

Report to Council

16 October 2019

By the Leader of the Council

DECISION REQUIRED



Not Exempt

A27 Arundel Bypass – Further consultation response

Executive Summary

In August 2017, Highways England published a consultation paper outlining three potential options for a new road bypass on the A27 around Arundel. In May 2018, Highways England published their Preferred Route Announcement, known as Option 5AV3. The Highways England website explains that as work towards submitting an application for consent from the Secretary of State progressed, new information was discovered which led to a revised set of potential route options.

The six revised options have been published in the brochure 'A27 Arundel Bypass: Further public consultation'. Highways England has invited people to 'have their say' on these six route options.

This new road layout will not be located in Horsham District, but it is believed that any change to this part of the A27 would have a big impact on reducing the high number of vehicles that currently use, what are perceived as faster, routes through Horsham District. It would accordingly improve the poor air quality in our southern villages, especially Storrington where there is a declared Air Quality Management Area through the middle of the village.

Horsham District Council is a statutory consultee and this report to Council sets out the proposed response to this consultation. On balance, it is recommended that the Council favours the 'Magenta option' as this should achieve significant reductions in traffic flows and consequent enhancements to air quality in Horsham District whilst minimising likely environmental impacts.

Recommendation

Cabinet is recommended

- i) To agree the content of the consultation response to be submitted to Highways England by 24 October 2019.

Reasons for Recommendation

- i) To take account of the issues raised in the Highways England consultation and to enable the Council to be fully transparent in our response to the proposed options.

Background Papers

A27 Arundel Bypass: Further public consultation - Have Your Say (30 August to 24 October)

Wards affected: Amberley, Parham, Storrington and Sullington, Washington, Wiston, Steyning, Bramber, Upper Beeding

Contact:

Barbara Childs, Director of Place ext 5401

Catherine Howe, Head of Strategic Planning ext 5505

Background Information

1 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 In August 2019, Highways England published a consultation paper outlining six options for a new road bypass on the A27 around Arundel. This follows on from a previous consultation paper published by Highways England in August 2017, and a Preferred Route Announcement in May 2018. The Highways England website explains that as work towards submitting an application for consent from the Secretary of State progressed, new information was discovered which led to a revised set of potential route options based on the latest available information.
- 1.2 Horsham District Council responded to the previous 2017 consultation supporting route Option 5a, which was aligned to the south of the built up area of Arundel. The reason for this was that the traffic modelling had shown that the decrease in traffic using the B2139 and the A283 would be significantly greater for option 5a than for other shortlisted options.
- 1.2 Although the new bypass is not located in Horsham District, the new road infrastructure will have an impact on traffic flows on roads and the local environment in Horsham District. This report sets out the proposed response from Horsham District Council to this latest consultation.

2 Relevant Council policy

- 2.1 The corporate plan identifies the need to implement the Horsham District Planning Framework, and to ensure that people and the environment in Horsham District are protected from pollution. The key policies in the Horsham District Planning Framework which relate to this report are:
 - Policy 39, which seeks to ensure that all new development which takes place can be supported by adequate infrastructure, such as roads and schools.
 - Policy 24, which sets out the need to protect the quality of the District's environment, including minimising the emission of air pollutants.

3 Details

- 3.1 Highways England is consulting on six options (Cyan, Beige, Crimson, Magenta, Amber and Grey routes) to provide a dual carriageway between the existing dual carriageway sections of the A27 either side of Arundel. The public consultation began on 30 August and ends on 24 October 2019. The proposed routes are shown on the map in Appendix 1 of this report.
- 3.2 Horsham District Council is a consultee in the decision-making process. The letter setting out the Council's proposed response is attached as Appendix 2 to this report.

- 3.3 In the Council's response to the consultation, the letter first sets out the District's relationship to the A27 and the impact of traffic congestion on our residents. In particular, the high number of car journeys that arise on the A283 to avoid congestion on the A27 is highlighted. The consequence of this heavy traffic is also set out, with further detail provided on the designation of the Air Quality Management Area in Storrington.
- 3.4 Six different options have been proposed by Highways England. The Magenta, Amber and Grey routes are all aligned well to the south of the Arundel built-up area. The Magenta and Amber routes are aligned to pass through parts of the South Downs National Park, with the Amber route involving a greater length being constructed in the Park boundary and passing through an area of ancient woodland, compared with the Magenta route which avoids the ancient woodland area. The Crimson route also passes south of the built-up area but is shorter in length and passes through significant areas of ancient woodland. The Beige route largely follows the line of the existing A27, with significant upgrade, except between Crossbush and the existing River Arun crossing at which point the route would bypass Arundel Rail Station and the existing bridge crossing the railway. The Grey route is the longest of the routes and therefore the most costly; it bypasses more of the existing A27 to the west of Arundel than the other routes, passing between the existing A27 and Walburton to re-join the existing A27 just to the east of Fontwell.
- 3.5 It is clear on review of the evidence that the Magenta, Amber and Grey routes would do most to draw traffic away from existing congested routes, in effect having a similar wider impact as Route 5a in the previous consultation. In addition, these options will also speed up journey times on the A27 itself and are therefore likely to have a beneficial impact on the wider economy by reducing hours to businesses that are currently lost to road congestion. However, it is recognised that there will be an environmental cost to new roads schemes, which will need to be mitigated.
- 3.6 On balance, of these three, it is considered that the Magenta Route (4/5AV1) should be the Council's stated preferred option when responding to Highways England. Whilst providing similar benefits as the earlier Option 5a, it would have less adverse effect on Binsted Woods and areas of ancient woodland. It is less costly than the Grey route, and therefore considered to be more deliverable within the budget available to Highways England.

4 Next Steps

- 4.1 Following consideration of this report, the consultation response will be sent to Highways England prior to the close of the consultation on 24 October 2019.
- 4.2 Once all consultation responses have been analysed by Highways England, a Preferred Route will be determined and announced by the Secretary of State. Further consultation on the Preferred Route will then take place as part of the Development

Consent Order process. Following examination, the decision to grant development consent will be taken by the Secretary of State.

5 Views of the Policy Development Advisory Group and Outcome of Consultations

- 5.1 This is a report from the Leader who does not have a Policy Development Advisory Group. A copy of the previous 2017 consultation response from the Leader was circulated to all Members and Parish and Neighbourhood Councils. Local ward Members have been consulted, who support the recommendation.

6 Other Courses of Action Considered but Rejected

- 6.1 A course of action which could have been taken is not to respond to this consultation. This would not however give the Council the opportunity to set out its views on the proposals, and provide further detail to Highways England as to the impact that the proposals will have on those who live and work in the District.

7 Resource Consequences

- 7.1 There are no financial consequences arising from this report.

8 Legal Consequences

- 8.1 There are no legal consequences arising from this report.

9 Risk Assessment

- 9.1 There are no specific risks arising from this report.

10 Other Considerations

- 10.1 There are no crime & disorder; equality & diversity impacts arising from this report. In consideration of any proposal, Cabinet will need to have due regard to Human Rights, more particularly Article 8 which stipulates the need to take into account the right to respect for family and private life. The likely interference with human rights should therefore be weighed up in the balance of factors leading to the decision to select a route. Should the Arundel bypass proposals be implemented there is the potential for this scheme to improve air quality in the Storrington area. This will have a positive impact on the environmental sustainability of the village.

Appendix 2

Email to:
A27ArundelBypass@highwaysengland.co.uk

Our ref: MB/RD/BC/sw
Your ref:
Email:
ray.dawe@horsham.gov.uk

Date: 17 October 2019

DRAFT

Dear Sir/Madam

**A27 ARUNDEL BYPASS FURTHER PUBLIC CONSULTATION
CONSULTATION RESPONSE FROM HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Thank you for the opportunity to respond further to the proposals to improve the A27 in respect of a new Arundel bypass. This is of huge interest and importance to this council not least because of the impact the proposals could have in the delivery of economic benefits and growth to both the south coast corridor along the A27 and to this district. I have previously highlighted the significant problem of many drivers wanting to travel between Fontwell and Shoreham (and in reverse) choosing a route that takes them via our district's southern villages of Amberley, Storrington and Pulborough to avoid inevitable delays and congestion on the A27. This 'rat running' is a significant contributor to poor air quality in Storrington where some 18,000 vehicles a day pass through the village High Street.

Background

The southern boundary of Horsham District is close to Arundel (4 miles) and there are a number of road connections with the A27, most notably the links via the A29 from Fontwell and the A284 from Arundel. These provide a route (via B2139/A283) passing through the villages of Amberley and Storrington, crossing the A24, continuing east to Steyning and eventually rejoining the A27 at Shoreham by Sea. While this route is a longer distance, it is for many drivers infinitely preferable to the delays and congestion they would face by remaining on the A27. In addition, it is also our experience that drivers choose other routes further north to avoid congestion on the south coast, and this contributes to congestion and air quality problems in villages such as Cowfold.

A consequence of the high levels of traffic and congestion, especially at peak travel times, passing through Storrington has been poor air quality. In 2010, Horsham District Council declared an Air Quality Management Area in Storrington on account of exceedances of the air quality objective level for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). An action plan was prepared outlining a range of measures to tackle the poor air quality. Many of these are not measures that Horsham District Council, as a district authority, can bring about directly as they relate to highway improvements which are a matter for the highway authority (West Sussex County Council). A steering group was therefore established which drew together West Sussex County Council, the local Parish

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Council and members and officers from Horsham District Council to help bring forward the measures in the action plan. The one that has topped the list has been for improvements to the A27 as part of the main east/west trunk route in the region.

General comments

Horsham District Council is fully supportive of proposals to provide a bypass around Arundel. The Council previously favoured the route shown as Option 5a. There is now an alternative 'Magenta' Option (4/5AV1) which, whilst similar to the earlier Option 5a, would have less adverse effect on Binsted Woods and areas of ancient woodland. Magenta is therefore the Council's preferred option. Grey (Option 5BV1) and Amber (Option 4/5AV2) would also provide a beneficial outcome. The reason for this is that the decrease in traffic using the B2139 and the A283 will be greater for these three options than for other options, as shown on pages 16 and 18 of the Further Consultation document ('Benefits and Impacts' and 'Figure 3: Annual Average Daily Traffic respectively), whilst also avoiding too significant an impact on areas of ancient woodland. The selection of one of these three options will therefore be of greatest benefit in improving air quality in Storrington and reducing the volume of 'rat running' on the route through the Horsham district villages which lie between Fontwell and Shoreham.

This Council would encourage Highways England to construct any bypass and consequential bridges to the highest possible architectural standard and to take appropriate account of any potential flooding issues, given the sensitivity of the local environment.

As part of the scheme, we consider significant increases in provision for cycling could contribute to a reduction in the number of car journeys, and which in turn would reduce congestion and improve air quality. We would therefore encourage Highways England to support through their 'Designated Funds' the creation of a cycle-way between the South Downs National Park via Arundel to the coast along the River Arun and improved parking for commuters, tourists and residents at Ford railway station. You may wish to refer to the West Sussex County Council Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Strategy as part of any further consideration of improvements to this route.

In addition to this consultation, Horsham District Council is aware of further proposals to address wider issues of congestion along the A27. It is considered that it may be beneficial to continue to examine whether it may be possible to achieve a comprehensive solution to ease congestion on the Lancing to Chichester section of the A27 as a whole. It is recognised that there are significant national budgetary constraints in relation to road schemes, but it may be that a single scheme, rather than the more 'piecemeal' solutions that have been proposed to date, would be more cost effective and successful than individual plans. Such a solution would be of huge economic benefit and could also help to take into account the step change in housing delivery, which has been identified by the Government and therefore ensure that any enhancements to the road are as future-proofed as possible.

With regard to the 'Review of alternative transport options' section at page 10, I note that there are no significant plans for bus use in the area, and no current evidence to suggest that bus

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services could accommodate the overall need for travel. A similar conclusion is reached for train travel. As public transport use is fairly low in this area, the Council urges more serious consideration is given to improving public transport as a further means of effectively managing the transport network into the future to ensure that the step change in housing delivery can be delivered without further increases in vehicle numbers using our roads. Without this there is a risk that additional housing development in West Sussex could ultimately offset the benefits of the new bypass if further significant transport movements are the result. It is appreciated that this will need joint working across organisations (such as Councils and public transport providers) in the area.

Yours faithfully,

Councillor Ray Dawe
Leader of the Council