

**A358 Taunton to Southfields**  
**Dualling Scheme**

**Stoke St Mary Parish Council**

**THE FACTS**

## A358 (Southfields to M5)

Highways England only proposed 1 route for consultation

Other A303 schemes – Sparkford & Stonehenge

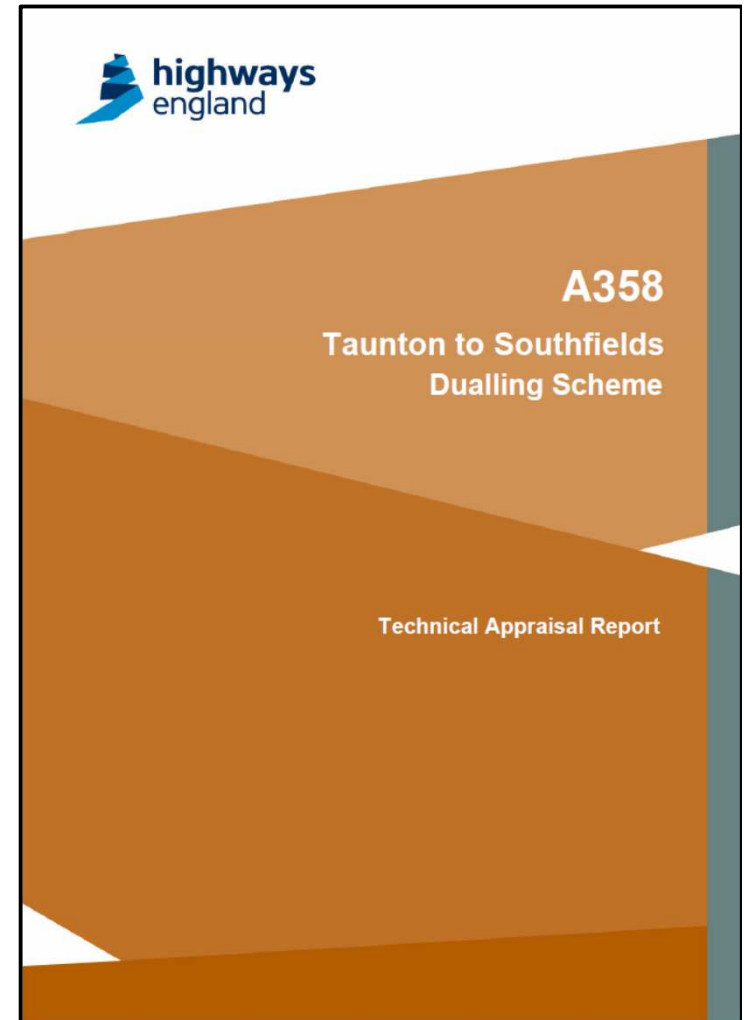
- Both have 2 options for consultation

**Why only 1 option for consultation??**

**Technical Appraisal Report has 4 options**

<https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/he/a/358-taunton-to-southfields/>

- Not available to view at recent Highways England consultations



# GOV.UK Consultation Principles – Jan 2016



1. Home (<https://www.gov.uk/>)

Guidance

## Consultation principles: guidance

**From:** Cabinet Office (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/cabinet-office>)  
**Part of:** Civil service reform (<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/civil-service-reform>)  
**Published:** 17 July 2012  
**Last updated:** 14 January 2016, see all updates

The government is improving the way it consults by adopting a more proportionate and targeted approach.

## Documents

**Consultation principles** ([https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/492132/20160111\\_Consultation\\_principles\\_final.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/492132/20160111_Consultation_principles_final.pdf))

PDF, 79.9KB, 2 pages

## Details

The government has published a revised set of government consultation principles. **These principles give clear guidance to government departments on conducting consultations.** We have amended the principles in the light of comments from the Secondary Legislation Scrutiny Committee and to demonstrate the government's desire to engage more effectively with the public.

We will use more digital methods to consult with a wider group of people at an earlier stage in the policy-forming process. We will make it easier for the public to contribute their views, and we will try harder to use clear language and plain English in consultation documents.

We will also reduce the risk of 'consultation fatigue' by **making sure we consult only on issues that are genuinely undecided.**

Published: 17 July 2012

Updated: 14 January 2016

+ full page history

1. 14 January 2016 Added updated principles
2. 5 November 2013 New consultation principles added - November 2013.
3. 17 July 2012 First published.

**From:** Cabinet Office (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/cabinet-office>)

**Part of:** Civil service reform (<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/civil-service-reform>)



**Downloadable 2 page pdf  
11 principles (A – K)**



**These principles give clear  
guidance to government  
departments (i.e. Highways  
England) on conducting  
consultations**



**“making sure we consult  
only on issues that are  
genuinely undecided”**

**How does this match with a  
single option consultation?**

# GOV.UK Consultation Principles – Jan 2016

## **B. Consultations should have a purpose**

Do not consult for the sake of it. Ask departmental lawyers whether you have a legal duty to consult. Take consultation responses into account when taking policy forward. Consult about policies or implementation plans when the development of the policies or plans is at a formative stage. Do not ask questions about issues on which you already have a final view.

## **C. Consultations should be informative**

Give enough information to ensure that those consulted understand the issues and can give informed responses. Include validated assessments of the costs and benefits of the options being considered when possible; this might be required where proposals have an impact on business or the voluntary sector.

- **Only consult when there is more than ONE option**
- **Many local residents are left believing that they do not have a real opportunity to influence Highway England's decision making process**
- **HE must listen and act upon the feedback**

## GOV.UK Consultation Principles – Jan 2016

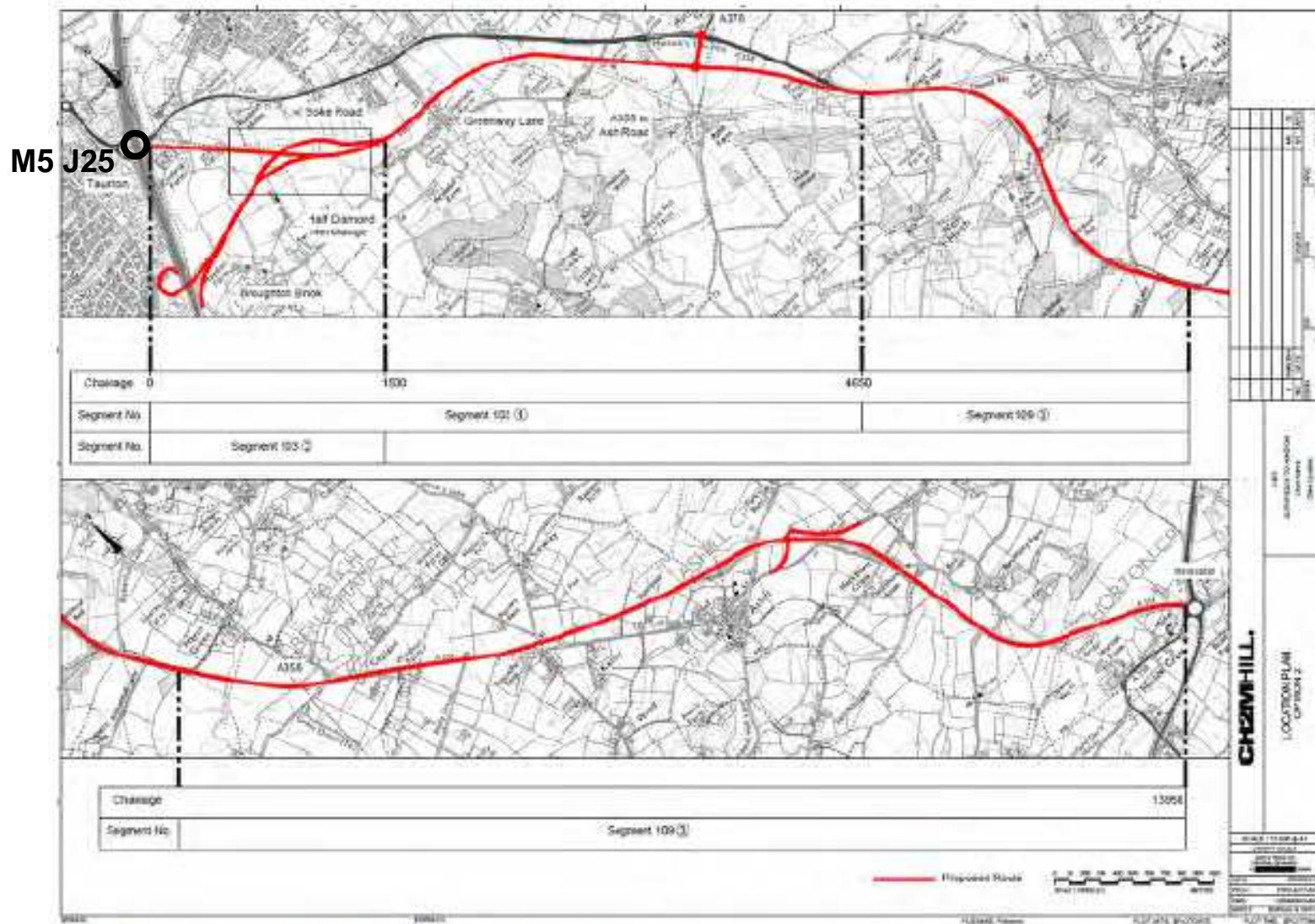
**K. Consultation exercises should not generally be launched during local or national election periods.**

If exceptional circumstances make a consultation absolutely essential (for example, for safeguarding public health), departments should seek advice from the Propriety and Ethics team in the Cabinet Office.

- Pre-election period (purdah) for SCC elections commenced 20<sup>th</sup> March
- HE A358 consultation commenced 28<sup>th</sup> March, i.e. during purdah
- **Freedom of Information request submitted**
  - **Did HE seek advice and agreement from the Propriety and Ethics team in the Cabinet Office?**
  - **Response due Fri 23<sup>rd</sup> June**



# Previously “Announced Scheme” – Jan 2015



Source: Strategic Outline Business Case, CH2MHill, January 2015 Details released in the Freedom of Information Request

Similar alignment to Option 2A/2B – M5 South connection south side of Haydon Lane

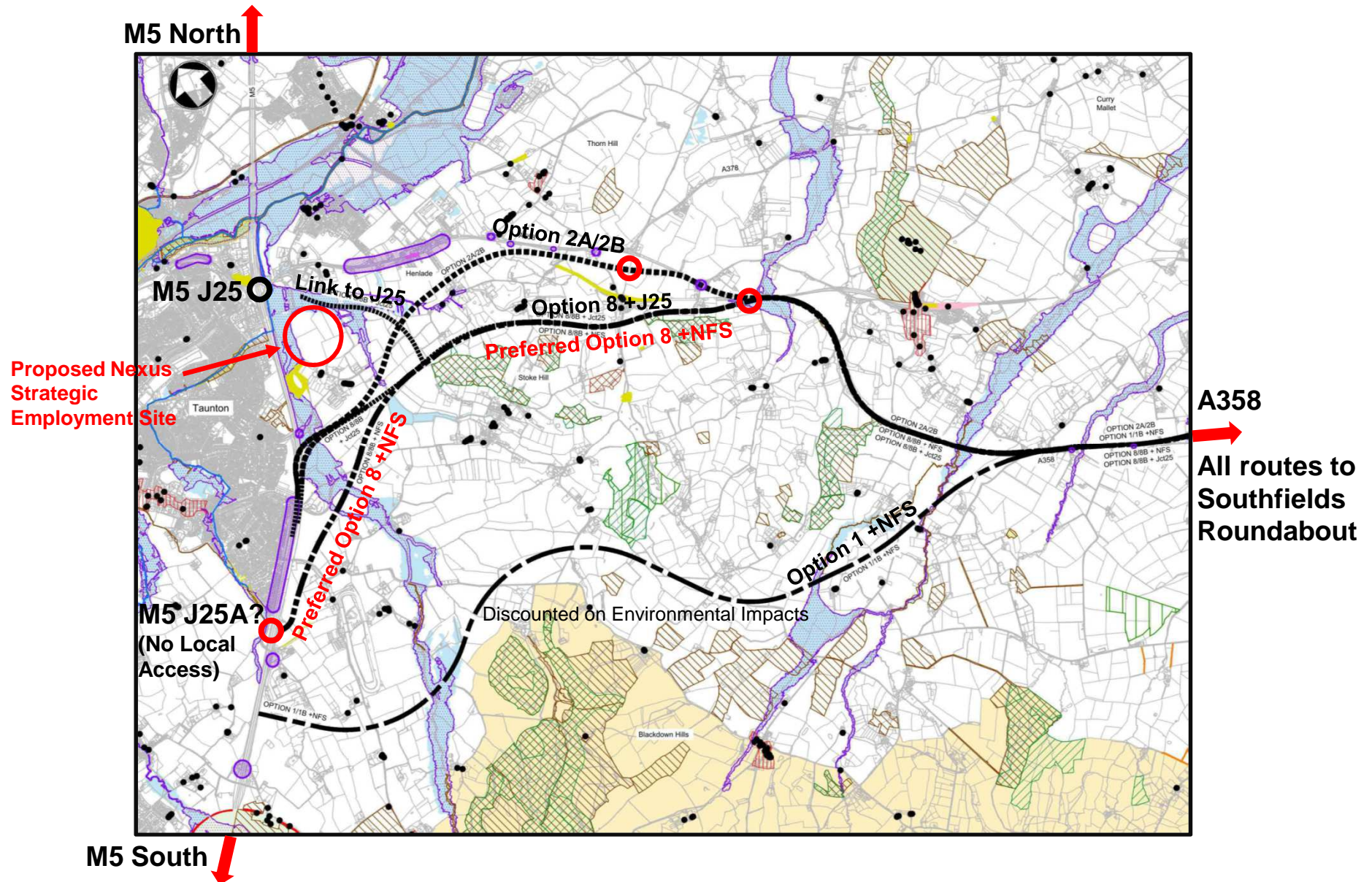
## Freedom of Information Request - SCC

- Meeting minutes from 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2017
  - Numerous references to three options being still on the table
  - SCC “highlighted that assessment and reporting of the three routes to date will have been based on this link [to J25] being an integral part of two of the options”
- Public Consultation started 28<sup>th</sup> March 2017
  - Highways England announced just One preferred route

**In just 3½ weeks the other options were discarded by HE in what appears to be a unilateral decision.**

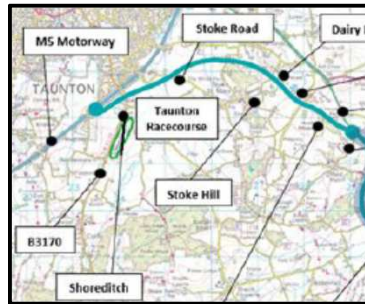


# 4 Options from Technical Appraisal Report



# 4 Options - Benefit to Cost Ratio

**Preferred  
Option  
8+NFS**



**1.54 (Lowest)**

**Option  
1+NFS**



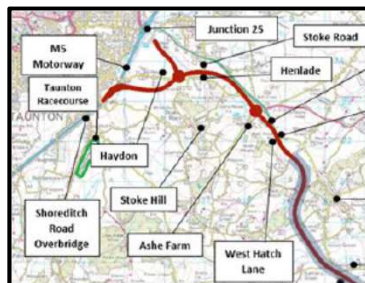
**1.76**

**Option  
8+J25**



**1.87**

**Option  
2A/2B**



**2.08 (Highest)**

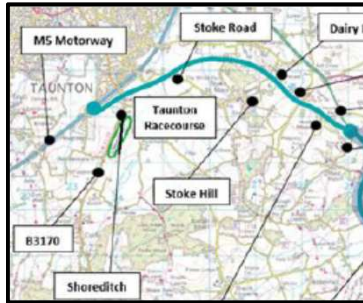
## **Benefit to cost ratio (BCR)**

- “Consultation Principles”
- Used to evaluate all the benefits for building the new road
- Place a value upon all the economic benefits (commuters, business, others)
- Also includes impact of accidents, roadworks during construction, greenhouse gases, noise & air quality
- A higher BCR provides greater justification for building the road.
  - 1.5-2.0 – Medium
  - 2.0- 4.0 – High

**• Highway England’s mandate:  
Provide the best value for  
money for the tax payer**

# 4 Options – Accidents + Noise

**Preferred  
Option  
8+NFS**



## Accidents

## Noise

**£0.3M increase  
HE Mandate  
Safer roads?**

**£0.8M increase**

**Option  
1+NFS**



**£7.0M reduction**

**£0.3M reduction**

**Option  
8+J25**

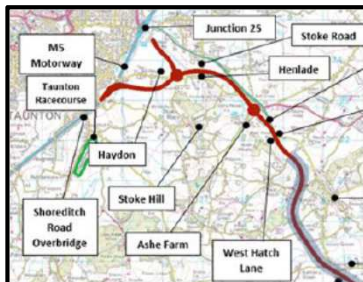


**£9.7M reduction**

**£2.2M reduction**

**= Benefit**

**Option  
2A/2B**



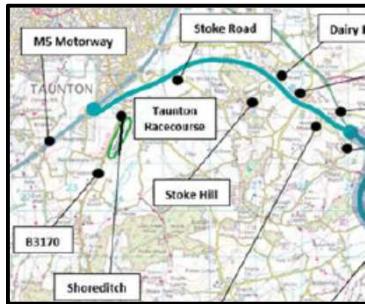
**£10.2M reduction**

**£0.5M reduction**

**Note: Compared to “Do nothing” option**

# 4 Options – Traffic Flows (after 15 years)

**Preferred  
Option  
8+NFS**



**Annual Average Daily Traffic**

**26,000**

**Only 48% of highest option  
Therefore under-utilised  
as only primarily used by  
M5 South traffic**

**Option  
1+NFS**

*Discounted on Environmental Impacts*



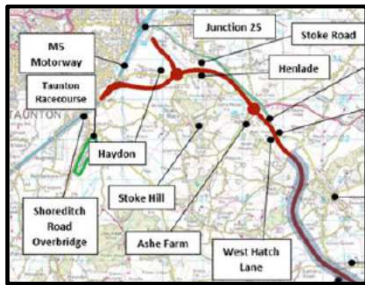
**31,700**

**Option  
8+J25**



**45,900**

**Option  
2A/2B**



**54,600**

**73% for M5 North + Taunton  
27% for M5 South**

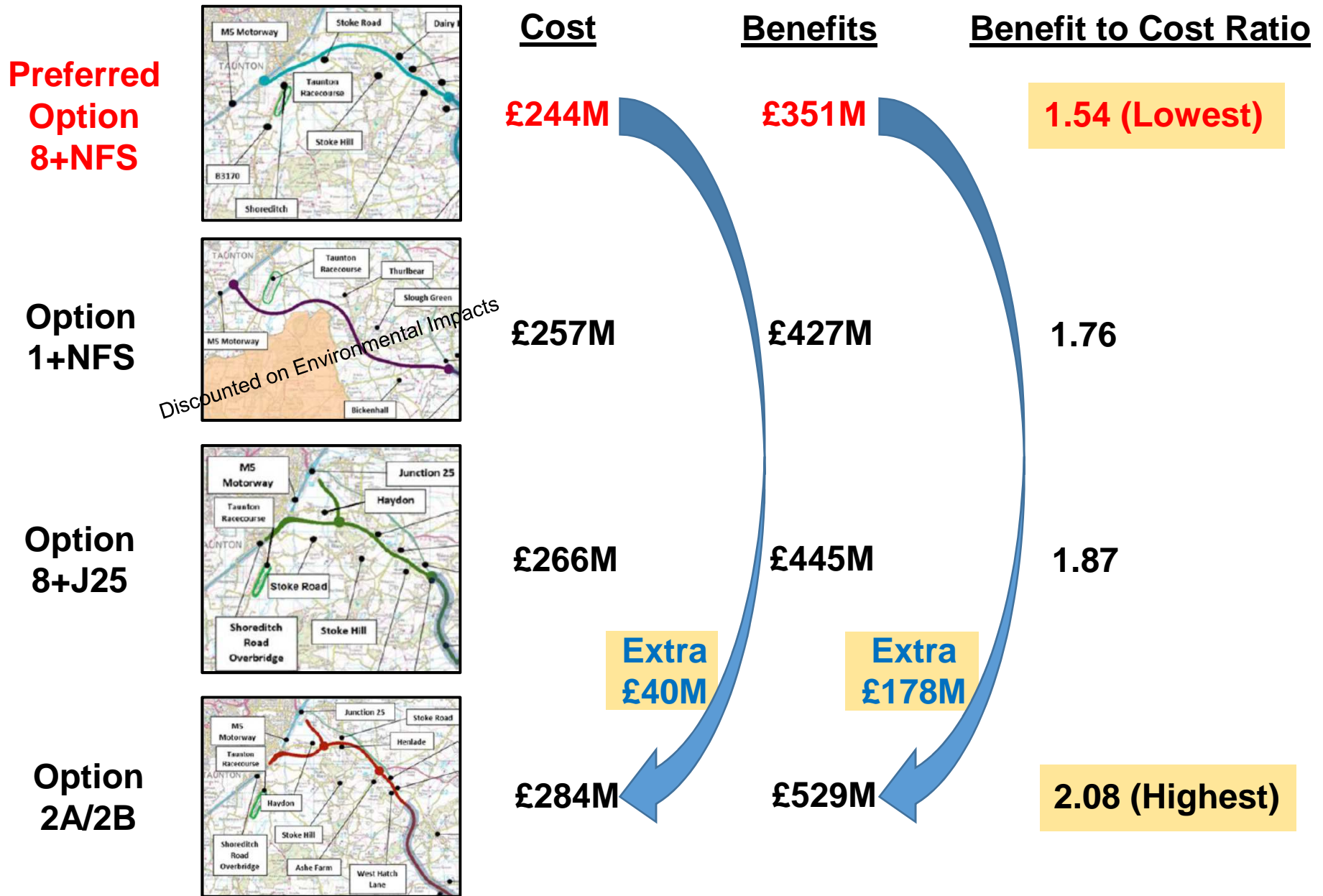
## Technical Appraisal Report pg 88

### M5 J25 Traffic + Old A358

Operational assessment of Junction 25 has been carried out for the options both without a Junction 25 link (Option 8/8B+NFS) and with (Option 2A/2B and Option 8/8B+Jn25). The analysis was undertaken with LINSIG for the linked signal junction improvement proposed by Somerset County Council with forecast peak period traffic flows for the design year 2038. This showed that with the junction improvement the degree of saturation would be around 85% in both the AM and PM peak periods either with or without the Jn25 link. All options will remove traffic to M5 South from Jn 25 whilst for options without the link road the majority of traffic to Taunton and M5 North will still pass through Jn 25 via the old A358. This explains why there is not much difference in the operation of Jn 25 between the options. It should be noted that values for degree of saturation up to 90% are usually considered to be acceptable though the analyses show that further detailed analysis would be required to reduce queuing issues on the circulation internal links.

- **The preferred option (with no link to J25) will therefore not alleviate traffic through Henlade**
- **However, both options 8+J25 and 2A/2B will act as a Henlade By-pass**

# 4 Options – Construction Cost (2010 prices)



## Summary

### **Highways England's Current Preferred Option**

- No economic benefit for Taunton
- Most traffic will bypass Taunton as no local access at J25A or connection to J25
- Little reduction in traffic through Henlade

### **Highways England should**

- Follow Government Consultation Guidelines
- Provide more than one option for consultation
- Demonstrate value for money – Option 2A+2B

**We all need Taunton to become a**

**Vibrant Garden Town NOT a  
Deserted By-Pass Town**