

A303

Public right of way improvements to the north and east of Podimore



When Highways England was formed in 2015, replacing what was the Highways Agency, the company was given a remit to transform both the roads and the experience of drivers travelling on them, whilst also addressing strategic imperatives such as economic growth and climate change.

We were allocated £900 million to fund activities beyond what is considered business as usual

That means investing in retrofitting measures to improve the existing road network and surrounding areas to deliver additional improvements as part of new road schemes.

To support this work, five designated funds were set up covering:

- air quality
- cycling, safety and integration
- environment
- growth and housing
- innovation

We are using these funds where we can to support schemes and projects close to our road network.

Our roads and you

We recognise that our road network has an impact on the lives of local people, including non-motorised users.

Our aim is to minimise this impact. We are doing this by making improvements to and around the network to ensure it supports the safe travel of non-motorised users. This group includes horse-riders, cyclists and pedestrians.

We are developing proposals in your area as part of our cycling, safety and integration designated funding stream. These proposals, if taken forward, will allow non-motorised users to safely cross the A303 near the village of Podimore in south Somerset.

What are we proposing?

We are conducting a feasibility study on measures which will make it easier for non-motorised users to travel from the north and east of Podimore. Possible solutions to improve the public right of way connection may involve:

- improvements to Higher Farm Lane (including the existing overbridge) to make it suitable for use by a range of non-motorised users
- creation of an entirely new public right of way between Higher Farm Lane and Eastmead Lane
- improvements to Eastmead Lane to make it suitable for use by a range of non-motorised users

If taken forward, our proposals will require a change in legal status to ensure the route can be used by each user group. This will ensure that horse-riders, cyclists and pedestrians can all use the route. We will also look at vehicular access to help us understand whether the route could accommodate some types of vehicles, including horse-drawn carriages.

The measures would make it safer and more convenient for non-motorised users to cross the A303 between Podimore and areas to the north and east.

We will consider the below factors in further detail as we develop our proposal:

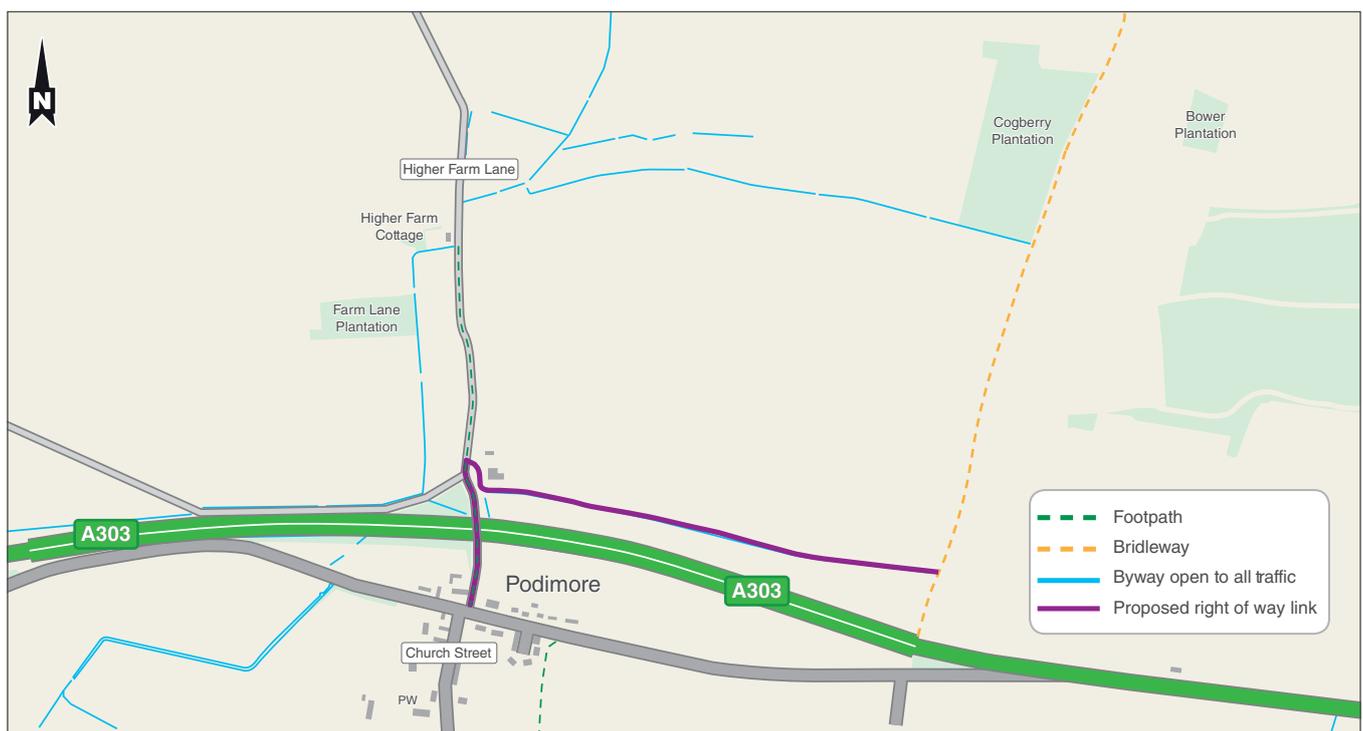
- the safety of road users and non-motorised users; including data on the number of recent accidents and collisions in the vicinity of the proposal
- the use and potential impact of the proposed improvements on public rights of way
- issues for non-motorised users in the local area

Background

The A303 is one of the most direct routes between the south-west, London and the south-east.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s sections of the A303 and A372 were upgraded to help reduce congestion and improve journey time reliability.

The construction of Podimore Bypass was an important part of this work, but its construction restricted access to Higher Farm Lane. Our proposals, if taken forward, will restore this access to Higher Farm Lane via the designated overbridge.



What you told us

We recognise that there is a need to improve routes for non-motorised users in and around south Somerset.

Our conversations with local people have told us that you would welcome improvements to the crossings over the A303.

We listened carefully to this feedback and are now proposing an improved public right of way route to the north and east of Podimore.

Get involved

We are holding a three-week listening exercise on our proposals and invite you to complete the questionnaire online. The closing date for responses is Friday 26 April 2019.

We encourage you to provide your views before the closing date as feedback received after this may not be considered.

This is not a formal consultation, but a feasibility study to help us understand more about the potential route and how improvements might be made.

Please complete the questionnaire to provide your views. You can do so at:



Next steps

We remain at the very early stages of designing the proposal and welcome your feedback.

Later this year we will make a decision on whether to progress this proposal.

If you would like more information about this scheme, please call Highways England on:



0300 123 5000

or email:



a303designatedfunds@highwaysengland.co.uk

If you need help accessing this or any other Highways England information, please call **0300 123 5000** and we will help you.