

A27 Chichester Bypass Improvement Scheme Consultation

1. Contacts

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2. Recommendation

2.1. That the Cabinet determines whether to request the Secretary of State for Transport to instruct Highways England, first to undertake a new consultation on improvements to the A27 around Chichester with an extended range of options including the two previously developed northern by-pass options and secondly to publish without delay the results of the consultation held between July and September 2016.

2.2. That the Council be recommended to endorse such action.

3. Background

3.1. Members will recall the report considered by the Cabinet and the Council in September 2016 concerning the options proposed by Highways England to improve the A27. The report outlined the five options published for consultation, reviewed the consultation documents and considered the potential benefits and adverse effects of the different options including how they each might impact on the council's own work and how they might affect local communities, businesses and visitors to Chichester District.

3.2 Based upon the information made available by Highways England, the Council resolved to provide qualified support to option 2 and to approve the wider comments within the appendix to that report as Chichester District Council's formal response. However, the Council made it clear that it was only minded to support option 2 provided that Highways England gave serious consideration to the following:

- (i) Strategic improvements to the Portfield roundabout to increase east-west capacity, possibly including an eastbound flyover for cars and light vans only using the A27;
- (ii) The provision of good access for traffic going from the B2145 to the east of Chichester without impeding through east-west traffic (possibly by a

slip road from the Whyke Road flyover down to the A27 or a right turn from the flyover down to the A27);

- (iii) The reduction of the length of the Stockbridge Link Road, either to only a section from the A286 to the Fishbourne roundabout or to the two sections from the B2201 via the A286 to the Fishbourne roundabout;
- (iv) The provision of safe, segregated crossings of the A27 for cyclists and pedestrians at the Bognor Road, Whyke Road, Stockbridge Road and Fishbourne junctions;
- (v) The installation of noise abatement screens on the flyovers;
- (vi) The examination of the scope for lowering the roundabouts and flyovers at the Bognor Road and, especially, Fishbourne junctions to reduce visual impact; and
- (vii) The use of Highways England's Designated Fund to finance the mitigation measures listed above.

3.3 In addition and importantly, the Council requested for purposes of transparency and community cohesion, that the Secretary of State provided the justification for discounting the previously prepared two offline routes to the north of the city.

3.4 It is clear therefore that in providing a response to the consultation, the Council had significant reservations about the identified options, the absence of northern options and the extent to which the proposed schemes would bring about the much needed long-term improvements to the A27.

3.5 The public consultation brochure for the A27 Chichester Bypass Improvement Scheme in summer 2016 included a timetable which indicated that the Minister for Roads would announce the preferred route by the end of 2016. During a recent meeting with Highways England officers they advised that the timetable had already slipped. Furthermore, at the time of writing this report a response has not been received to the request for an explanation of the reasoning behind the decision to remove the northern route options, although it is noted that the consultation document stated that after detailed consideration of the available budget and the criteria set out in government's 2015-2020 Road Investment Strategy, new route options were discounted as not being viable.

3.6 The Leader has been provided a copy of correspondence (see appendix 1) from Councillor Louise Goldsmith, the Leader of West Sussex County Council, addressed to Mr J O'Sullivan, Chief Executive of Highways England, alluding to comments made by the Secretary of State for Transport, the Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP, and indicating that the Secretary of State would be prepared to look at the possibility of re-running the consultation provided there was support from the councils and the MP.

4. Outcomes to be Achieved

4.1. As the consultation documentation states, the A27 bypass improvement has a long history dating back to 2000 and the South Coast Multi Modal Study. There

is significant public interest in the improvement scheme and the development of options has not been without criticism, with some claiming that there has been a lack of transparency in the process. The initial date for the consultation in March 2016 had to be postponed.

- 4.2. Potentially the opportunity to revisit the consultation exercise with alternative options included will address local criticism of process and enable communities to comment on a wider choice of options and hopefully improve confidence in the selection of the preferred route.

5. Proposal

- 5.1. The Cabinet should consider whether there is merit in writing to the Secretary of State to support a re-running of the consultation exercise with alternative off-line options including the northern options previously developed and later discounted and recommend to the Council accordingly.
- 5.2. Members will no doubt recognise that such a course of action could potentially lead to delay in the implementation of the agreed scheme.

6. Alternatives Considered

- 6.1. The Cabinet and the Council might decide not to comment further and be satisfied with the existing comments agreed by the Council on 20 September 2016.

7. Resource and Legal Implications

- 7.1. The resource and legal implications were set out in the September 2016 report. However, should the Secretary of State decide to re-run the consultation, officers are likely to have to repeat the previous significant analysis with a concluding report to the Cabinet and the Council.

8. Consultation

- 8.1. Consultation comments were set out in the previous report and no further consultation has been undertaken.

9. Community Impact and Corporate Risks

- 9.1. Again, these were set out in the earlier report and no further comments are made at this stage.

10. Other Implications

	Yes	No
Crime and Disorder		✓
Climate Change See earlier report.	✓	
Human Rights and Equality Impact		✓
Safeguarding and Early Hel:		✓
Other (please specify)		✓

11. Appendices

- 11.1. Letter from Councillor Louise Goldsmith, Leader of West Sussex County Council to Mr Jim O'Sullivan, Chief Executive of Highways England.

12. Background Papers

- 12.1. None