

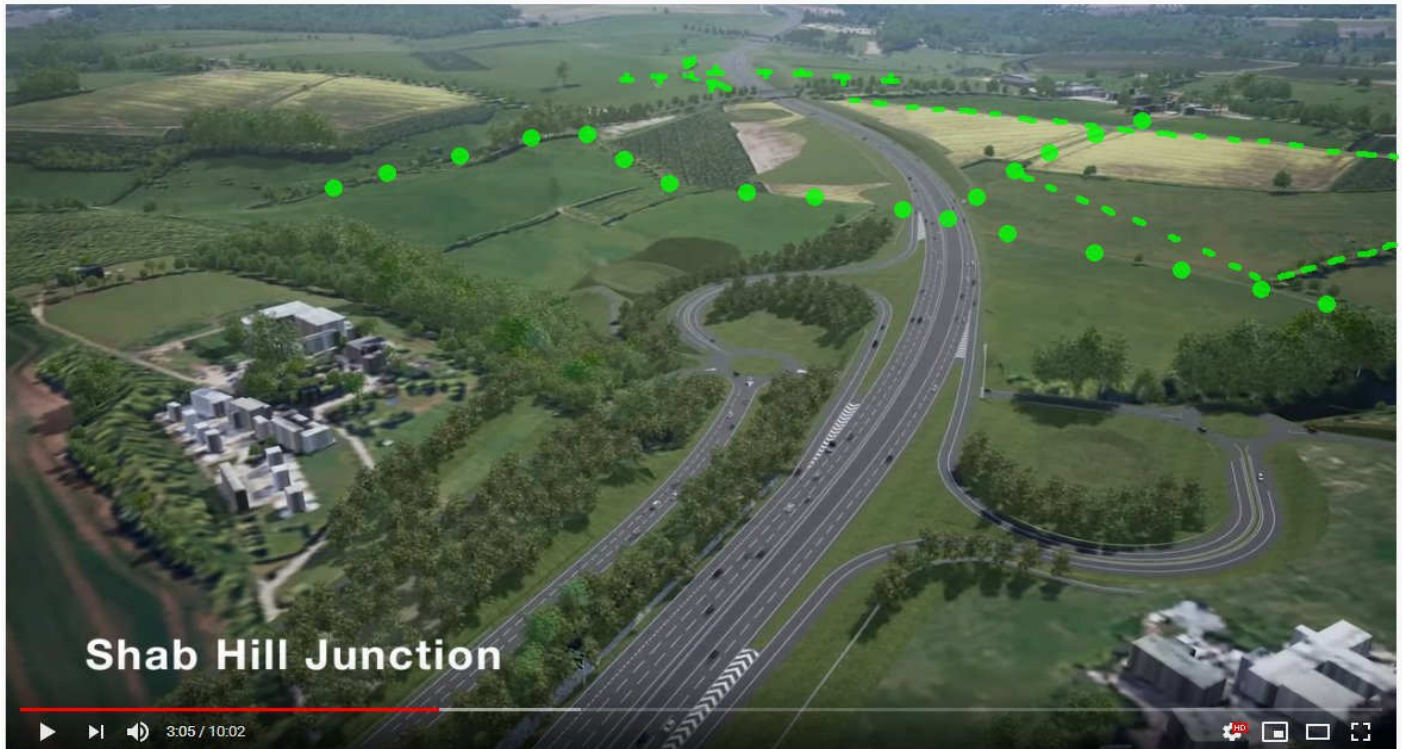
3. Do you have any comments on our proposed route from Shab Hill to Cowley Junction?

This response uses still images from Highways England Video Flythrough.

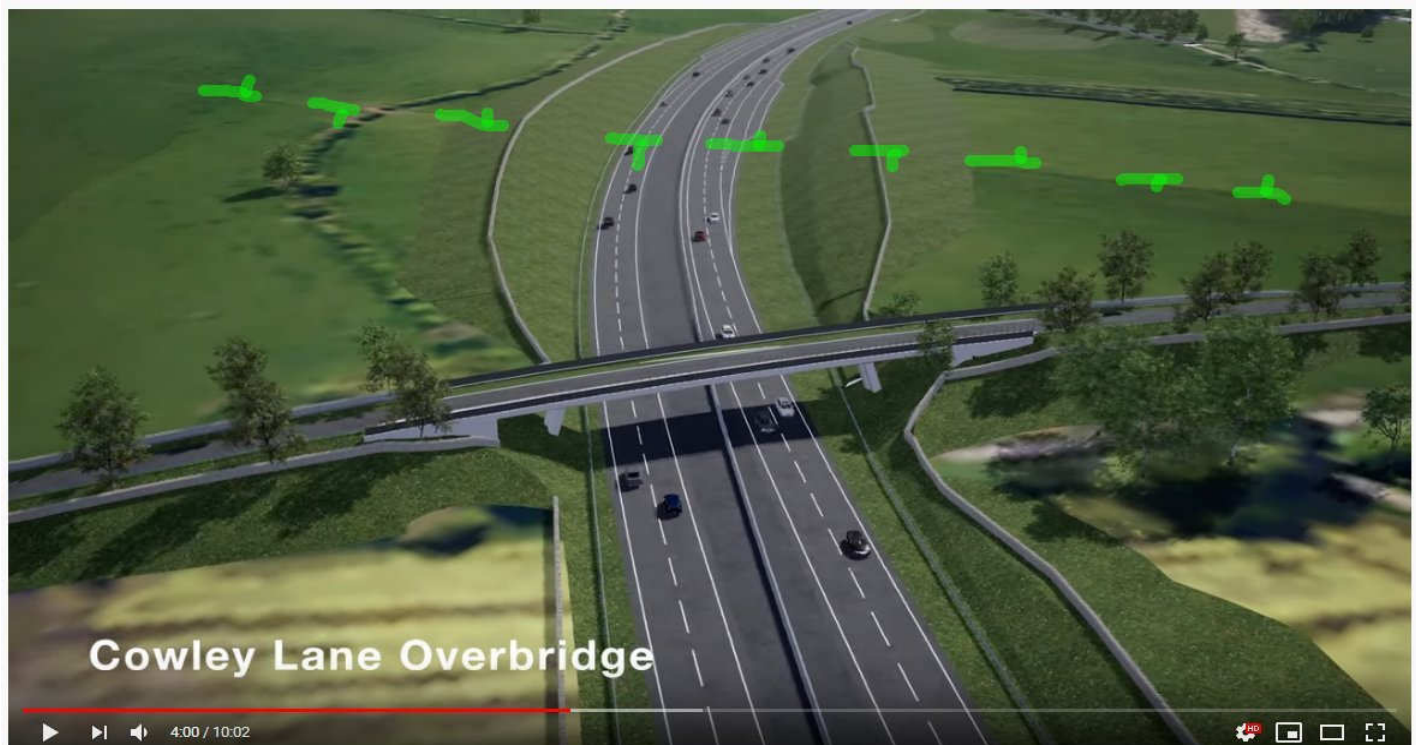
Looking south east again, the image below shows the missing crossing point for ORPA (Other Route of Public Access) 50853 at the southern end of Shab Hill Junction indicated with green dots across the new A417.

ORPA 50944 heading from Stockwell farm to the top right meets ORPA 50853 here.

(Green Dots = ORPA. Short Dashes = Footpaths. Dash with sidebars = Restricted Byways)



Below is a closer view of the Cowley Lane Bridge and Restricted Byway ACY36 with no crossing point. Restricted Byway ACY26 (not shown) follows the line of a historic hedge heading initially left before heading centre distance.



Here is another view from Google maps this time showing the sign post for Restricted Byway ACY26 and the historic hedge alongside it. Centre view a solitary lime tree



In the year 2000 under the CROW act many RUPPs Roads Used as Public Paths were blanket changed to Restricted Byways without fully checking their status. ACY26 may well be an ancient road alongside the ancient hedge.

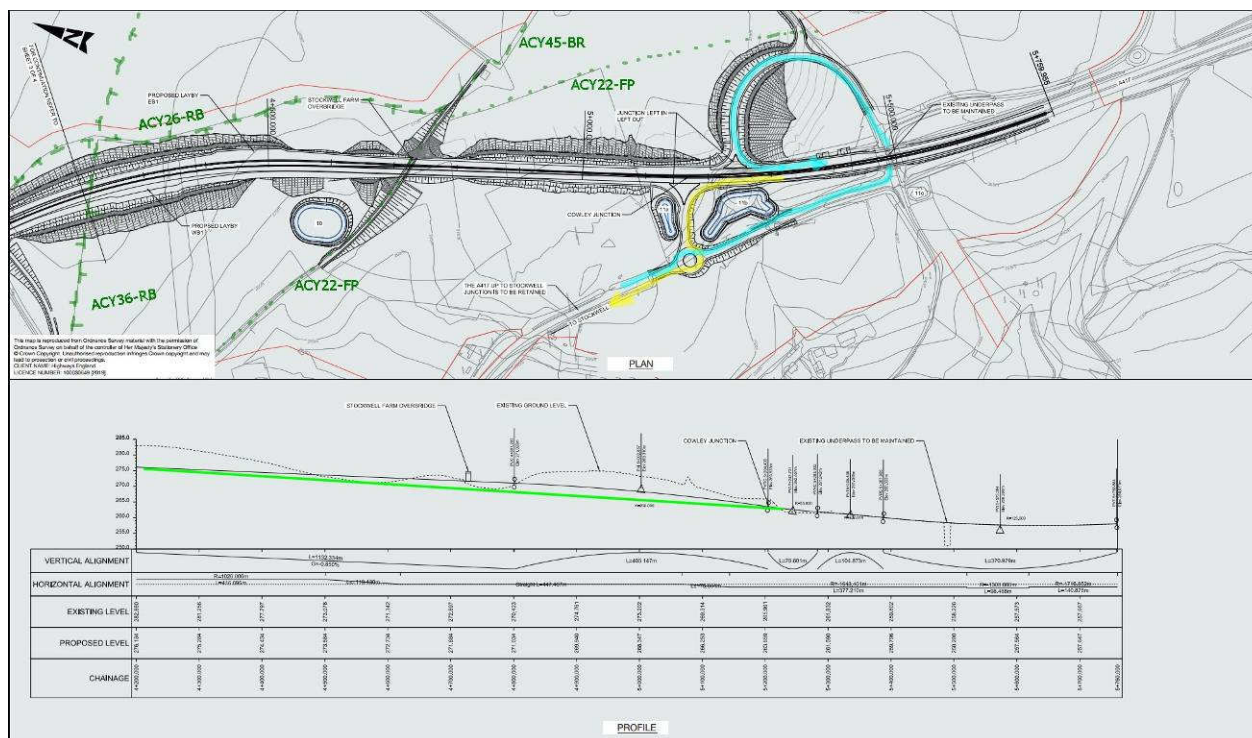
The map image right overlays option 30 onto an OS map. An avenue of lime trees heads north east from Stockwell Farm either side of the current lane. Highways England proposal is to break a small road through the lime trees, build a bridge in parallel with the current lane, then demolish some of the rest of the avenue with the new dual carriageway. The previous flythrough video image shows new trees planted on the flanks of the new bridge i.e. not inline with current.

An option here would be to build the new bridge on line within the lime trees where possible and replant new or reuse trees in line with the present ones.



Highways England Plan4 shows the gradient of the proposed A417 through Stockwell Lane and Stockwell farm track. If the gradient could be flattened as per the green line, the two bridges could fit lower in the landscape.

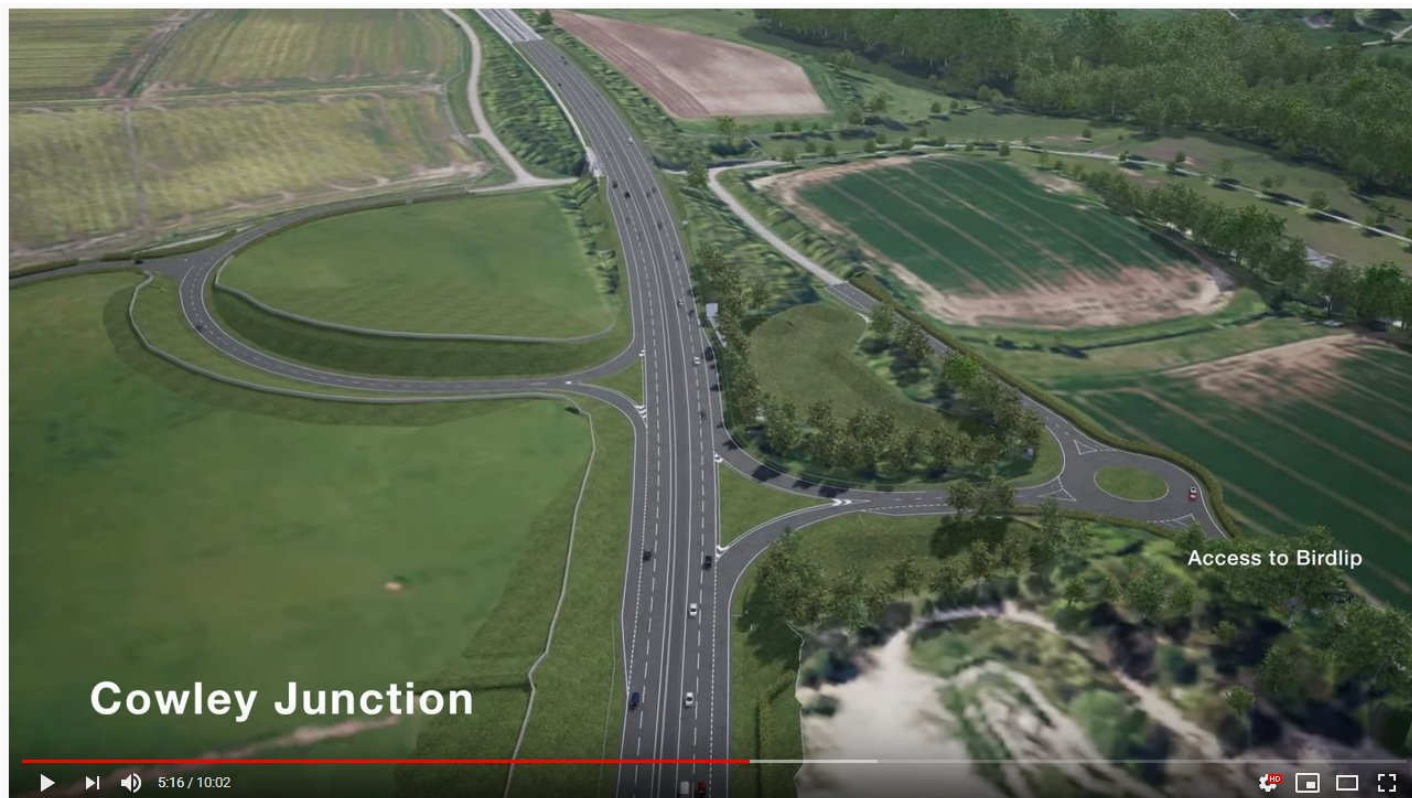
Also highlighted the main traffic flows east (cyan) and west (yellow) on and off the new A417.



Below the proposed bridge for Stockwell Lane farm track marked as a footpath ACY22. The quarry can be seen off to the right and just in front of the bridge the present line of the track. The footpath is historically wide – some 10 metres. A green flanked bridge here could have planted hedgerows either side to retain the enjoyment of the path.



Cowley Junction



The video caption to the right says there is 'Access to Birdlip' from this junction (for local traffic). However Highways England proposal suggests closure of the road to all traffic from the Stockwell Farm Cowley Lane junction onwards.

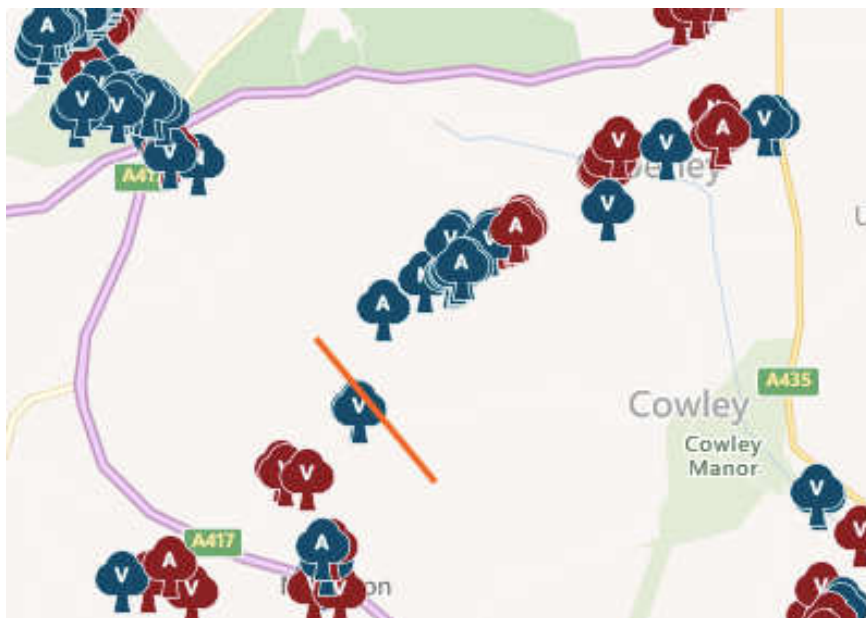
Possible alternative route east of Stockwell Farm

Some of the proposed Option 30 route is elevated, for example on the west side of ACY26 at grid ref. SO 944-145 Page 3 of this document discusses dropping the route deeper into the landscape to reduce the impact on the avenue of lime trees. A natural dip in the landscape has been noticed nearby (SO 944-146) which could offer an alternative alignment for the road to the east of ACY26 (shown in cyan with red dots below right), avoiding the lime trees and heading south towards the west of MAST. Much of ACY26 follows an ancient hedgerow. A technical review has been requested via the Environment, Heritage, Landscape Technical Working Group to evaluate visual & noise impact of this alternative route compared to the current proposal.



Historic hedge along ACY26

A species-rich historic hedge incorporating veteran and notable trees currently runs along the east side of Restricted Byway ACY26 from Grid ref SO 945-145 to grid ref SO 947-143. Some of the trees in the hedge are listed on the ancient tree inventory. The hedge is a valued and pleasant countryside feature, enjoyed by the walking public, rich with insects, birds and butterflies. According to the inventory this hedge crosses a line of veteran and ancient trees that run from Nettleton towards Dowdeswell.



Ancient woodland inventories map
The orange line passes through a veteran Beech tree



OS map with hedge shown in orange

Close up of the map from the ancient woodland inventories map. Note there is an extensive route of the veteran and ancient tree-line from west of Nettleton in the south towards Seven Springs to the north east. It extends onwards to Dowdeswell. To the north west note the number of veteran trees close to the Air Balloon junction on the A417.

A Walking, Cycling and Horseriding route within the proposed scheme

From the Air Balloon to the Birdlip turning Junction a Walking, Cycling and Horseriding route could follow a route through barrow Wake car park or head up an ORPA to Shab Hill.

The current A417 to Cowley junction should also be suitable once it becomes a low traffic route after the new dual carriage way is built. The old Roman Road through Birdlip is also available.