

Summary

Ramblers' aims for this scheme can be summarised as

- Keep the Cotswold Way and Gloucestershire Way on their Authors' line
- Ensure safe footpath crossings
- Retain the landmark Air Balloon Inn – a meeting place for walkers

And in order to demonstrate the environmental credentials of the project, where possible use green flanked bridges for the crossing points of the new road for biodiversity interconnect.

Highways England could build this road with no diversion or extinguishment of paths or tracks if suitable bridges, short tunnels or underpasses were installed along the route. If longer tunnels were allowed, a tunnel option could be used to replace the deep cutting described in Option 30.

Lack of a crossing point for all users at the Air Balloon site not only results in long diversions for users of the Cotswold and Gloucestershire Ways but also leaves Cyclists and Horse Riders seeking another route.

A similar lack of a suitable crossing point at Shab Hill not only affects users of the Gloucestershire Way but also users of a number of popular walking routes – it's a junction of 5 types of path or track.

The Options & Alternatives for the A417 Missing Link are discussed in GR-HE-A417-PCR-2019-11-4a.pdf. Tunnel Option 3 can be discounted if Government refuses to fund tunnels of length 150 metres or more.

Only two Options remain that meet the above project aims.

Simplified (or Greened-Up) Option 30 retains many of the benefits of option 3

Journey distances are the same or shorter than current journey distances.

It retains the Air Balloon roundabout and uses it to connect the A436 to the new A417 via slip roads.

No Shab Hill junction or link road – instead the current road is used as the link.

Option 30 with Alternative 2 and retaining the Air Balloon Inn

- Offers the possibility of repurposing the road next to Barrow Wake as Calcareous Grassland.

However

- It has longer journey distances for A436-A417 traffic (2 miles).
- The Shab Hill junction should be inverted to better fit with the landscape.

and

- The 4 lane road outside the Air Balloon could be repurposed for other uses.

Both options include a wildlife green bridge. However the design should be reviewed asking whether it is green enough and whether it fits well within the landscape.

A vegetation flanked green bridge seen in other recent road schemes could be more appropriate.

The pre-1990 A417 road (now Dog Lane) is not only a quiet walking, cycling and riding route to the Air Balloon, it also acts as a link between current A417 crossings. It can do the same for the new road.

Both Options would meet Ramblers aims as described above.

Both utilise a short tunnel (or green bridge) of less than 150 metres below the Air Balloon car park.

This retains the Cotswold and Gloucestershire Ways on their authors' line. It also protects the site of Neolithic Emma's Grove nearby and the trees around the site including a veteran apple tree.

The choice between the two options will depend on other considerations.

Ramblers have continually pressed Highways England to consider cost effective tunnelling options. Some would be short enough to be considered bridges. However no satisfactory response has been received.

Index of the documents submitted in this PCR Public Consultation Response

- Summary & Index (2 pages)

This document

0. Introduction (2 pages)

GR-HE-A417-PCR-2019-11-0a.pdf

A discussion of missing path crossings using Highways England video fly through.

1. Brockworth to Shab Hill (9 pages)

GR-HE-A417-PCR-2019-11-1a.pdf

Is the green bridge green enough?

2. Green Bridge (2 pages)

GR-HE-A417-PCR-2019-11-2a.pdf

A discussion of Shab Hill to Cowley Junction using Highways England video fly through

3. Shab Hill to Cowley Junction (5 pages)

GR-HE-A417-PCR-2019-11-3a.pdf

Is alternative 2 better than other options and alternatives?

4. Alternative 2 (1 page)

GR-HE-A417-PCR-2019-11-4a.pdf

How much of the current road can be repurposed?

5. Current A417 repurposing (1 page)

GR-HE-A417-PCR-2019-11-5a.pdf

Will footpaths stay open during construction?

6. During Construction (1 page)

GR-HE-A417-PCR-2019-11-6a.pdf

Discuss the landscape and other environmental issues not covered elsewhere

7. Environmental Information (2 pages)

GR-HE-A417-PCR-2019-11-7a.pdf

8. Anything Else

Response to Walking, Cycling and Horseriding Technical Working Group (7 pages)

GR-HE-A417-PCR-2019-11-8a.pdf

HE-Proposals-Review (6 pages)

GR-A417-HE-Proposals-Review-2019-10.pdf

A review of Highways England proposals including Option 3 the 1km tunnel, their Option 30, a simplified (greened up) version Option 30 and an update showing use of 'Alternative 2' with Shab Hill junction. Also includes a list of footpath numbers and highways numbers.

Green bridges tunnels and cuttings (1 page)

GR-A417-green-bridges-tunnels-2019-07.pdf

The A27 tunnel just below surface in the South Downs (1 page)

GR-A417-A27-tunnel.pdf