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Date: xx October 2017

Dear Sir/Madam

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

Thank you for the opportunity to respond 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 also highlight below 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 and Storrington 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.

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 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. This will improve the economic well-being of Arun district and the wider region, and also the social and environmental well-being of residents in Arundel, Storrington and surrounding communities.

Horsham District Council considers that both Options 3 and 5a as set out in the Public Consultation document produced by Highways England will provide a beneficial outcome. **This Council however strongly favours 5a.** The reason for this is that the traffic modelling that has been undertaken shows that the decrease in traffic using the B2139 and the A283 will be significantly greater for option 5a than for option 3. With option 5a, the decrease in traffic during the morning peak is predicted to be a reduction of 29% on the B2139 and 24% on the A283. With option 3, the reduction in traffic is only 4% on the B2139 and 6% on the A283. The selection of option 5a 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 described above which lie between Fontwell and Shoreham. In addition, traffic modeling indicates that Option 5a will speed up journey times significantly, which would have a beneficial impact on the economy of the whole County by reducing lost time from delays to road users in the area

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. Within Horsham district, the lack of segregated cycling paths is the issue commonly raised as the reason why people feel reluctant to cycle for local journeys. 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 two other proposals to address wider issues of congestion along the A27. These are the proposals for enhancements around Chichester, and those to the A27 in Worthing and Lancing. Whilst the Council is supportive of these proposals in isolation, it is considered that it may be beneficial

to examine whether it may be possible to achieve a comprehensive solution to ease congestion on this 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.

Yours faithfully,

Councillor Ray Dawe
Horsham District Council Leader