

Application by Highways England (the Applicant) for an Order granting Development Consent for the A27 Arundel Bypass (the Proposed Development) - Scoping Consultation

Slindon Parish Council is concerned at the choice of route with widespread implications for the environment and failure to invest in ways to manage and reduce traffic on the roads as an alternative to construction of a new road. It believes that the construction will merely shift the bottleneck at peak times from Arundel to its own doorstep in Fontwell and create environmental issues both during and after construction.

Although the proposed route lies outside the South Downs National Park, it is adjacent to it, lying on the southern boundary. Bigger roads such as this increase traffic and carbon emissions, destroy valuable wildlife habitats and local communities, impacting the unique setting and special qualities of the nearby South Downs National Park.

The long-term impacts for Slindon may be less than those of neighbouring Walberton, Binsted, Tortington and the Arun Valley, although the primary impacts of the new scheme have the potential to create secondary impacts, including aspects such as noise and air pollution, in direct conflict with the special qualities of the National Park.

Shellbridge Road is linked to Walberton and meets the B2233 at Yapton. We would like to preserve it as a quiet rural road where wildlife can be seen and enjoyed rather than a speedy rat run to the A29.

Distinctive towns and villages, and communities with real pride in their area is another special quality of the South Downs National Park and the busy A27 corridor which will skirt the South Downs National Park must be managed with sensitivity and maintain a 'sense of place'. It provides the ideal opportunity to deliver a highways scheme which incorporates environmentally friendly features.

The road construction must seek to be as aesthetically pleasing as it can be, as unintrusive as possible in terms of noise and visual impact, adapted to the environment and less damaging to habitats. Tranquil and unspoilt places is identified as one of the South Downs National Park's special qualities and this could be delivered through use of plants to screen the road, camouflaging of ugly concrete and painting of crash barriers to blend with planting.

In 2017 Highways England contributed to a collaborative research project which resulted in the publication of "The Matthew Muirhead Report New Asphalt Surfacing", dealing predominantly with noise from road surfaces with a commitment to long term monitoring of noise measurement and durability. In the late 1980s when a new section of the A27 was constructed it did not follow a route very close to local villages as the Grey route does, yet because of a cheaper option of asphalt for the road surface, the noise level was very intrusive.

The Grey Route of the proposed Arundel Bypass affects a number of local villages and mitigation from the effects has been promised. The Slindon Parish Council will continue to support the parishes of Walberton, Binsted and Fontwell and all other villages and hamlets near the new route. We ask that the choice of a road surface which ameliorates noise pollution for people living and working near the new Bypass will be considered as essential. The new Open Graded Friction Course (OGFC) which is an asphalt mix and is more porous has been revealed to cut noise by 8 decibels. It is used extensively in the USA and perhaps might be a good option.

In conclusion, whilst there are many ways that the impacts of the route can be mitigated, in the light of shifting working practices with many more people now working from home the current project should surely be put on hold and avoid a scheme which isn't actually needed or indeed wanted.