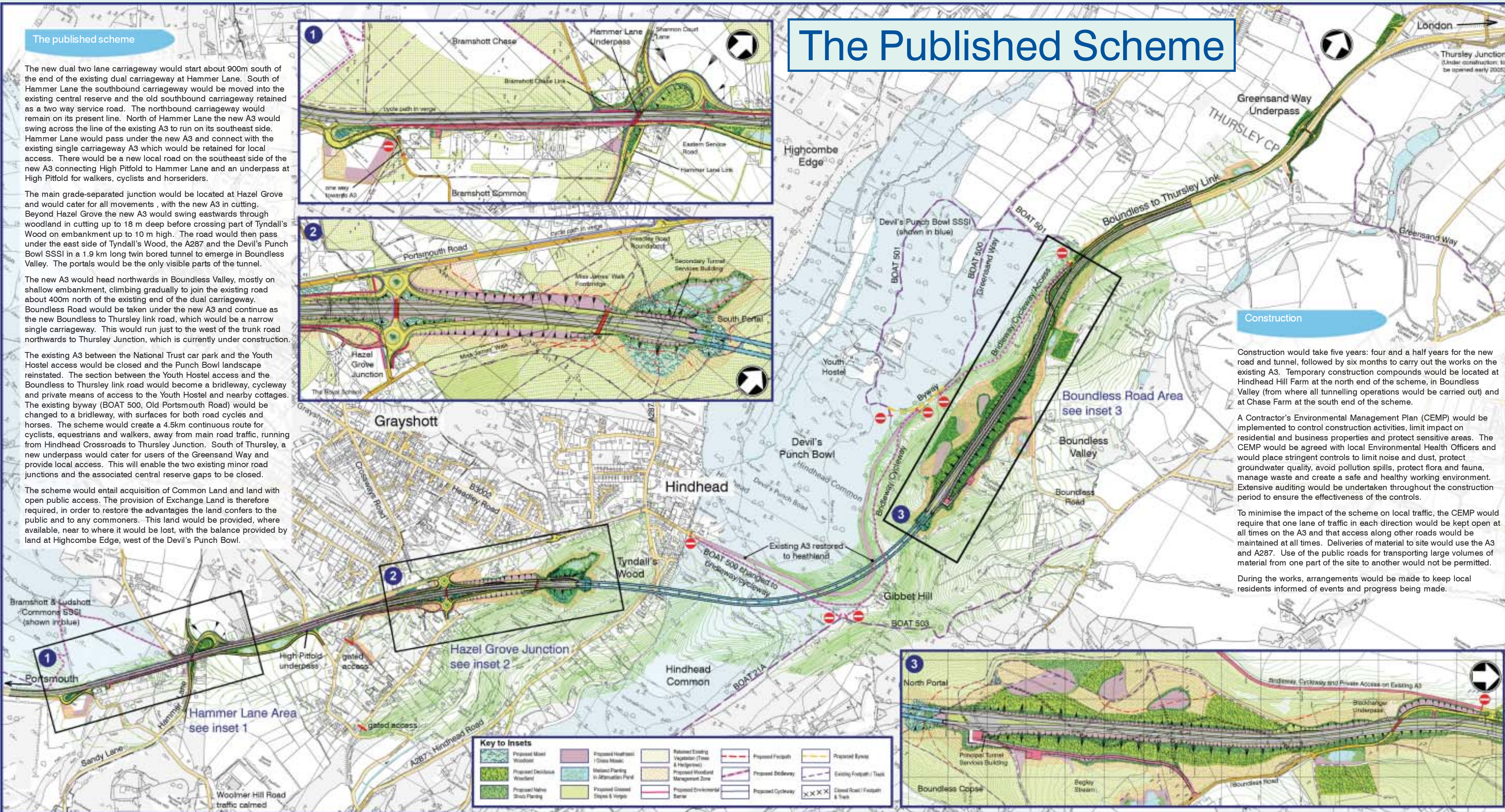
The new dual two lane carriageway would start about 900m south of the end of the existing dual carriageway at Hammer Lane. South of Hammer Lane the southbound carriageway would be moved into the existing central reserve and the old southbound carriageway retained as a two way service road. The northbound carriageway would remain on its present line. North of Hammer Lane the new A3 would swing across the line of the existing A3 to run on its southeast side. Hammer Lane would pass under the new A3 and connect with the existing single carriageway A3 which would be retained for local access. There would be a new local road on the southeast side of the new A3 connecting High Pitfold to Hammer Lane and an underpass at High Pitfold for walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

The main grade-separated junction would be located at Hazel Grove and would cater for all movements, with the new A3 in cutting. Beyond Hazel Grove the new A3 would swing eastwards through woodland in cutting up to 18 m deep before crossing part of Tyndall's Wood on embankment up to 10 m high. The road would then pass under the east side of Tyndall's Wood, the A287 and the Devil's Punch Bowl SSSI in a 1.9 km long twin bored tunnel to emerge in Boundless Valley. The portals would be the only visible parts of the tunnel.

The new A3 would head northwards in Boundless Valley, mostly on shallow embankment, climbing gradually to join the existing road about 400m north of the existing end of the dual carriageway. Boundless Road would be taken under the new A3 and continue as the new Boundless to Thursley link road, which would be a narrow single carriageway. This would run just to the west of the trunk road northwards to Thursley Junction, which is currently under construction.

The existing A3 between the National Trust car park and the Youth Hostel access would be closed and the Punch Bowl landscape reinstated. The section between the Youth Hostel access and the Boundless to Thursley link road would become a bridleway, cycleway and private means of access to the Youth Hostel and nearby cottages. The existing byway (BOAT 500, Old Portsmouth Road) would be changed to a bridleway, with surfaces for both road cycles and horses. The scheme would create a 4.5km continuous route for cyclists, equestrians and walkers, away from main road traffic, running from Hindhead Crossroads to Thursley Junction. South of Thursley, a new underpass would cater for users of the Greensand Way and provide local access. This will enable the two existing minor road junctions and the associated central reserve gaps to be closed.

The scheme would entail acquisition of Common Land and land with open public access. The provision of Exchange Land is therefore required, in order to restore the advantages the land confers to the public and to any commoners. This land would be provided, where available, near to where it would be lost, with the balance provided by land at Highcombe Edge, west of the Devil's Punch Bowl.



The Published Scheme

Construction

Construction would take five years: four and a half years for the new road and tunnel, followed by six months to carry out the works on the existing A3. Temporary construction compounds would be located at Hindhead Hill Farm at the north end of the scheme, in Boundless Valley (from where all tunnelling operations would be carried out) and at Chase Farm at the south end of the scheme.

A Contractor's Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) would be implemented to control construction activities, limit impact on residential and business properties and protect sensitive areas. The CEMP would be agreed with local Environmental Health Officers and would place stringent controls to limit noise and dust, protect groundwater quality, avoid pollution spills, protect flora and fauna, manage waste and create a safe and healthy working environment. Extensive auditing would be undertaken throughout the construction period to ensure the effectiveness of the controls.

To minimise the impact of the scheme on local traffic, the CEMP would require that one lane of traffic in each direction would be kept open at all times on the A3 and that access along other roads would be maintained at all times. Deliveries of material to site would use the A3 and A287. Use of the public roads for transporting large volumes of material from one part of the site to another would not be permitted.

During the works, arrangements would be made to keep local residents informed of events and progress being made.