

Northern Route Option 1

Northern Route Option 2

Northern Route Option 3

Northern Link

Banwell Bypass & Highways Improvements

Consultation Report



ion 2

Link

A368

Towerbrook Farm
The Haybarn
Towerhead Farm
Towerbrook Farm Depot



24.3m

20.1m

19.0m

Banwell Wood

Banwell Plain Fort

Banwell Plain Fort

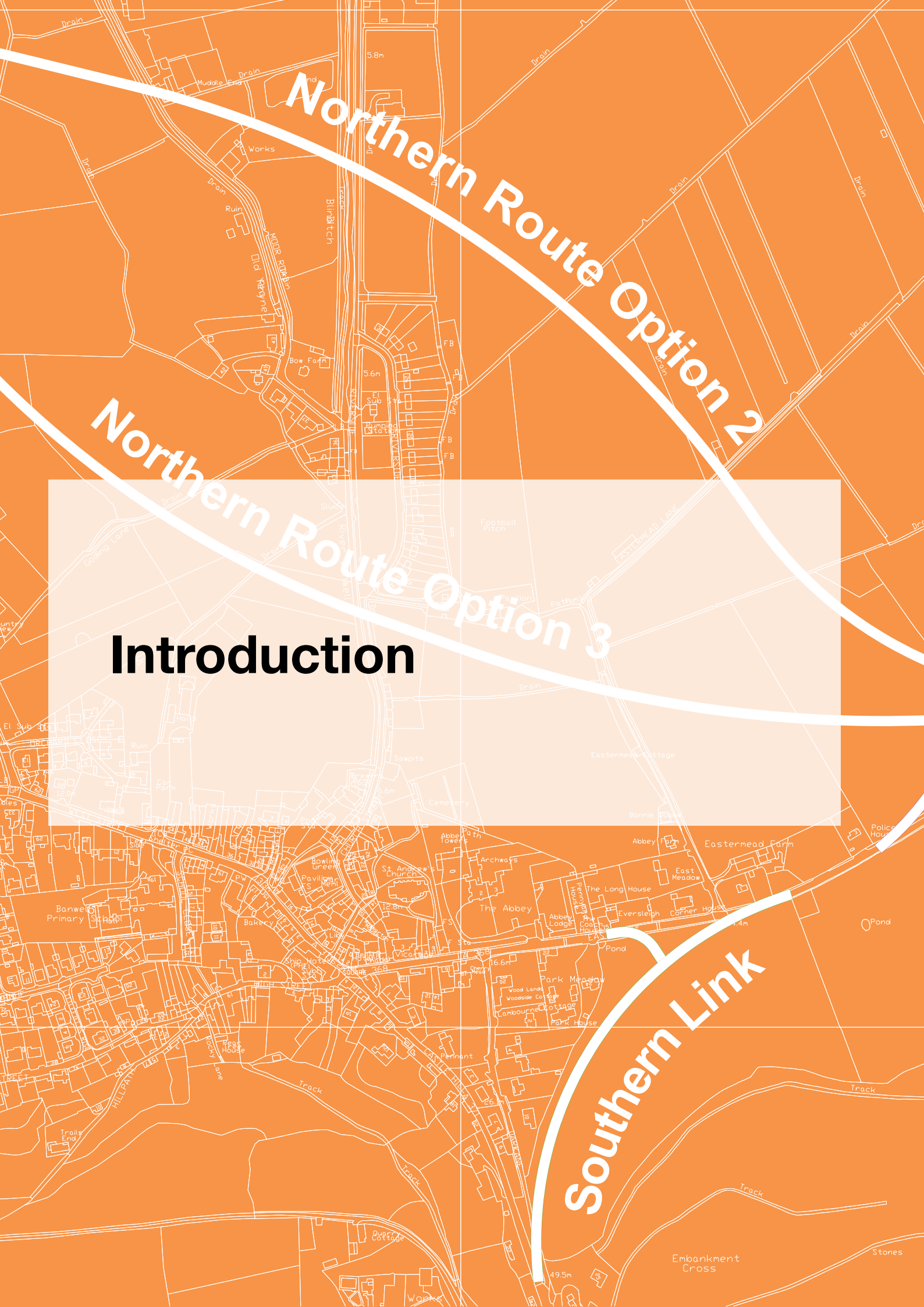
Banwell Wood

bankment
Cross

Stones

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Introduction

Southern Link

Overview

This public consultation report has been prepared to present a summary of the Banwell Bypass and Highway Improvements consultation, which ran for six weeks from 5 July to 16 August 2021.

This was a non-statutory consultation, to gather feedback to help inform a route decision for the Banwell bypass and to inform highways improvements that could reduce the potential impacts of the scheme on both the local community and road users. The feedback along with findings from environmental surveys and technical investigations, will help the council decide how we develop the bypass' design and associated works to mitigate impacts resulting from the bypass.

In the consultation, North Somerset Council (NSC) provided information about the project and asked the public for views on:

- How they use the A371 and A368 and what the existing problems are.

- NSC's favoured Banwell bypass route.
- Possible mitigations or enhancements for Banwell and the wider local road network.

Information to support the consultation included a long list of alternative options considered by NSC.

Of the options considered, a bypass to the north of Banwell was deemed to be the most appropriate solution and, consequently, three routes to the north of Banwell were shortlisted. These were the routes taken forward to this first public consultation.

Following this consultation, the council's design consultant, Arup, will develop the bypass' design and identify highways improvements needed to reduce impacts of the scheme. The council will consult the public again to seek their views on this more developed scheme early in 2022.

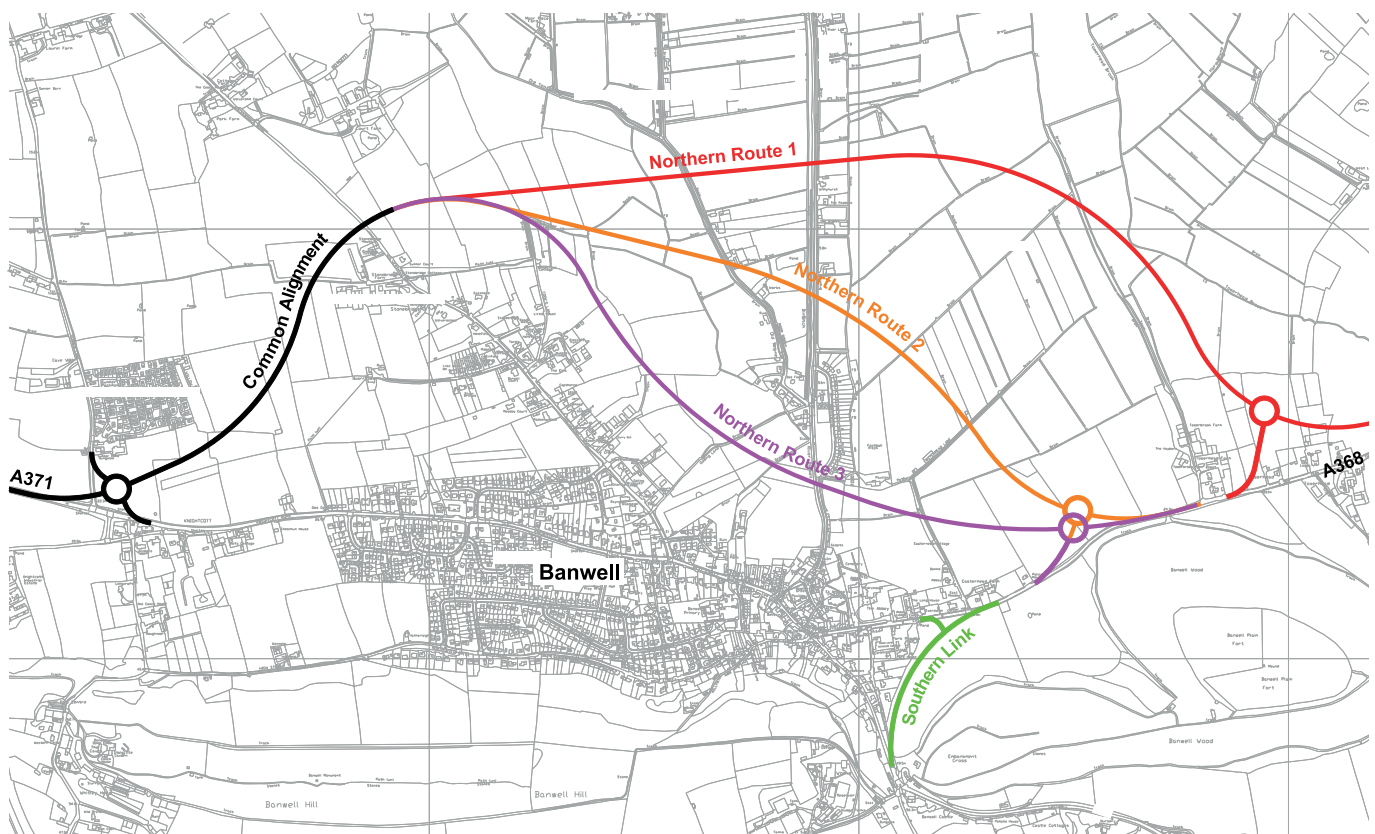


Figure 1: Shortlisted bypass route options

Scheme background

In 2019, NSC successfully secured £97.1 million of funding from Homes England's Housing Infrastructure Fund to deliver the essential infrastructure needed to benefit existing communities and support the delivery of 7,557 new homes. 4,482 of these new homes will be located at the existing Weston Villages development sites of Haywood Village and Locking Parklands. The location of the remaining homes will be subject to the new Local Plan process.

Banwell has experienced the negative impact of traffic congestion on its local community, economy and environment since the 1930s. These problems have worsened over the years as new developments have brought increased population and traffic to the area. As outlined in the consultation supporting documents, a bypass to the north of Banwell, including a Southern Link Road, is considered the most appropriate solution, providing local opportunities for active travel such as walking and cycling, and significantly reducing the flow of traffic within Banwell village.

The Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) will be used to build the new bypass of the village of Banwell, fund improvements to the surrounding roads and pathways, improve the area's utilities network and provide an expansion of Winterstoke Hundred Academy secondary school in Locking Parklands.

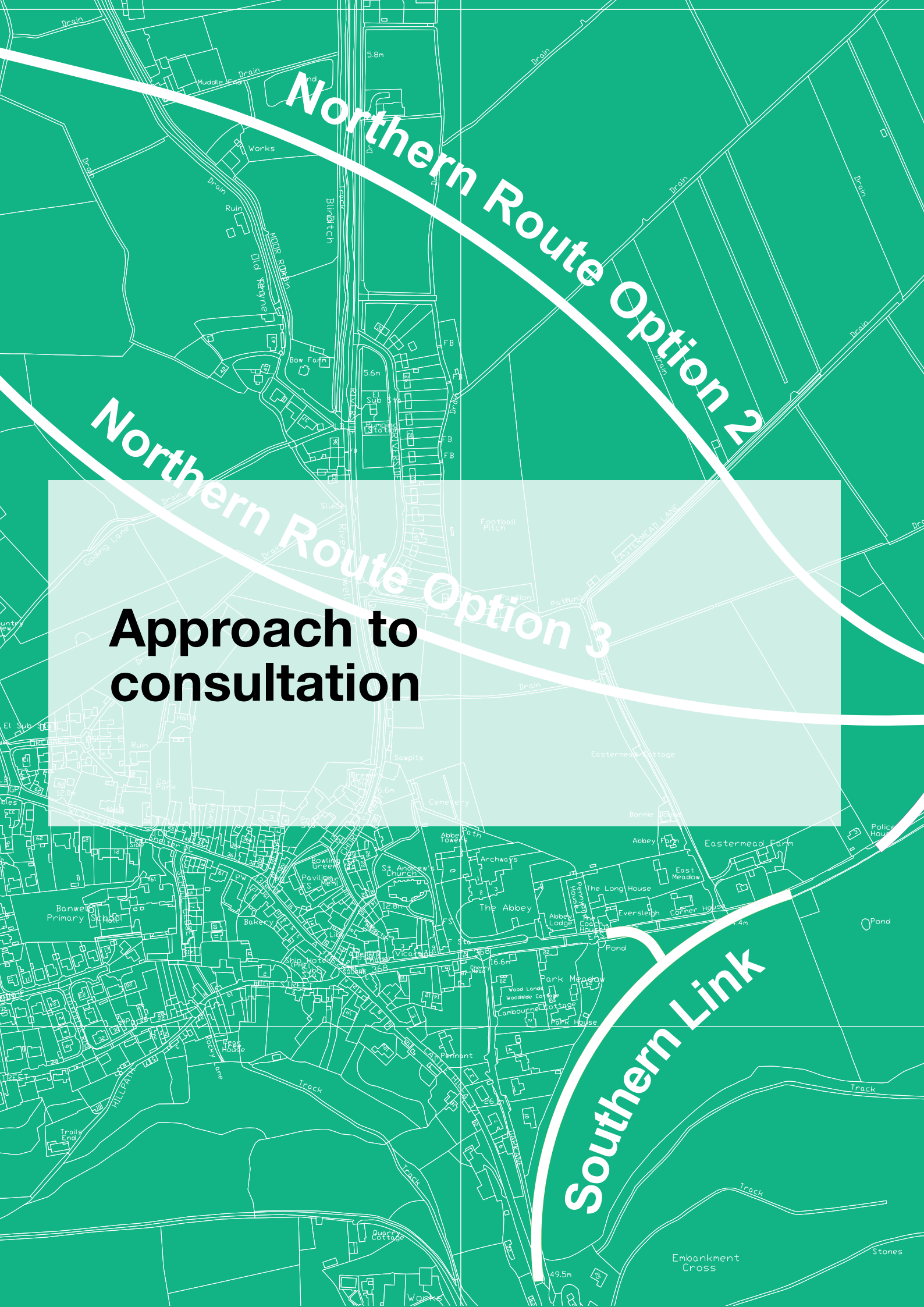
In Spring 2021, the council appointed Alun Griffiths (contractors) Ltd, with Arup & TACP as technical and environmental designers/advisors, who have undertaken a route option appraisal for the bypass, looking at evidence collected in surveys and technical investigations to weigh up the positive and negative impacts of the route options presented in the public consultation materials.

The council has set the following scheme objectives, which are to:

- Improve the local road network to deal with existing congestion issues.
- Improve and enhance Banwell's public spaces by reducing traffic severance and improving the public realm.
- Provide the opportunity to increase active and sustainable travel between local villages and Weston-super-Mare.
- Deliver infrastructure that enables housing development (subject to Local Plan).
- Ensure the development respects the local area and minimises visual impact upon the surrounding countryside and Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- Innovative and efficient in reducing and offsetting carbon from the design and construction of the infrastructure.
- Ensure the development provides the opportunity to increase bio-diversity net gain by at least 10%.
- Proactively engage with stakeholders in a way that is both clear and transparent.

Scheme timeline

Key Dates	Activity	Description
Summer 2021	Complete Consultation and Option Appraisal	Following this consultation, we will consider all feedback and review the route options further (otherwise known as an option appraisal) to help confirm a preferred route.
Early 2022	Pre-Application Consultation	After deciding a preferred route, work will begin on the preliminary design of the bypass and the Environmental Impact Assessment. We will consult with you again during this design process so that you can have another opportunity to share your views before the bypass' planning application is submitted.
Spring/ Summer 2022	Submission of Planning Application and Land Acquisition	A planning application must be submitted for the bypass. This would seek approval from the Local Planning Authority to progress to construction. The public will have the opportunity to comment on proposals through the planning process. By agreement with landowners, we will be seeking to acquire land and rights required to build the bypass and any environmental or other mitigation works that would be involved. It is envisaged that a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) will be required in order to ensure the bypass can be delivered. This will enable the Council to acquire any land and rights that would be required to build the bypass and any environmental mitigation work that would be involved, should agreement not be reached with landowners and affected parties.
Winter 2022/ 2023	Anticipated Public Inquiry and Statutory Process	If there are objections to the CPO that cannot be resolved, a public inquiry may be required. An independent Inspector would hear evidence, in front of the public, from interested parties and stakeholders. The Inspector would make a recommendation to the Secretary of State on how to proceed. The decision whether to confirm the CPO would rest with the Secretary of State.
2023	Expected Start on Site	If planning consent is granted for the bypass, any land not already acquired for construction would be acquired and work on site would begin.
2024	Open to Traffic	If the plans go ahead without delay, the bypass will be open to traffic in 2024.



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**Approach to
consultation**

Southern Link

Prior engagement

In May, before the launch of the consultation, community working groups were set up with the help of Banwell, Churchill and Winscombe & Sandford Parish Councils. These provided a forum for members (put forward by the parishes) to share their aspirations for the bypass project and wider road network improvements, as well as raise their concerns about possible impacts of the scheme on their local area. The suggestions for highway improvements from these working groups were included in the consultation material.

Engagement

Over the course of the six-week, non-statutory consultation the council provided a range of opportunities for local people to engage and respond.

On Monday 5 July the consultation was launched online using the council's eConsult system. Ensuring the consultation was both inclusive and accessible was a key priority, so paper consultations were also made available (on request) for residents without internet access and the council's customer services team were available to support over the phone.

Documents to help residents respond to the consultation were made available online and by post, and two public information drop-ins were held through the day and into the evening in Banwell and Churchill. The purpose of these sessions was to present the information from the consultation documents and provide an opportunity for attendees to ask questions of the project team. Covid-19 was a key consideration in organising the sessions and efforts were made to ensure the venues were covid-secure and social distancing adhered to.

In organising these sessions, residents of Sandford and the Winscombe & Sandford Parish Council raised concerns about residents of the Sandford Station Retirement Village being unable to make the journey to either Banwell or Churchill and so, acting on these concerns, a further daytime session was held in Sandford to ensure their inclusion.

In addition to the public information drop-in events, statutory and non-statutory groups were invited to engage in environmentally focussed discussions – including Natural England, Somerset Internal Drainage Board, Environment Agency, and Mendip Hills AONB.

These responses, along with consultation feedback, will help to inform some of the areas of focus in the bypass' preliminary design.

Promotion and materials

Inclusivity was a key focus of the consultation, providing a range of ways for residents to get involved and share their feedback, regardless of where they live in the local area.

To achieve this the following channels were used to promote the consultation:

- The dedicated Banwell bypass webpage on the NSC website was updated at launch of the consultation to include large buttons linking directly to the eConsult platform, along with further details of the drop-in information events.
- The launch of the consultation was also supported with a press release, published on the news section of the NSC website. The release also informed articles in several local papers and a broadcast piece on ITV West Country.
- Postcards were delivered to 3500 households in Banwell and neighbouring villages at the launch of the consultation, providing links to the council website and the online survey, as well as details of drop-in events and the customer services phone number.
- An article about the bypass with signposting to the consultation was included in the summer edition of the council's North Somerset Life magazine, delivered to approximately 100,000 households in the area.

- Further signposting was included in the council's eLife newsletter which is sent to a distribution list of approx. 70,000 email addresses.
- Throughout the consultation period, the council's corporate social media channels were used to highlight the consultation and signpost to the eConsult platform. Over the six-week period social media posts achieved over 20,000 reach and 8,000 engagements on Facebook and NextDoor.
- Parish councils also supported the consultation in line with the council's messaging using their own social media channels to reach their communities.

As well as promoting the consultation to the public, letters were sent to significant statutory and non-statutory groups and bodies in advance of the launch to ensure they were able to respond in an official capacity.

Landowners previously contacted regarding surveys and investigation works also received letters in advance of the consultation to provide notice of the launch date.



Feedback

Formal responses to the consultation were accepted by completion of the online survey, or by paper copies returned to the council, by Monday 16 August.

In addition to the formal consultation responses, several written responses were sent to the Banwell bypass email inbox or by post.

Drop-in events in Banwell, Churchill and Sandford were promoted as information events for general enquiries and residents attending were encouraged to formally share their feedback using either the online survey or paper copies (which were available to take away).

A number of completed paper copy surveys were received by officers at the drop in events.

The project team also responded to general enquiries over email to help consultees access the online consultation (or paper copies). Enquiries regarding consultation access were responded to within ten working days where possible.

Formal responses were received from residents, businesses and other local bodies, including Banwell, Churchill and Winscombe & Sandford parish councils.

Analysis approach

All consultation responses received were analysed to understand individual views, opinions and suggestions on the bypass and highway improvements to minimise potential impacts of the scheme.

Responses to closed consultation questions were collated and analysed in detail to understand the overall findings and to identify key differences in responses from the range of user groups.

All free text responses were analysed in two stages:

1. Analysis by theme

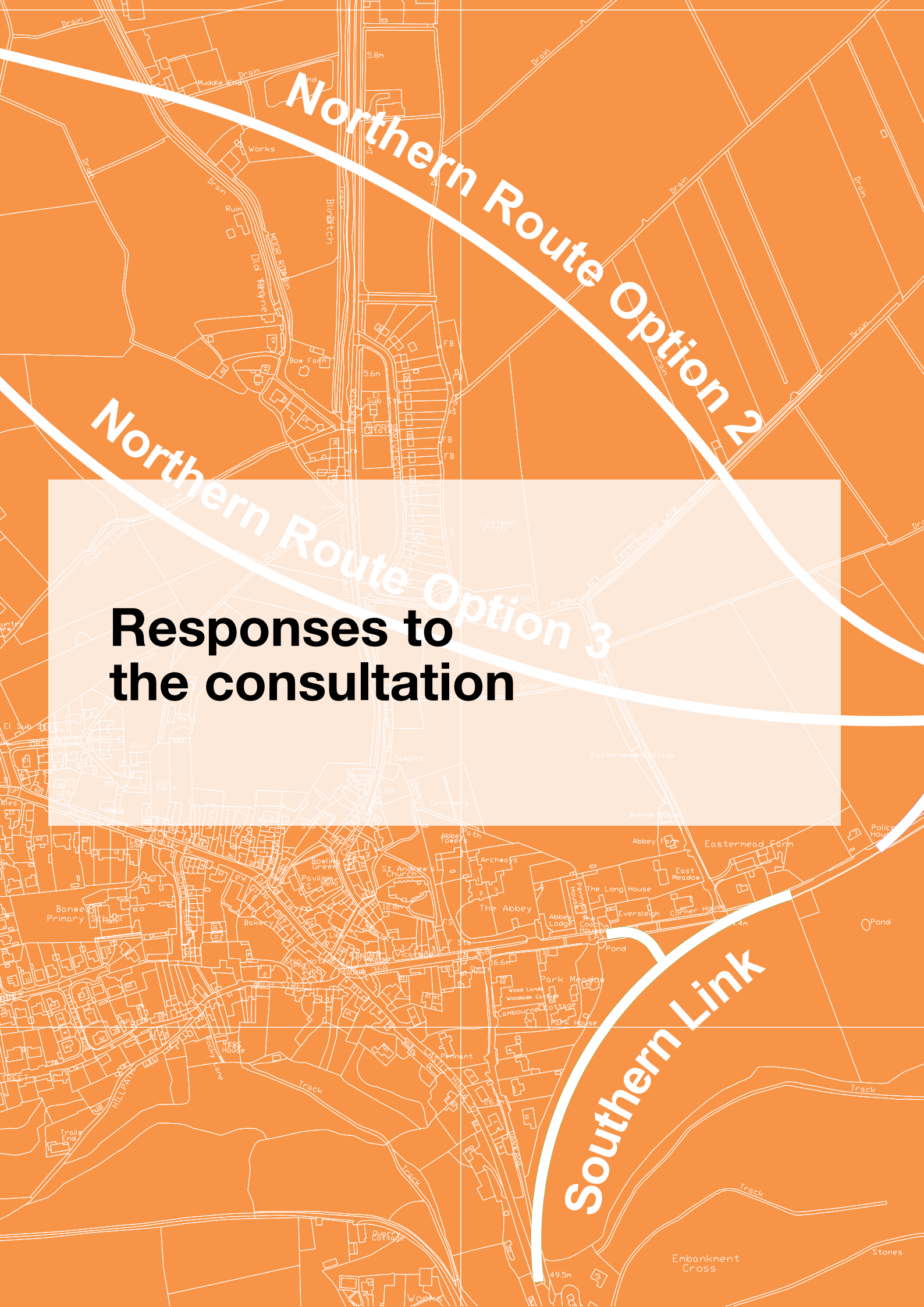
Identifying common topics and ideas that came up repeatedly to produce a high-level summary of the responses.

2. Identification of 'matters' raised

Looking at individual suggestions raised within each of the key topics and themes and, where appropriate, combining them to form a single overarching matter.

Each matter raised was passed on to the technical team for consideration in development of the bypass' design. The team's responses to the key themes can be found in section 4.





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Responses to the consultation

Southern Link

Summary

A total of 1135 formal survey responses were received during the consultation period and a further 37 letters and written responses were also returned to the council.

Not all respondents answered every question when completing the consultation survey, but all responses were considered in the assessment. As a result, the total number of responses to each question varies.

In this section, key findings from both the consultation survey and supplementary written responses are drawn together to summarise the feedback received.

This has been divided into the following sections:

Section 3.2

General Questions

Section 3.3

The current situation
(Questions 1.1 to 1.6 of the consultation)

Section 3.4

Banwell bypass
(Questions 2.1 to 2.10 of the consultation)

Section 3.5

Banwell placemaking
(Questions 3.1 to 3.4 of the consultation)

Section 3.6

Wider enhancements
(Questions 4.1 to 4.3 of the consultation)

Section 3.7

Key themes and comments
from general consultation feedback.

General questions

Consultation responses were sought from both businesses and individuals with 79% of responses representing individuals.

The age of respondents is shown in the figure below.

Consultation responses were received from a range of locations with 32% of responses being made by residents of Banwell and 38% of responses obtained from the surrounding villages of Sandford, Winscombe and Churchill. 26% of responses came from individuals in different parts of North Somerset such as Blagdon, Weston-super-Mare and Clevedon. 96% of the respondents were based in North Somerset and 4% came from wider areas such as Somerset, Bristol, and Wiltshire.

21% of total respondents recorded that they have a business in the area. Figure 4 details the split between where these businesses are located. 38% responded 'other' with businesses located in Congresbury, Langford, Wrington and Bristol.

Figure 2: How old are you?

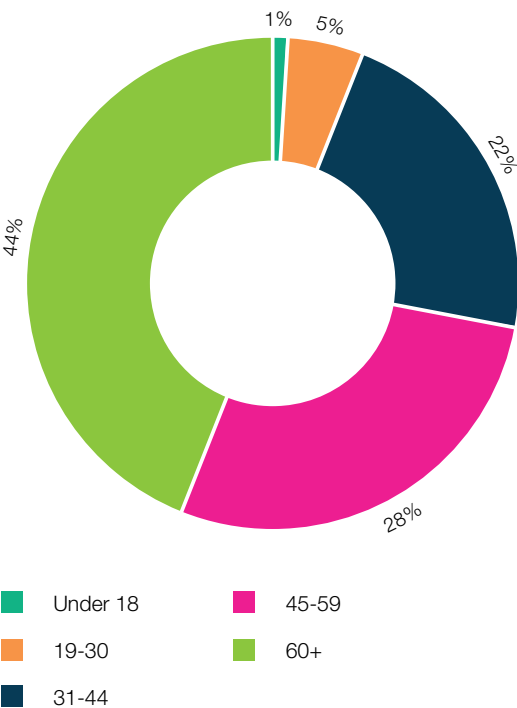


Figure 3: Where do you live?

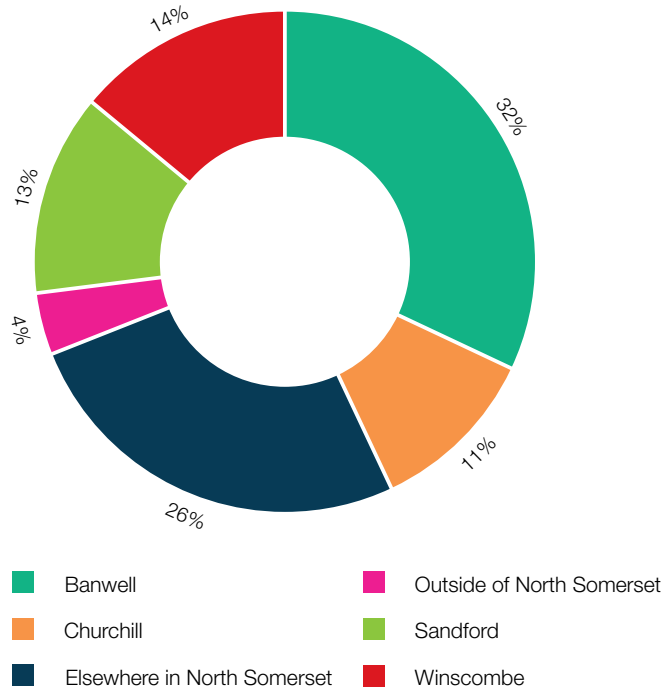
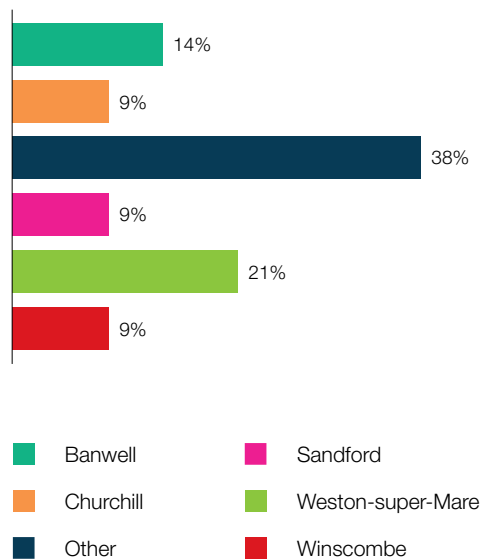


Figure 4: If you have businesses where is it based?



The current situation

Question 1.1

Respondents were asked how they currently used the A371 between Banwell and Winscombe and the A368 between Banwell and Churchill.

They could choose more than one option and recreation was most popular (607 responses) with many commenting that they use the routes to visit family or friends, for cycling and horse riding and to access the M5 for onward journeys.

Question 1.2

Respondents were asked which of these routes they used most. 57% said the A368 through Banwell to Churchill and the remaining 43% said the A371 (to Winscombe). 814 respondents answered this question in total.

Question 1.3

This question asked when respondents mainly used the A371 and A368. Figure 6 identifies the times of day that road users make use of both the A371 and A368. There is correlation between the responses of figure 5 and figure 6, many of the trips associated with 'recreation' or 'shopping' occur during the week but outside of peak hours (37%) or on weekends (32%). Primarily, those who must travel for business use, commuting and school runs make up the 31% of journeys undertaken during the AM and PM peaks.

Figure 5: How do you currently use the A371 (Banwell to Winscombe) and A368 (between Banwell and Churchill) routes?

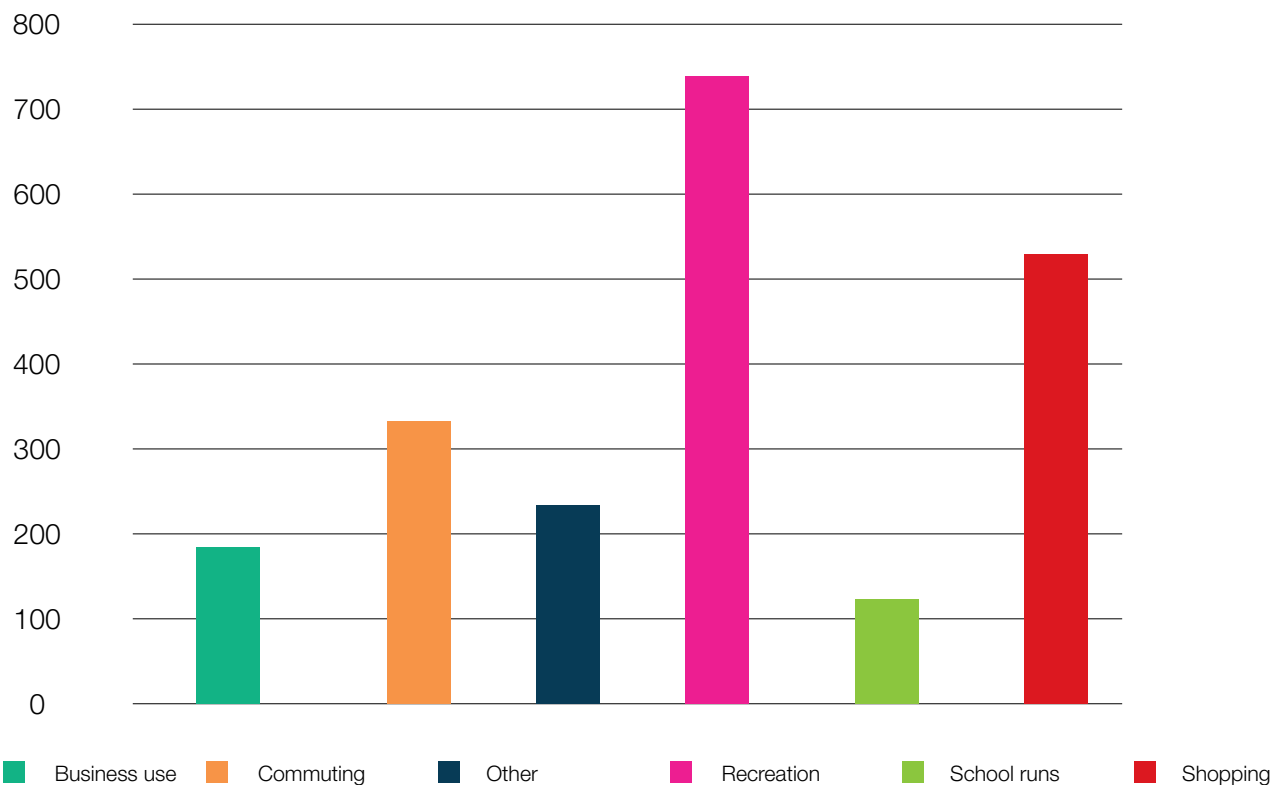
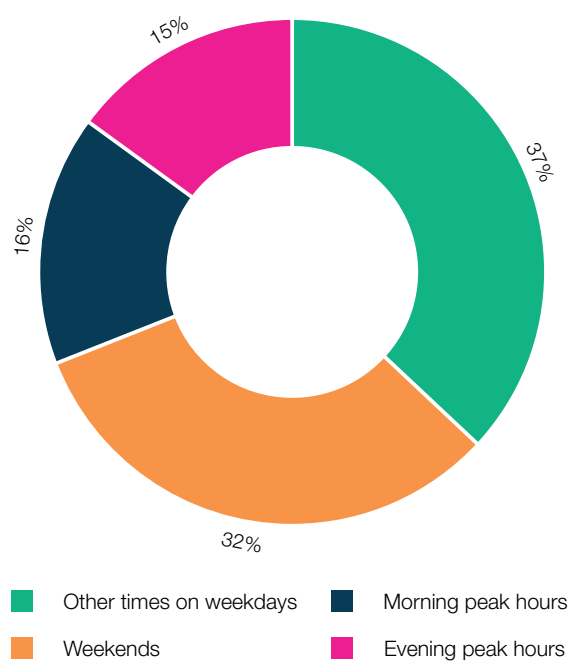


Figure 6: When do you mainly use the A371 (Banwell to Winscombe) and A368 (between Banwell and Churchill)?



Questions 1.4, 1.5 and 1.6

Respondents were requested to provide feedback on their level of concern about local roads as they are at present. These questions sought feedback on different sections of the highway network:

- The A371 through Banwell (Q1.4).
- The A368 between Banwell and Churchill (Q1.5).
- The A371 between Banwell and Winscombe (Q1.6).

Each question asked for comment on the following issues:

- Road safety.
- Traffic congestion and delays.
- The impact of traffic on residential properties (including air quality and noise).
- Impact on employment/businesses.
- Impact of traffic on schools/doctors/others.
- Walking and cycling facilities.



Table 1: How concerned are you about the current situation on the A371 through Banwell?

A371 through Banwell	Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Neutral	Somewhat unconcerned	Very unconcerned
Road Safety	582	262	105	43	15
Traffic congestion and delays	761	163	50	21	12
Impact of traffic on residential properties (including impacts of air quality and noise)	647	215	95	27	19
Impact of traffic on Employment and business	308	305	290	64	37
Impact of traffic on Schools, Doctors (and other services)	454	296	179	48	26
Walking and cycling facilities	560	222	148	46	30

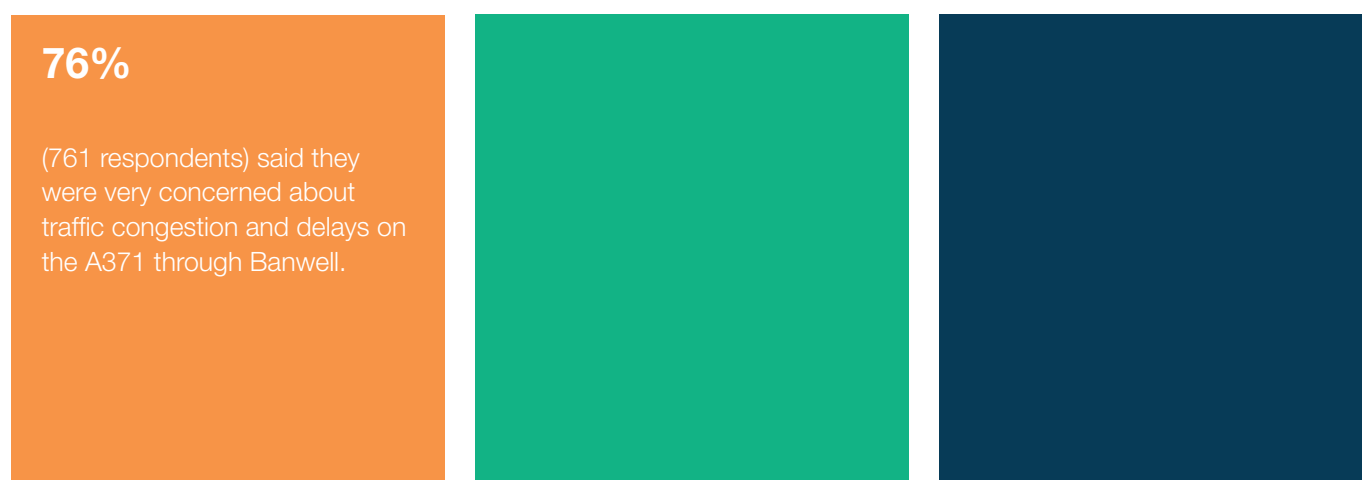
Table 2: How concerned are you about the current situation on the A368 between Banwell and Churchill?

Road Safety	511	280	131	48	31
Traffic congestion and delays	586	234	114	38	28
Impact of traffic on residential properties (including impacts of air quality and noise)	519	260	144	52	25
Impact of traffic on Employment and business	270	296	303	77	49
Impact of traffic on Schools, Doctors (and other services)	402	282	221	61	32
Walking and cycling facilities	544	216	151	47	41

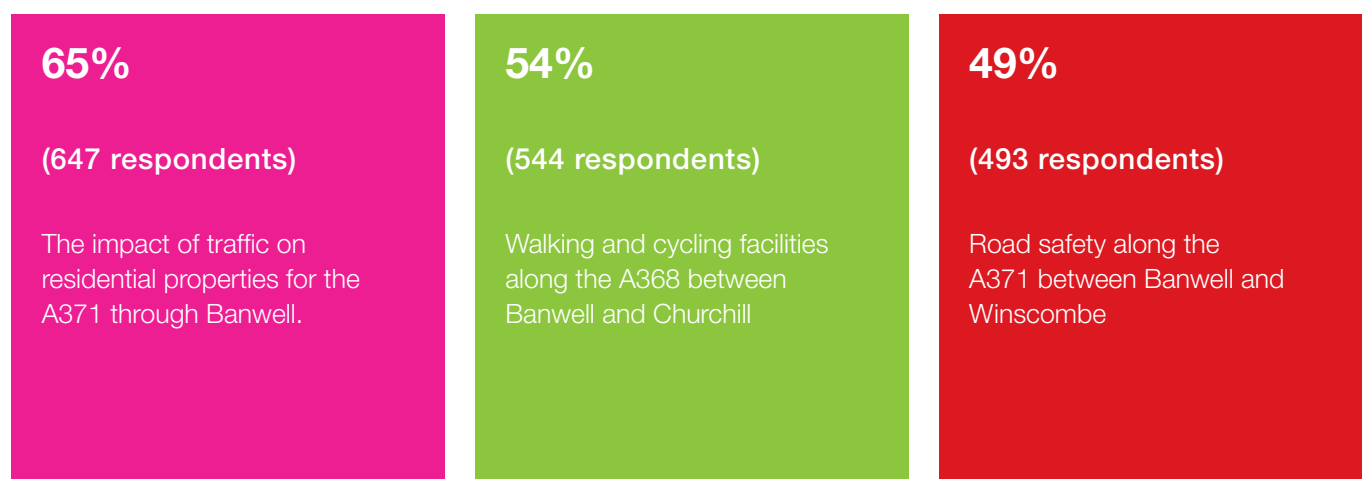
Table 3: How concerned are you about the current situation on the A371 between Banwell and Winscombe?

A371 between Banwell and Winscombe	Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Neutral	Somewhat unconcerned	Very unconcerned
Road Safety	493	280	153	42	29
Traffic congestion and delays	546	236	148	44	24
Impact of traffic on residential properties (including impacts of air quality and noise)	453	253	208	46	35
Impact of traffic on Employment and business	262	304	321	58	49
Impact of traffic on Schools, Doctors (and other services)	350	277	275	49	38
Walking and cycling facilities	481	236	187	44	46

Traffic congestion and delay was considered the highest area of concern by respondents for various routes through Banwell and onwards to local villages:



The following issues were highlighted with the second highest votes under the category 'very concerned':



Banwell bypass

Question 2.1

Consultation participants expressed a high level of support when asked whether there was a need for a bypass at Banwell, with 79% (of a total 877 respondents) saying yes. Additional comments were invited as part of question 2.1 and the emerging themes are summarised below.

1. Comments of support

Noted that the bypass has been discussed for a number of years and that the problems have worsened in that time, with several responses noting that their peak journey times often took upwards of an hour due to travelling through Banwell.

2. Comments of support with concern

Among responses supporting the bypass some common concerns were raised, primarily the environmental impact of the bypass and moving traffic to Sandford, Winscombe and Churchill.

3. Do not support

Main themes of comments focussed on the concerns that a bypass will encourage further housing development. The most common reason for not supporting the bypass was the potential impact on neighbouring villages; two alternatives were suggested, these were the request for a bypass of all villages that connected directly to the A38 and traffic lights in Banwell instead of a bypass.

Question 2.2

We asked whether the public supported the need for wider improvements to mitigate potential impacts of the bypass. Of the 861 responses received, 88% said yes. Comments arising from this question requested traffic calming measures for surrounding villages, such as gateways or chicanes for Sandford; speed bumps through Sandford and Churchill; weight limits to restrict HGV use of the A368; and a '20 is plenty' scheme through Winscombe and Sandford to create a safer environment around the primary schools.

Other key themes included requests for improved footways and cycle paths and improvements to the public transport network to encourage a shift from cars to more sustainable means of travel. Several roads were named as locations for extra consideration, Wolvershill Road in particular, and its use to access the M5 at Junction 21.

Those who responded 'no' to the question (12%) were from those who did not support a bypass and therefore commented that wider improvements were not necessary or, because the only suitable mitigation considered was a bypass of Banwell, Sanford and Churchill directly to the A38.

Question 2.3

The project team asked the public to rank the scheme objectives in order of importance:

This question received 830 responses. 44% of respondents ranked 'improve the local road network to deal with existing congestion issues' as being of the highest importance to them. 24% of respondents ranked 'proactive engagement with stakeholders' as being of the highest importance to them and 16% of respondents ranked 'ensuring the development respects the local area and minimises impact on the surrounding area' as being of the highest importance to them.

Question 2.4

When asked if route 2 (NSC currently favoured route) would best achieve the scheme objectives. 411 respondents said yes. 425 said no. 300 did not specify either way but made general comments on the bypass.

Question 2.5

The survey asked whether any alternatives better meet the scheme objectives. 328 said yes there was a better alternative, 500 said no and 307 did not specify either way. In order to review the responses against each route option we have analysed question 2.4 and 2.5 together.

There was a total of 853 responses to question 2.4 and 2.5 which gave an indication of which route option they felt best met the Council's objectives. Responses which did not select yes or no but provided comment on their favoured option in the free text box have been included in the analysis.

Where respondents said route 2 would best meet the scheme objectives but then provided further comments in question 2.5 regarding another route they thought could also achieve scheme objectives, both responses have been considered in assessment of the results.

In addition, a further two options have been included in the analysis based on the frequency of their mentions. The results are presented in figure 8:

Figure 7: Scheme objectives ranked as most important by the public

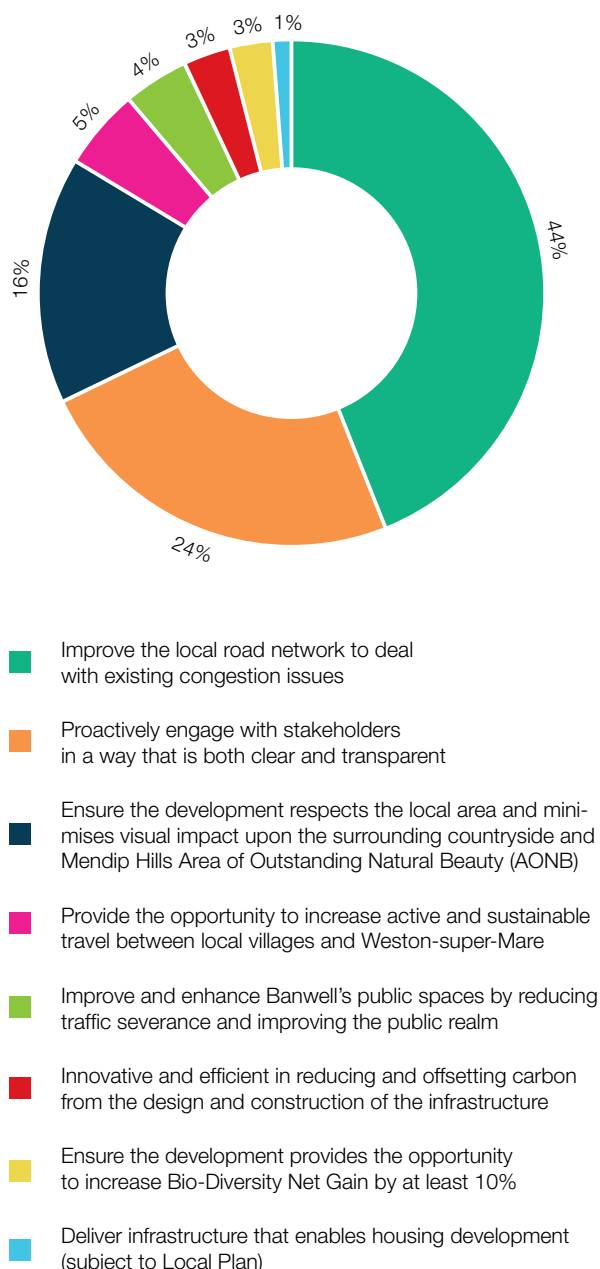
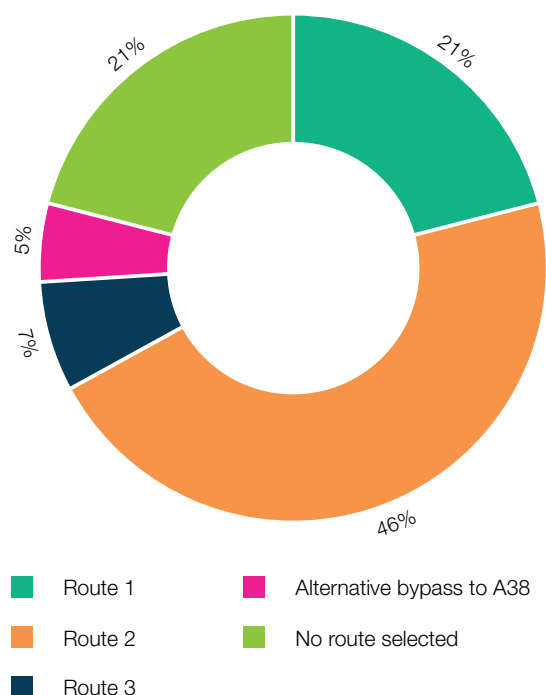


Figure 8: Which route best meets the scheme objectives?



21% of respondents responded 'no' to both questions, commenting that none of the options presented were favourable as there was not sufficient information to make an informed decision, or that all options would result in traffic being moved onto Sandford, Churchill and Winscombe.

5% of respondents referred to the need for a bypass linking directly to the A38 to avoid impacts of a bypass on surrounding villages.

There were also comments that the construction of a bypass did not seem appropriate with NSC's climate emergency declaration.

Route 1

Many of those in favour of route 1 (21%) commented that this was the only option they would describe as a bypass and favoured the distance from Banwell village noting that this option would have less noise and air pollution impact on the village. Less favourable reasons for route one focussed on environmental and wildlife impact, noting that the longer route would result in an increase in carbon emissions during both construction and use.

Route 3

Route 3 received less votes with only 7% considering this the better option. Comments in support referred to the shortness of the route and therefore lesser impact on the countryside. It was perceived that this route would provide less options for local housing development 'infilling' between bypass and the existing village.

Question 2.6

When asked if we had missed any options from our long list. 62% voted no. The remaining 38% voted yes, some of the suggestions for our consideration included:

- Improvements to the existing road through Banwell, using traffic lights, one-way systems and weight restrictions.
- Better safe cycling and walking routes connecting the local villages.
- That the Southern Link proposed should use the existing National Grid haul route. This is addressed in section 6.9 in the Options Appraisal Report.
- A bypass of Sandford, Winscombe and Churchill connecting with the A38 should be considered.

Bypass cross-section and speed limit

The following questions were about elements of the bypass design, such as carriageways, speed limits and how the bypass should join with the existing road network.

Question 2.7

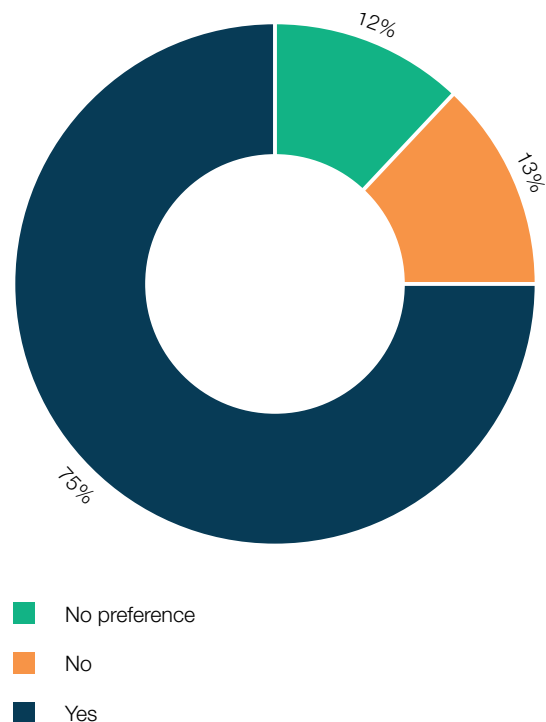
When asked whether respondents agreed with the NSC's proposal that the bypass should be single carriageway. Figure 9 shows 75% of responses supported proposals to construct a single carriageway bypass.

Many responses noted that a single carriageway would be in-keeping with the surrounding road network and would have less of an impact on the environment.

Many also said that a dual carriageway would likely result in increased speeds and accidents with several stating the need to provide dedicated cycle and walking lanes and horse crossings.

Comments against a single carriageway raised concerns about need to cater for future demand created by additional housing, with others mentioning that passing places or areas of dualling would be preferred to accommodate overtaking of farm vehicles.

Figure 9: Do you agree that the bypass should be single carriageway?



Question 2.8

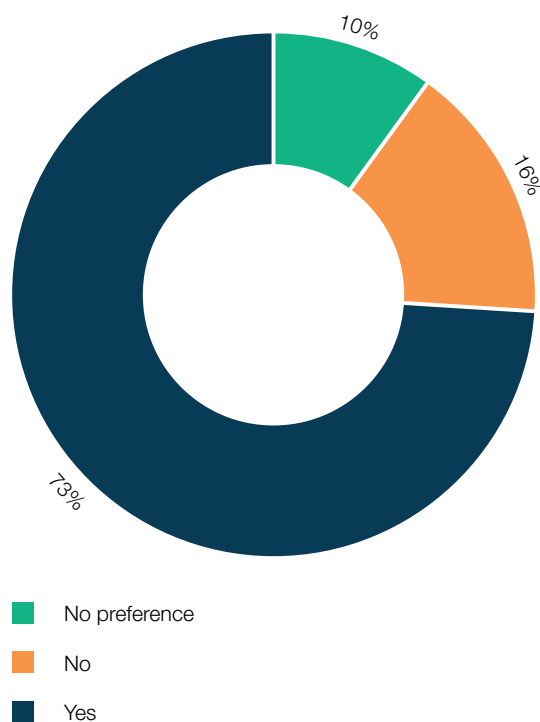
When asked whether respondents agreed with the NSC's proposal for a 40mph speed limit on the bypass. The proposal was widely accepted with 73% of respondents agreeing that this was appropriate.

Comments of support said that this mirrored the surrounding network and that faster vehicle speeds would likely result in more noise.

There were opposing comments from those who voted 'no' with varying comments that the speed should be reduced to 30mph and also increased to 50mph:



Figure 10: Do you agree that the speed limit of the proposed bypass should be 40mph?



Question 2.9

The public were asked to consider how the bypass should cross over Riverside. The option of a junction between the two roads was offered, or no junction but with an overbridge to maintain access to the local road network. The following responses were received in figure 11.

Those in support of a junction said that this would improve access to Riverside, discourage the use of Church Street and West Street, and have a traffic calming effect on the bypass.

Those in support of an overbridge said that a junction would create/maintain a 'rat run' for traffic trying to reach the M5 and that an overbridge would maintain the village feel of Riverside area, whilst providing greater safety to walkers, cyclists and horse riders and would ensure the flow of traffic could be maintained along the bypass.

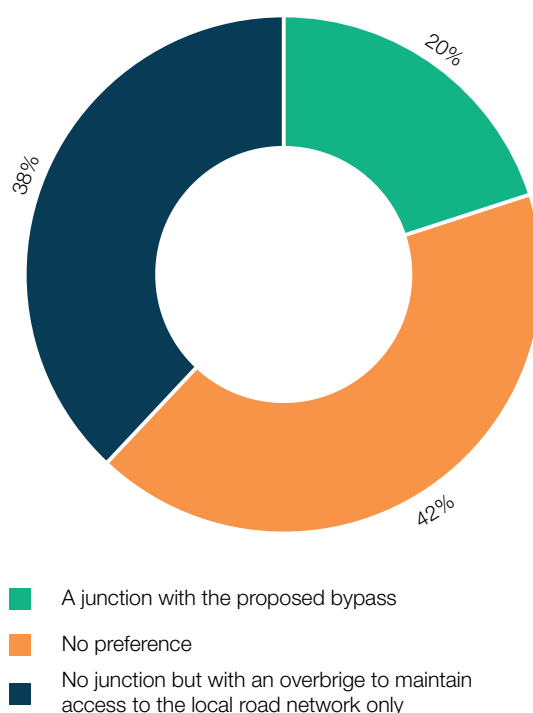
Other comments included consideration of a roundabout in this location and suggested that, whichever solution is taken forward, consideration is made to restrict access to HGV's as they are often re-routed along Riverside when there are accidents on the M5.

Question 2.10

This question looked at the proposed Southern Link which would connect Banwell bypass to the A371 towards Winscombe and significantly lower traffic levels in Banwell village. 58% of respondents agreed that the proposal was the best solution with comments reiterating that this would provide an alternative to Castle Hill and Dark Lane and would improve traffic flow.

Several comments also requested that pedestrians and cyclists be catered for via the existing road network and that Castle Hill should restrict/prevent through traffic via Castle Hill once the Southern Link is opened.

Figure 11: What arrangements would you like to see where the bypass meets Riverside?



The main themes of comments from those who didn't agree with the Southern Link were around environmental concerns, in particular how the road will impact the AONB and manage the impact of flooding and drainage issues. There were concerns about the visual and noise impact associated with a new road in this location and whether there was a need for it, requesting further traffic modelling to evidence the requirement for the Southern Link.

Figure 12: Do you agree that the Southern Link will be the best solution for meeting the traffic needs and associated impact to Banwell Village?



Banwell placemaking

Question 3.1

Participants were asked why they spend time in Banwell. There were 836 responses of which 40% were from local residents, 21% were from commuters driving through the village, 14% said that they spend time in Banwell as visitors and 23% selected 'other'. Some of the reasons captured under the heading of 'other' were:

- School runs.
- Horse riding.
- For recreational purposes such as accessing the football club, walking, cycling.
- Visiting family and friends.
- Visiting the medical centre.
- Passing through to get to another location.
- Accessing shops and businesses in Banwell.
- Accessing land.
- Visiting the parish council or attending events at the village hall.

Question 3.2

Question 3.2 asked whether participants would like to see more walking and cycling facilities within Banwell and the surrounding area, 86% answered yes to this question.

Question 3.3

Placemaking refers to improvements to the design of public spaces and questions 3.3 and 3.4 focused on possible placemaking in Banwell facilitated by the scheme. Participants were asked to rank various placemaking measures and to comment on what other measures they would like to see implemented in the centre of Banwell.

Question 3.3 asked participants to rank placemaking measures in Banwell on a scale of 1-8 with 1 being most important and 8 least important.

Figure 13: What us your main purpose of spending time in Banwell village?

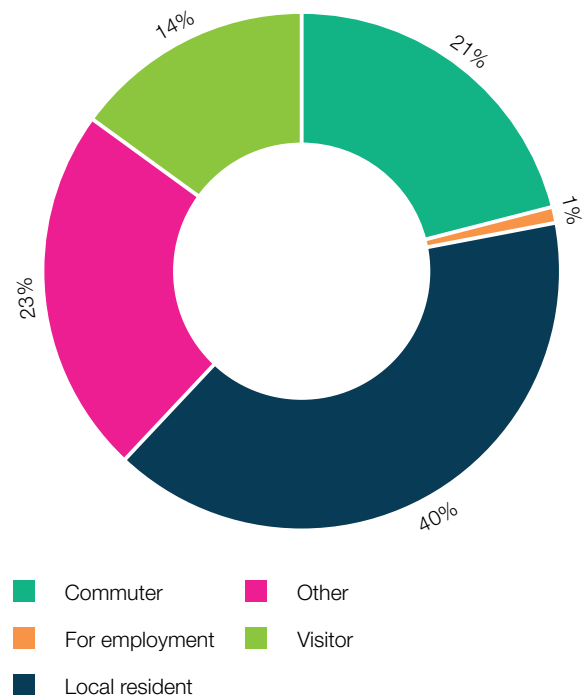


Figure 14 shows what was given a score of 1 and ranked 'most important'. The most popular at 42% was traffic measures such as traffic enforcement, traffic calming, reduced speed limits, priority systems in the narrows. This was followed by public transport improvements at 19% and active travel infrastructure at 18%.

Question 3.4

There were 244 responses to question 3.4 'do you think there are any other placemaking measures we should consider?'

There was a lot of support for safe cycling and walking routes which included links to Winscombe, Sandford & Churchill and links to the Strawberry Line.

Another popular request was the prohibiting of HGV's either by making the village access only or by implementing weight restrictions.

Question 3.4 continued

Although this question was focused on placemaking in Banwell village it was also noted that support for prohibiting HGV's was strongly expressed for Winscombe, Sandford and Churchill too.

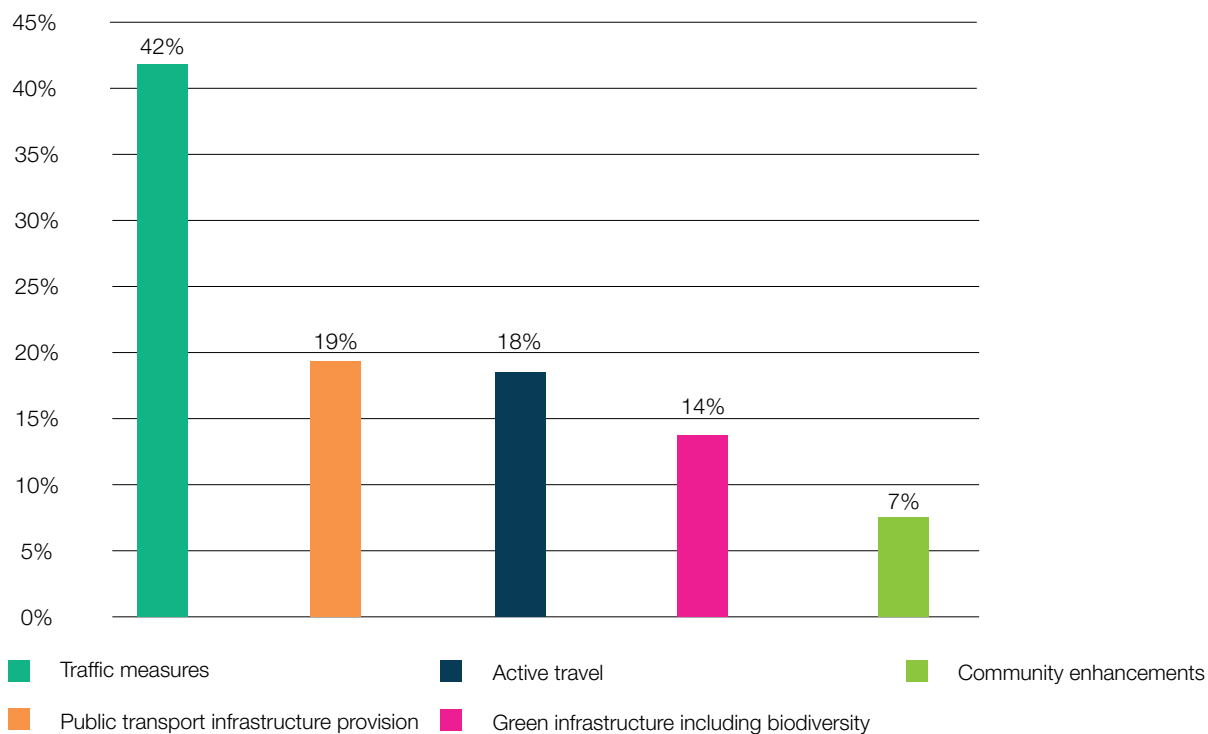
Other key themes noted were:

- Safe routes for horse riders.
- Traffic calming and speed reduction measures (for Banwell, Winscombe, Sandford and Churchill).
- Footpath widening (comments show support for this in Banwell and along the A368).
- Improvements to public transport.
- Making Banwell village access only.
- Having public green spaces in Banwell such as parks, allotments, community gardens.

- Protecting Banwell Football Club.
- Re-instating Banwell Square.
- Safer routes to schools.
- Improved parking provision on West Street for residents and visitors.

3.7% of responses were in support of installing traffic lights to manage traffic flows in the narrow section of Banwell; those who expressed this were generally not supportive of the bypass and put this forward as an alternative option. Summer Lane Park Homes residents expressed that they would like to see an alternative design considered where the roundabout is moved away from the Summer Lane junction. Those concerned about the impact on Wolverhill Road made suggestions for traffic calming, one-way systems and cycle lanes.

Figure 14: Placemaking themes for Banwell (Ranked the highest importance)



Wider network enhancements

Question 4.1

Question 4.1 asked whether participants would like to see more walking and cycling facilities within Banwell and the surrounding area, 86% answered yes to this question.

Question 4.2

Question 4.2 asked participants to rank traffic mitigation measures to reduce impacts of the bypass on villages surrounding Banwell, using a scale of 1-8 with 1 being most important and 8 being least important.

Highway improvements, such as carriageway widening and junction and side road improvements, came out on top with 24% ranking it most important. This was closely followed by implementing traffic measures at 24% and cycling and footway improvements at 22%.

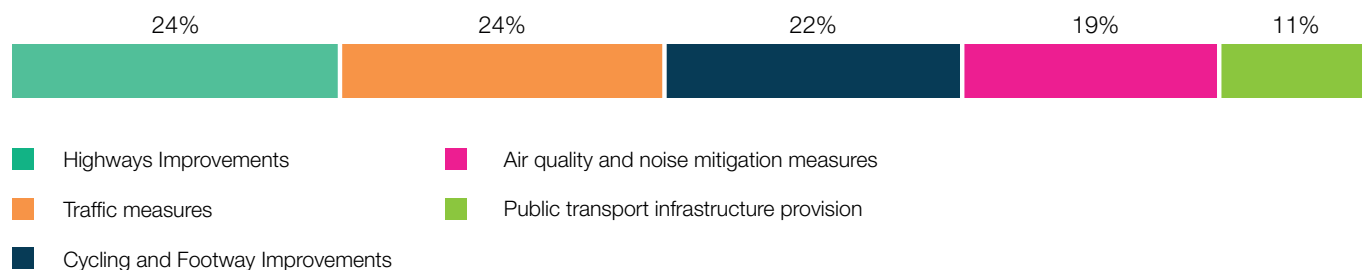
Question 4.3

Question 4.3 provided the opportunity for respondents to comment on any other measures which should be considered. 252 responses were received, and several key themes were noted which were similar to those in question 3.4. There was popular support for prohibiting HGV's, creating safe cycling and walking links between villages, to the Strawberry Line and to the schools and creating safe routes for horse riders.

Other popular suggestions for highway improvements were:

- 20mph zones in Sandford, Churchill, Winscombe and Banwell.
- Average speed cameras on A368 & A371.
- Improvements to pavements and walkways.
- Planting of trees and hedges alongside the bypass to reduce noise and visual impact.
- Segregated cycleway and walkway alongside bypass.
- Limited street lighting or no lighting at all along the bypass.
- A bypass for Banwell, Sandford and Winscombe to be constructed out to the A38.

Figure 15: Wider network (Sandford, Winscombe, Churchill) mitigation measures ranked as highest importance.



Key themes and comments

Written responses

The following points were observed from the written responses received in response to the public consultation:

- Principle of needing to overcome traffic issues in Banwell is generally supported, with many recognising that a bypass is the most appropriate solution.
- Concern around the bypass resulting in additional traffic through villages along the A371 and A368 (namely Churchill, Langford, Sandford and Winscombe). Many respondents request additional highways measures to mitigate these impacts, including a bypass directly to the A38. These concerns came largely from residents of these villages.
- Impacts upon neighbouring settlements will need to be fully assessed and appropriately mitigated.
- Concerns from landowners around loss of land, particularly related to route 2.
- Residents of Banwell generally resist the loss of the football pitches at Banwell Football Club, identifying them as important community assets.
- Concerns around amenity impacts (noise, pollution, etc) during construction and operational stages, particularly residents of Banwell.
- Concerns around environmental impacts, particularly biodiversity and flood risk. Issues have also been raised around impacts on the AONB and Groundwater Source Protection Zone related to the Southern Link Road. Impacts upon increased traffic within Churchill Conservation Area also raised.
- Respondents requested that further traffic modelling information is made available and included analysis to show impact of proposed future housing development.
- Many respondents would like to see a better-connected network of pedestrian/cycle routes as part of the wider scheme of improvements.

Key themes

Whilst many of the key themes for individual questions have been discussed in the section above, there were several recurrences of specific topics throughout the consultation survey which we have noted.

- Housing – in particular, concern for development between the bypass and existing village.
- The potential impact to the villages of Banwell, Sandford and Churchill and the opinion that the bypass is just ‘pushing the problem on’.
- Visual and noise impacts of the bypass, many comments relating to Summer Lane Park Homes and the proximity of the roundabout at the western end of the bypass.
- Improvements to sustainable travel options; an increase to public transport provision, improvement to footways, safer walking routes to school, provision of cycleways linking surrounding villages, Strawberry Line and to W-s-M and safer routes/consideration for horse riders.
- The impact on Banwell Football Club if route 2 is selected.
- HGV’s – restricting the access of larger vehicles to improve road safety.
- The relevance of the bypass and whether matters could be resolved by placement of traffic lights at the crossroads/narrow sections of Banwell.
- The need for speed reduction, traffic calming and favouring of 20mph zones to improve road safety.
- A request to protect green spaces and the countryside – provision of habitat corridors and tree planting to lessen visual/noise impact of bypass.
- Why a longer bypass of Banwell, Sandford and Churchill connecting to the A38 is not proposed.
- Concern that the bypass for Banwell will only be a short-term solution (this isn’t future proof) and that further housing development will result in the need for further transport mitigation.

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Outcomes of the consultation

Outcomes of the consultation

In this section, we have addressed the recurring themes and questions arising from the consultation responses.

Has any consideration been given to new traffic lights in Banwell rather than building a bypass?

Traffic lights in Banwell to manage the flow of traffic at the junction of West Street, East Street, Castle Hill, High Street and Church Road have been considered as an option but not been taken forward.

This is because any system of traffic lights at the junction would need to allow traffic from each of the five roads (West Street, East Street, Castle Hill, High Street and Church Road) to move one at a time and in sequence.

An initial assessment of the traffic light sequencing suggests that traffic queues on each of the five roads would build due to the delay in waiting for the traffic lights to turn green.

The impacts from the traffic queuing at each of the five arms would potentially be worse than the existing situation and as such would not meet the scheme objectives.

Can access for Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) be restricted through Banwell, Winscombe and Sandford?

It is difficult to completely restrict the movement of HGV's as they are allowed to use any classification of road to collect or deliver to individual properties - even if there is a weight restriction in place (unless it is a physical restriction such as a structural weight limit for a weak bridge or similar).

There is already a HGV restriction on the A371 through Winscombe. A bypass would enable the number of HGVs to be significantly reduced through Banwell. The A368 (A371) is the current HGV route between Churchill and Weston-super-Mare.

Further analysis will be undertaken around HGV movements during the development of the scheme's design.

Further solutions to reduce the impact of HGVs on local communities are discussed below.

Better connections needed for walking and cycling, especially:

- Better connection from Banwell to the Strawberry Line.
- Make Wolvershill Road a safer route for cycling to Worle/WsM.

Providing improved active and sustainable travel opportunities between local villages and Weston-super-Mare is one of NSC's scheme objectives.

Opportunities identified for improvements to the active and sustainable travel network around Banwell include: the potential for better connections for walkers and cyclists between Weston-super-Mare and the Strawberry Line, and the potential for making Wolvershill Road more attractive for walking and cycling.

The feasibility of implementing these measures will be considered during the development of the scheme's design.

Can we have safer routes to Churchill School? There are no footways on some sections between Sandford and Churchill.

We are considering options to offset impacts of the bypass in villages surrounding Banwell. This includes additional footways - as well as the improvement of existing footways - along the A368 which would provide better access to Churchill Academy from surrounding communities.

We have concerns over rat running along Wolvershill Road and Riverside especially due to the Scheme

We are considering options to offset impacts in the villages surrounding Banwell, as well as the addition of possible enhancements to villages as part of, or separate to, the bypass scheme.

Side road improvements to avoid "rat running" and improve active / sustainable travel is another of the measures being considered.

An east-west cycleway or footway through Banwell would be more direct and convenient than one along the bypass.

A bypass of Banwell would remove the majority of traffic from the village, which would provide opportunities to improve the existing routes through the village.

The removal of traffic alone would improve both the quality and safety of journeys through Banwell on foot or by bike, but other measures are under consideration to further improve and enhance the centre of Banwell such as improved active travel routes and facilities, additional road crossing points and shared public spaces.

A new footway/cycleway running alongside the Banwell bypass is considered in addition to - rather than a replacement for - improvements being considered for the route through Banwell.

Could 20mph speed limits be implemented in Sandford or other surrounding communities?

We are looking at options to offset impacts of the bypass in the villages surrounding Banwell and on routes towards Weston-super-Mare, including speed limit enforcement measures.

Why is there no proposal to link direct into the M5 further north?

A connection between the proposed bypass and the M5 was not part of the funding bid and is not needed to meet the scheme's objectives. As a result, the connection is not being explored in the design.

We have concerns around impacts on horse-riding due to the Scheme.

Possible impacts on equestrians have been considered in a high-level walking, cycling and horse-riding assessment. The assessment will be detailed further as design progresses.

Opportunities to improve horse riding around Banwell have been identified as part of this assessment. The feasibility of implementing these opportunities will be considered during development of the scheme's design.



We have concerns around the potential impact of Route 2 on Banwell Football Club.

Concerns surrounding the potential impact of Route 2 on Banwell Football Club and recreation grounds have been noted.

Measures to reduce the impact on the recreation grounds (as far as reasonably practical) will be pursued during design. This could include refining the route alignment to reduce the direct impact on Banwell Football Club and its pitches.

We have concerns around environmental impacts to Summer Lane Park Homes and walking / accessibility concerns to/from the site and local facilities, Bus Stops, and Banwell village.

Concerns surrounding the potential impact on Summer Lane Park Homes have also been noted.

As part of the scheme, an Environmental Impact Assessment will be undertaken, which would include Noise and Air Quality assessments. These assessments would help determine whether any specific mitigation measures are needed to offset possible negative noise or air quality impacts caused by the bypass.

Measures to maintain, and potentially improve, the walking, cycling and public transport connections between Summer Lane Park Homes and local villages will also be pursued during the development of the scheme's design. We will consult with residents of the Summer Lane Park Homes as the design progresses.

Concerns about additional housing, especially the potential infill of housing between the bypass and Banwell. A preference to maintain and protect green spaces between the bypass and Banwell, and protecting habitat and ecology areas, has also been indicated.

The bypass design team are working closely with North Somerset's local planning team to ensure the scheme is effectively integrated into any new development proposals in the area. This includes consideration of how the land between the bypass and existing village is utilised.

Ensuring the opportunity to increase Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) by at least 10% is one of North Somerset Council's objectives for the Scheme.

Why not build a longer bypass of all communities along the A368, eventually connecting into the A38 to the east?

A longer bypass of Banwell, Sandford and Churchill has previously been considered by the Council, however, due to funding availability, early assessments of this option envisaged a phased approach to bypass delivery.

The current Housing Infrastructure Fund requirements do not align with the time needed to deliver such an extensive bypass network, with the costs considered prohibitive at this time.

How is the scheme being 'future-proofed' for future traffic demand? Would it not need to be upgraded to a dual carriageway in the future?

Based on capacity, neither existing levels of traffic nor the expected volumes of bypass traffic justify a full dual carriageway.

Should we be building roads given that North Somerset Council have declared a climate emergency?

North Somerset has a growing population and so there is a demand for more new and affordable homes to meet the region's need. The Government have also set local authorities house building targets to help deal with the national housing crisis.

Whilst urgent action must be taken on climate change – and NSC have declared a climate emergency and ambition of carbon neutrality by 2030 in recognition of this - this must also be balanced against the need to provide our growing communities with places to live. Banwell bypass has been funded through Homes England's Housing Infrastructure Fund, which aims to provide the infrastructure needed to deliver these new homes.

The climate emergency remains of great importance and one of the bypass' scheme objectives is to innovatively and efficiently reduce and offset carbon from the design and construction. As such, opportunities to reduce carbon emissions in construction and use of the bypass are being prioritised and progressed as the designs are developed. It is also hoped that the bypass can have a lasting impact on carbon emissions in North Somerset, for example, moving traffic out of Banwell so that active travel routes for walking and cycling are safer and more attractive, encouraging local people to travel sustainably rather than using their cars. The scheme also provides opportunities to make active travel more attractive between local villages and Weston-super-Mare.

What are the impacts of the Southern Link on the groundwater Source Protection Zone (SPZ)?

The project team are aware of the Source Protection Zone (SPZ) that underlies part of the proposed Southern Link. Further ground investigation is proposed as part of the scheme that will help inform the catchment feeding into Banwell Spring.

Following the findings of the ground investigation, the design will be further developed to prevent any potential impacts (such as infiltration through the embankment from the road drainage) and minimise ground disturbance as far as is reasonably practicable.

The relevant authorities will be consulted throughout the design process and engagement with the Environment Agency and Bristol Water is already in progress. The Environmental Statement, when published, will include a Hydrogeological Impact Assessment which will outline any impacts on the SPZ.

Does the traffic modelling take future traffic increases into account? When will this data be made publicly available?

The traffic model will assess future traffic increases on the existing highway network both with and without the bypass and wider network enhancements that result from general population growth and known / planned development. The design year for assessment is typically 15 years post opening.

Traffic modelling data is still in draft and will be made publicly available when a planning application is submitted for the scheme.



Northern Route Option 2

Northern Route Option 3

Conclusion

Southern Link

Did the consultation achieve its purpose?

The purpose of the consultation was to gather feedback from the public as early as possible in the design process, so that local people could help to inform the route option decision for Banwell bypass. The consultation will also help the council understand the type of highways improvements the local community and road users would favour to reduce potential impacts of the scheme. This feedback will help inform the continued development of the bypass' design, leading up the second consultation on the more developed designs in early 2022.

The consultation successfully engaged a broad range of respondents, with feedback received from landowners, residents, businesses, and those with a wider interest in the proposed scheme each conveying their own areas of interest. The large number of survey responses from these groups has also provided the design team with important sample of information to consider as work on the project progresses.

The range of methods used to promote the consultation focussed on inclusion, with the option to engage digitally or using print materials and to find out more in a face-to-face setting. This helped ensure that the broad range of respondents listed above were able feedback in this first consultation and help shape the bypass at this early stage.

In addition, background information provided to support the consultation survey included key details of the story so far, outlining how the council arrived at its current position and the three route options. Comments received in the consultation commended this detail and, in particular, the analysis of why alternatives to the bypass had been discounted and the reasons for NSC suggesting a favoured route. However, there were comments which suggested that the materials required improvement, in particular bigger maps to identify the routes.

A number of responses also requested additional detail on issues such as traffic modelling and biodiversity. As this first consultation is so early in the design process and feedback will be used by the design team to identify areas of aspiration and concern to inform design, this detail is not yet available. As this detail relates to the more developed designs, it is more relevant to inform responses to the second Banwell bypass consultation and, as such, will be available in support of planning submission in 2022.

Despite Covid-19 it was felt that face-to-face information drop-in events were necessary as part of this first consultation, however, a number of attendees highlighted that the use of masks and visors sometimes made it challenging to hold discussions. In order to maintain public safety, the council had a responsibility to ensure the information sessions were covid safe and so the use of masks and social distancing took priority. Staff attending the sessions offered to speak with those unable to hear outside of the venue or follow up on discussions over email after the events. Several requests were made for an additional event to be held in Sandford to accommodate residents of Sanford Station Retirement Village who could not travel to Banwell or Churchill and this was accommodated at the earliest available opportunity.

As a significant number of responses were received online in comparison to paper copies, it is clear that many were able to access the digital consultation materials with ease. This is something that will be taken forward to the second consultation in early 2022.

Based on the volume of responses and the range of feedback received, the consultation has been successful in providing the design team with the information needed to continue developing designs. As addressed in section 4, there were several main themes which the council and design consultants will now look to address, along with several opportunities raised by respondents which will be considered and presented during the next stage of consultation proposed in early 2022.

Next steps

In addition to this report, which summarises the findings from the consultation, an Options Appraisal Report (OAR) has been produced, which details the technical work completed to date (including surveys) that has informed the route appraisal. Both the OAR and consultation report will inform a Council paper to the Executive Member for Assets and Capital Delivery to seek approval to progress with the recommended preferred route.

The design of the bypass and highway improvements will progress over the following months and feedback from the consultation will be incorporated into design where feasible. In addition, further community working groups set up with the help of parish councils will be held and engagement with landowners affected by the scheme will commence. The progress that takes place over the next few months will be presented in the next round of public consultation which is due to take place in early 2022.



Northern Route Option 1

Northern Route Option 2

Northern Route Option 3

Banwell

Southern Link

