



Pacific House (Second Floor)
Hazelwick Avenue
Three Bridges
Crawley
RH10 1EX
01293 305965
coast2capital.org.uk

By e-mail

23 October 2019

A27 Arundel Bypass Further Consultation

Dear Highways England,

I am writing on behalf of Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership in response to Highways England A27 Arundel Bypass Further Consultation. Coast to Capital is a unique business-led collaboration between the private, public and education sectors across a diverse area which includes East Surrey, Greater Brighton and West Sussex.

The consultation material summarises well the national and regional significance of the A27, "As the main route serving the south coast, the A27 corridor is crucial to the region's success. A population of more than 1 million people rely on the A27, and growth plans for the region mean this number is only set to increase."

The need to reduce congestion and improve movement of people and goods along the A27 from Brighton to Portsmouth is widely recognised, specifically in order to increase the local and regional economy, with widespread support for an appropriate intervention at Arundel. The limitations of the A27 are part of a wider picture of infrastructure challenges in the Coast to Capital area that restrict our economic growth compared to other parts of the South East. The national significance of this scheme is recognised in Government's own 2015-2020 Road Investment Strategy (RIS1).

We are pleased that Highways England continues to take a consultative approach to this important scheme. The need to support growth must also be carefully balanced with environmental and social impacts given the setting of existing and proposed routes. This is something that was firmly recognised in the previous consultation exercise and has, in part, led to these new proposals. We would encourage

Highways England to continue to listen to these concerns in this latest consultation phase.

We recognise local support by Arun District Council and West Sussex County Council, as well as other local groups including the Coastal West Sussex Partnership, for Magenta as the preferred route and we would add our own support to it, on balance of minimising social and environmental impact and providing value for money. In short, Cyan and Beige routes are considered to impact too heavily on Arundel itself as well as the South Downs National Park, while Crimson route would also have a heavy impact on the South Downs and a large swathe of Ancient Woodland. This would leave three remaining options – Amber, Magenta and Grey routes. Of these Magenta would be our preference for the reasons of balance stated above.

While Magenta route would help to reduce environmental impacts, we would urge Highway's England to invest in innovative ways to mitigate as far as possible the short and long term impact of the new road, on flora and fauna and local communities. This would include construction methods and materials but also design elements to aid the transit of people and wildlife in particular. Biodiversity gain should be an aspiration of the scheme where possible in terms of habitat creation, rather than simply the minimum degree of loss.

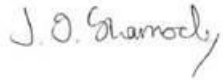
We consider that, given the timing of this scheme in relation to the growing understanding and acceptance of climate change risks, it is imperative to design in necessary measures now that will allow us to manage and reduce these risks for the future. We therefore encourage Highways England to think ahead creatively – with us, our partners and with other Government departments – as to future vehicle use of the A27 and other roads.

This would apply not only in terms of zero-emission modes of individual transport (i.e. private car and freight vehicles) but also raising the collective ambition to promote and encourage forms of mass transit. Much of the current congestion is exacerbated by local movements across and along stretches of the A27 by private car where no viable public transport or cycling alternative exist and where measures to enable such alternatives to be delivered in the future can be designed in now.

The relationship between road and rail networks, as part of future consideration of rail franchising models based on local commuter movement is also key. The consultation material acknowledges that rail take-up is low in the Arundel area, which should not simply be taken as a given but rather an opportunity to balance and reduce future use of the A27. Potential solutions to move longer vehicle journeys off the A27 and onto the West Coastway Rail Service may well lie in the ability to move more local rail journeys onto mass transmit road options, thereby enabling the railway to deliver more express journeys with a net reduction in demand on the road.

We look forward to Highways England's response to this latest stage of consultation and future design proposals.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. O. Sharrock".

Jonathan Sharrock

Chief Executive