



ADUR & WORTHING
COUNCILS

Joint Strategic Committee
12 September 2017
Agenda Item 9

Key Decision No

Ward(s) Affected: All

Adur and Worthing Response to the A27 Worthing and Lancing Improvement Scheme.

Report by the Director for the Economy

Executive Summary

1. Purpose

This report sets out details of the current consultation on the proposed improvements to the A27 from Worthing to Lancing. The report recommends that both Councils should object to the proposals on the basis that the consultation does not provide any options for the public to consider and in view of the lack of available budget would not deliver any material benefits to users of the A27 or the local economy.

2. Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee objects to the current consultation on the grounds that,

- i) the proposed A27 improvements do not provide any significant improvement to the current congestion problems, secure any significant reduction in journey times or improvement in air quality;
- ii) the lack of funding allocated to the project means that the consultation fails to meet the original scope of the Road Investment Strategy which was to test the scope for 'full dualling' of the A27 through Worthing;
- iii) the consultation fails to provide any alternative options for the local community to consider;

- iv) the limited improvement in capacity in the short term will not meet the Government's future objectives for meeting housing demand in the area or support economic growth of the sub-region; and,
- v) the piecemeal approach to consulting on the A27 improvements fails to take a holistic view of the problems along the length of the A27 corridor nor assess in sufficient detail the cumulative impact of improvements (or decisions not to proceed with certain improvements).

3. Context

3.1 In 2015, the Government published its first Roads Investment Strategy for the 2015-2020 period (RIS1). This sets out the Government's ambitions for the trunk road network, managed on behalf of the Secretary of State by Highways England. RIS1 includes a commitment to invest £15.2 billion in the trunk road network through a range of improvements and feasibility studies to identify potential solutions for delivery in future funding periods.

3.2 The Government is now in the process of preparing its Roads Investment Strategy 2 (RIS2) which will cover the 2020-2025 period. DfT are currently undertaking research and engagement prior to publication of RIS2 which is expected in November 2017.

3.3 The A27 Worthing and Lancing improvements scheme is identified within the Government's 2015-2020 (RIS1). It is part of a package of investments along the A27 corridor to increase its capacity and condition which includes schemes at Chichester, Arundel and East of Lewes. Members will be aware that following the Chichester consultation the Secretary of State informed Highways England to stop work on the A27 bypass improvement scheme. In response the Chief Executive of Highways England stated that,

'We are obviously disappointed at this decision as the improvement would have brought significant strategic benefits to the region.

But any improvement had to be right for Chichester and there was no overall consensus. We will continue to work with partners to monitor the route's performance and to carry out any short term measures we can to help road users, the local community and the region.'

3.4 Consultation on the options for the A27 East of Lewes scheme was undertaken last year, whilst the Arundel bypass options consultation has recently commenced with comments due by the 16th October 2017.

4. Worthing to Lancing Proposed A27 Improvement Scheme

4.1 Consultation on the Worthing to Lancing A27 Improvement Scheme commenced on the 19th July and ends on the 12th September 2017. Whilst, Adur and Worthing Councils, along with other local organisations, have made representations to extend this consultation to the end of September, a formal response from Highways England (HE) is still awaited. However, it has agreed to accept further representations beyond this date when requested.

4.2 The scope of the A27 Worthing and Lancing improvements scheme, as described in the Road Investment Strategy, is:

'Improvements to the capacity of the road and junctions along the stretch of single carriageway in Worthing and narrow lane dual carriageway in Lancing. The extent and scale of the improvements, including the option of full dualling, are to be agreed in consultation with West Sussex County Council and the public.'

4.3 A budget of between £50 million and £100 million has been allocated to the scheme and the consultation identifies the key scheme objectives as being,

- Reduce congestion on the Worthing-Lancing section of the A27
- Manage the impact of planned growth and support the wider economy
- Minimise impacts on, and where possible seek opportunities for, enhancing the environment
- Provide safer roads and more reliable journeys by reducing travel delays
- Improve accessibility for all users.

4.4 The consultation documents highlight that the cost of the options for addressing these scheme objectives is a key consideration and that for any option to be taken forward to public consultation it must be affordable within the allocated budget and offer value for money. All road schemes have to demonstrate the balance of benefits measured against construction costs (known as the benefit to cost ratio - BCR).

4.5 The consultation makes it clear that there is only one option which meets the scheme objectives whilst offering value for money within the budget set for the scheme. This option improves the 6 key junctions along the route in Worthing and Lancing. Details of the other options that have been investigated but not taken forward for public consultation are included as Appendix I to this report.

4.6 It is submitted that the scheme would provide,

‘significant extra capacity and would reduce delays. The proposed new junctions would also have protected pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities which would help to reduce the community division currently caused by the road.’

4.7 Details of the proposed improvements of the 6 junctions are identified in the following table,

| Junction | Description |
|--|--|
| 1. Durrington Hill / Salvington Hill | Convert the existing priority junctions to a traffic signalled cross road junction. Widening on Durrington Hill and on the A27 to accommodate a two lane approach, which would require some land acquisition. |
| 2. Offington Corner Junction roundabout – A24 Findon Road/ Offington Lane (Durrington Cemetery) | Convert the existing roundabout to a traffic signalled cross road junction. Widening on all approaches and some exits to accommodate extra slip roads and lanes, which would require some land acquisition. Access to the A24 from Fontwell Close remains but access to the A27 from Goodwood Road would be closed. |
| 3. Grove Lodge Junction | Widening of the approaches and circulation lanes to accommodate two lanes of traffic through the junction. Would require some land acquisition. |
| 4a. Lyons Farm Retail Part 1 Junction (Sompting Road) and 4b Lyons Farm Retail Part 2 Junction (Lyons Way) | Widening of the existing junctions to accommodate more lanes. Provide new turning arrangements at both junctions. Right turns from the A27 eastbound into Sompting Road and from Pines Avenue onto the A27 would be banned. Dedicated left-turn lane from the A27 eastbound into the retail park removed. Access to the A27 from Hadley Avenue closed. Widening would require some land acquisition. |
| 5. Busticle Lane / Halewick Lane Junction | Provide new junction to the west of the existing junction for access to / from Halewick Lane. This would require some land acquisition, some of which is within the South Downs National Park. |
| 6. Grinstead Lane / Manor Road Junction | Widen the existing junction approaches and convert the existing roundabout to a new traffic signal controlled junction for traffic turning from Manor Road onto the A27. Would require some land acquisition from nearby properties. Traffic coming from the Brighton direction would not be able to make U-turns. |
| Note: all proposed new traffic signals would incorporate toucan crossings (allowing pedestrians and cyclists to cross together), which would increase the provision for people walking and cycling in a number of locations. | |

5. Issues for consideration

Transport

- 5.1 As indicated earlier in the report the Road Investment Strategy set out the scope of the study to secure 'improvements to the capacity of the road' along this stretch of the A27 and importantly stated that the, '*extent and scale of the improvements, including the **option of full dualling**, are to be agreed in consultation with West Sussex County Council and the public.*'
- 5.2 It is very disappointing, therefore, that the consultation has not included this option or any other option for the local community to consider. This has been primarily because the level of funding allocated to Worthing has been insufficient to assess more significant improvements and allow any consultation on *full dualling* or any of the other options considered but rejected (see Appendix I).
- 5.3 The consultation for Adur and Worthing is in stark contrast to the funding made available to other areas of the A27, for instance at Chichester and Arundel where various options have been presented to the local community. The net result is that the 'consultation' presents a preferred option that provides minimal improvements in capacity/journey time over the period to 2041.
- 5.4 When compared to the 'Do minimum scenario', the proposals result in a small overall travel time saving across the highway network during AM and PM peak periods. The travel time saving equates to a - 1% improvement across the network during each of the peak periods. This is slightly offset, however, by a 1% increase in travel time during off peak periods (likely as a result of the introduction of new traffic signal controls).
- 5.5 The proposals may help to manage the increase in traffic in the short-term but their overall impact is relatively modest and there is concern about the significant disruption during the construction phase for such little long term gain. The improvements are predicted to attract some traffic to use the A27 route rather than less suitable parallel routes but in isolation, the proposals are not going to have any significant impact on reducing current congestion on the trunk road upto 2041 without significantly greater investment.
- 5.6 Although a significant amount of technical work has been published by Highways England, it is considered that there is a great deal of further work required to assess the cumulative impact of improving the A27 corridor and to

understand the wider economic impacts of the options. The piecemeal approach to consultation and a lack of understanding of the knock on effect of some schemes not progressing makes it hard to understand the overall impact along the length of the A27.

Traffic Flow Issues and Junction Capacity

- 5.7 In general terms the consultation indicates that for the majority of routes the change in traffic flow is forecast to be less than 5%. However, there are a number of routes where there are larger increases and decreases. This is generally as a result of providing some additional capacity at the 7 improved A27 junctions, however, this will only be in the short term as the junctions will still be operating close to capacity and as traffic levels rise capacity would reduce. The potential benefits would be to the A259 which would see a reduction in flow in 2023 of 25% in the AM peak and 34% in the PM peak. It is also predicted that there would be a reduction in traffic flows on Offington Avenue.
- 5.8 The proposals are also forecast to have a negative impact on some local roads such as Grinstead Lane and Manor Road. It is also disappointing that the scheme does not provide any traffic reduction in West Street Sompting and a likely increase in off peak flows of 14%.

Road Safety Impacts

- 5.9 The proposals are expected to result in accident benefits worth £5.6m over the 60 year appraisal period. As with the traffic impacts, the proposals provide a modest but positive impact on road safety compared to the 'Do minimum' scenario where the total cost of accidents is forecast to be £313.5m over the same appraisal period. As the proposals will improve road safety and reduce the cost of accidents the objective of the scheme to provide safer roads is met albeit to a fairly limited extent.

Sustainable Transport

- 5.10 One of the objectives of the scheme is to 'improve accessibility for all users' and in addition the Road Investment Strategy stated that the proposals for this stretch of the A27 should look at developing sustainable transport measures. The proposals do include some new facilities for Non-Motorised Users (NMUs) at junctions on the corridor. However, these facilities are fairly limited in scope and fail to show how they will connect into the wider network of routes.
- 5.11 As indicated earlier the proposed scheme for this stretch of the A27 will not address the significant congestion problems. As many of the trips along this

stretch are local there is the opportunity to encourage a transfer of some short distance trips to sustainable modes of transport. However, this would require significant upgrades to sustainable transport infrastructure and services. There would be the opportunity to improve public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure in this area that could be complementary to any A27 improvements. However, this would require greater levels of central funding and a more collaborative approach between Highways England local authorities, which has been limited to date.

- 5.12 Crossing the A27 as a pedestrian or cyclist is problematic and discourages access to the National Park. Although the introduction of pedestrian/cycle phases at traffic signal controlled junctions will make some improvement these cause delays to traffic and can lead to road safety issues. For instance Offington corner increases the crossing points for pedestrians and cyclists on the east side using the existing cycle route and pedestrian crossing from one crossing point to 6 and a journey time from about 4 minutes to a predicted 12 or more, heightening the risk of users especially school children crossing the road at unauthorised points. There is the opportunity to provide foot/cycle bridges and there are a number of locations which have been looked at the past and these should be investigated further including at West Durrington, Grove Lodge, and Lancing Manor.

Economy

- 5.13 The A27 has a serious detrimental effect on the local economy and local businesses. As the proposals will only have a modest improvement in traffic conditions, it is not considered that the proposals will help to address the underperformance of the West Sussex coastal economy compared to the regional average.
- 5.14 At this stage in the scheme development process, only a summary note of the wider economic impacts has been provided. This indicates that the wider economic impact of the scheme is expected to contribute to an overall increase in GDP ranging from £12-20 million. However, it would have been beneficial for an assessment of the wider economic impacts that could have been delivered with more substantial improvements to the A27 at Worthing and Lancing, particularly when considered cumulatively with proposed improvements at Arundel and east of Lewes.

Local Plans

- 5.15 The A27 consultation assumes that other highway improvements required to support new planned development will take place including the new roundabout planned at New Monks Farm. The housing and employment growth set out in the adopted Core Strategy for Worthing and the emerging Local Plan for Adur are not dependent on the A27 improvements. However, it is unclear whether additional housing sites coming forward as part of the

Worthing Local Plan review would require more substantial improvements to existing junctions on the A27.

- 5.16 As Members are aware the significant physical and environmental constraints along the south coast restrict the various Councils ability to deliver their objectively assessed need for housing. However, the ability for additional growth in the sub-region is also significantly constrained by an infrastructure deficit as investment has not kept growth with economic growth in the sub-region. As the A27 improvement proposals do not provide significant additional capacity to cater for development other than that which is planned, the proposals will not significantly assist in narrowing the gap between planned and the objectively assessed need for housing or meet aspirations for improved economic performance.

Landscape Impact

- 5.17 The proposals would result in the removal of some sections of grass verge and mature trees to accommodate the junction improvements. Given the focus on the junctions and not the connecting roads, in general, the existing tree-lined character of the A27 would be retained.
- 5.18 The landscape impact assessment of the improvements to the Busticle Lane junction conclude that the proposals will have a negligible adverse impact. This conclusion is questioned as it does not appear to take account of the proposal to realign Halewick Lane into the National Park. Adur Members will note that this land was previously considered as a possible housing site.
- 5.19 The landscape impact assessment of the improvement to Manor Road junction concludes that the proposal will have a minor adverse impact. However, the proposals require land acquisition from Lancing Manor Park and the Leisure Centre resulting in the removal of all the trees along this section of the highway and within the Park. The Cricket Club has raised concerns about the impact of the proposals and the proposal would have an impact on the users of the Park. Whilst there may be opportunities to replant this may increase any adverse impact on the cricket square and amount of recreation land affecting by the proposal. The landscape and visual impact assessment on these two junctions does need to be re-assessed.

Air Quality and Noise

- 5.20 In Worthing, an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) has been designated between Grove Lodge and Lyons Farm due to exceedance of air quality standards for NO_x, principally due to traffic. Although the impacts on air quality in this AQMA have been considered, the proposals may also affect traffic flows in AQMAs on A259 Shoreham High Street and A270 Old Shoreham Road in Adur District and Storrington High Street.

- 5.21 The proposals are expected to affect air quality during construction and operation of the scheme. During construction of the scheme, this is expected to result in a small magnitude of impact with a medium risk. During operation of the scheme, this is expected to result in some improvements to congestion but this positive impact is expected to be of neutral significance. It is disappointing that the proposals do not improve air quality and at Grove Lodge and Lyons Farm as junctions are moved closer to some properties this will exacerbate air quality issues for these residents.
- 5.22 As with air quality concerns the proposals have the potential to affect the noise and vibration levels experienced by nearby noise sensitive receptors due to road widening and junction improvements along the A27 at Worthing and Lancing. If the scheme was to progress further noise assessment and mitigation measures would have to be investigated.

6. Engagement and Communication

- 6.1 A comprehensive public engagement process has been undertaken by Highways England to seek comments on the proposals. Unfortunately, due to delays in seeking formal approval to consult from the Department of Transport this has been undertaken primarily during the August holiday period when many people and business leaders have been on leave. It is hoped that the request to extend the consultation period will be agreed but nevertheless some notable organisations and businesses have already expressed concern about the proposals.
- 6.2 The Coastal West Sussex Partnership is a business led body formed to develop the region with a central mission to ensure the area is well connected to support sustainable economic growth. The Partnership has responded by stating that it wants to see the government take the lead in ensuring that a viable long term solution is found rather than the current piecemeal approach. Chairman of the Partnership has stated that,

“The option currently being proposed doesn't go far enough and more long-lasting and innovative solutions should be sought. The few benefits that could be delivered through this scheme appear disproportionate to the proposed costs and the disruption during the works could have a bigger cost to business.

We encourage Highways England to take a more holistic and innovative approach to improving the whole A27 route through West Sussex and not just on line junction improvements which will make little difference to overall journey times. Any solution proposed needs to give lasting benefit and at

present we do not feel that these solutions will improve reliability or journey times for the medium to long term”

- 6.3 The West Sussex Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Highways is due to consider a report which concludes that,

The County Council’s West Sussex Transport Plan 2011-26 identifies improvements to the A27 at Chichester, Arundel and Worthing as its highest priority. The poor performance of A27 disrupts businesses, residents and visitors to West Sussex on a daily basis. Traffic levels are forecast to grow in the future due to economic and population growth, increasing car ownership, income levels, and the price of fuel. Without improving the A27 at Worthing and Lancing, this will increase congestion at peak times and result in greater rat-running and ‘peak spreading’; i.e. peak period conditions will extend into other parts of the day. Accessibility to coastal areas, which are important for tourism and in need of regeneration in some places, will also continue to deteriorate as queues on the local roads approaching the A27 become longer.

The County Council consider that greater effort should be made to develop a realistic construction phasing plan that minimises the duration and impacts of construction at the next stage of the project. Also, if the consultation proposals are not implemented, then alternative (smaller scale) proposals will need to be delivered at some junctions to mitigate the impacts of development-related traffic over time. These are included in the ‘Do Minimum’ scenario, so ‘doing nothing’ should not be viewed as a genuine alternative. These improvements will not significantly address pre-existing congestion issues, and will still be disruptive when they are built. In determining a Preferred Route for this scheme, Highway England should take account of the cost of disruption associated with constructing alternative developer-funded improvements.

Although a significant amount of technical work has been published by Highways England, there is a great deal of further work required to: assess the cumulative impact of improving the A27 corridor; to develop detailed proposals to cater for NMUs; and to understand the wider economic impacts of the options. Although the County Council consider it to be in the best interest of the West Sussex community to identify and deliver the proposals, some of this work, particularly an assessment of the cumulative impacts of schemes to improve the A27, should take place before a Preferred Route is announced (because major changes to the scheme design will be less likely at the next stage of the project).

Highways England have stated the ‘objectives’ for the scheme are to:

- reduce congestion on the Worthing and Lancing section of the A27;*
- manage the impact of planned growth and support the wider economy;*
- minimise impacts on, and where possible seek opportunities for, enhancing the environment;*

- ❑ *provide safer roads and more reliable journeys by reducing travel delays; and*
- ❑ *improve accessibility for all users.*

The County Council's assessment of the proposals indicates that while the performance of the proposals against each of these objectives is positive in all cases, the scale of the benefits is relatively modest. The County Council is concerned that these benefits will be eroded quickly over time and further improvements will be needed in the medium-term. The County Council would like to work with Highways England to explore whether or not more substantial improvements could offer good value for money as a basis for seeking additional funding in a future RIS.

As there will be localised adverse environmental impacts, including loss of mature trees, semi-natural woodland and hedgerows, any scheme will require a package of detailed mitigation and compensation measures that will be developed at the next stage of the project.

The County Council consider there are potential opportunities to improve public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure in this area that could be complementary to the A27 improvements and help to prolong the benefits of the current proposals. However, this would require central funding and a more collaborative approach from Highways England involving information sharing with the local authorities, which has been limited to date. Opportunities that should be investigated for use of Highways England's Designated Funds include foot/cycle bridges in the vicinity of the Lancing Manor and Grove Lodge junctions.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications of this report for both Councils, however, it is acknowledged that improvements to the capacity of the A27 would have significant financial benefits to the local economy and the attractiveness of the area for inward investment and business expansion.

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Background Papers:

A27 Worthing and Lancing Public Consultation
Emerging Adur Local Plan 2016

Emerging Worthing Local Plan

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1. Economic

- 1.1 The report refers to the economic impact assessment carried out by Consultants for Highways England. Whilst the report concludes that the proposed A27 improvements

2. Social

2.1 Social Value

- ❑ The A27 is a key strategic route along the coast and its current poor performance in terms of congestion and travel time has a significant impact on the local economy. Investment in this vital transport infrastructure is long overdue and could provide significant benefits to productivity and the competitiveness of the sub-region. Unfortunately, due to a lack of funding, the current consultation does not address the key issues of congestion.
- ❑ The A27 passes through high density residential areas and this combined with the current levels of congestion has an adverse impact on air quality and noise. Although there would be some improvement in capacity as a result of the proposed improvements there would be no significant improvement in air quality or noise impacts.

2.2 Equality Issues

- ❑ Matter considered and no issues identified.

2.3 Community Safety Issues (Section 17)

- 2.31 Matter considered and no issues identified.

2.4 Human Rights Issues

- ❑ The proposed improvement works would potentially have a greater visual impact and increase noise and worsen air quality for some residents living close to the junctions to be improved unless significant mitigation measures are implemented alongside the proposed improvements works.

3. Environmental

- ❑ The proposed highway improvement scheme has been the subject of a landscape and visual impact assessment, however, it is considered

that the landscape impact of the works has been underestimated at Busticle Lane and Lancing Manor.

4. Governance

- ❑ The overall objectives of the A27 improvement scheme align with a number of the Council's priorities to improve the economic and social well being of the area and promote economic growth. The main concern is that the improvements do not go far enough to meet these objectives.
- ❑ It is not considered that the proposed consultation response would affect the Councils' reputation or relationship with our partners or community. In this respect the proposed response aligns broadly with the response of business partners and organisations. However, it is recognised that more significant highway improvements could run counter to other residents and organisations views in particular that such alterations would have a greater environmental impact.

Appendix 1

**Other Options considered and rejected by
Highways England prior to the consultation exercise.**

| Option | Description | Cost Range |
|-----------|--|---|
| Option 2 | <p>New flyovers / underpasses at junctions, with direct access to the A27. Junction improvements with new layouts incorporating flyovers / underpasses but no road widening. All existing direct access points to the A27 retained, though restricted access to/from some local roads.</p> | Discarded early as well in excess of the upper budget |
| Option 3 | <p>Junction improvements and upgrading to dual carriageway, with direct access to the A27. Widening of the A27 to dual carriageway. All existing direct access points to the A27 retained, though restricted access to/ from some local roads.</p> | <p>Up to £274 million</p> <p>Rejected due to cost and a low Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR) of 0.57 (poor value for money).</p> |
| Option 3A | <p>Junction improvements and upgrading to narrow dual carriageway, with direct access to the A27. As per Option 3, but designed with narrower lanes.</p> | <p>Up to £238 million</p> <p>Rejected due to cost and a low Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR) of 0.52 (poor value for money).</p> |
| Option 4 | <p>New flyovers / underpasses at junctions and upgrading to dual carriageway, with direct access to the A27. Widening of the A27 to dual carriageway. Junction improvements with new layouts incorporating flyovers / underpasses. All existing direct access points to the A27 retained, though restricted access to/from some local roads.</p> | Discarded early as well in excess of the upper budget |
| Option 5 | <p>New flyovers / underpasses at junctions and upgrading to dual carriageway with service roads. Direct access to the A27 not permitted. Widening of the A27 to dual carriageway. Junction improvements with new layouts incorporating flyovers / underpasses. All access points removed, and extensive additional work required to provide service roads from the local network.</p> | Discarded early as well in excess of the upper budget |
| Hybrid | <p>A 'hybrid' option that includes a mixture of junction improvements and flyovers (at Lyons Farm junctions and Grove Lodge roundabout). Includes some upgrading to dual carriageway standard to support the junction improvements.</p> | <p>£250 million to £350 million</p> <p>Rejected due to cost.</p> |