



Key Decision [~~Yes~~/No]

Ward(s) Affected: All  
Cabinet Portfolio: Regeneration

## A27 Worthing and Lancing improvements scheme Options consultation

### Report by the Director for the Economy

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### Executive Summary

#### 1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide members of the Joint Strategic Committee Sub-Committee with an opportunity to respond to the A27 Worthing and Lancing improvements scheme Options consultation currently being undertaken by National Highways.

#### 2. Recommendations

That Members of the Sub-Committee authorise the Council's response to National Highways consultation on the A27 Worthing and Lancing improvements scheme Options consultation in the following terms:

- 2.1. National Highways stated aim of making sure potential future improvements to transport in the Worthing and Lancing area can still happen is welcomed;
- 2.2. the limited scope of the project and reduction in the finances available to deliver it, even compared with the RIS1 scheme, mean

that Consultation Options do not reflect the strategic ambition set out in the Transport for the South East's Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) and in particular, the SIP's emphasis on integrating transport, digital and energy networks, together with a high-quality, reliable, safe, and accessible transport network;

- 2.3. at a local level, it is not clear how the proposals set out in the Options would integrate with Worthing's adopted Local Walking and Cycling Improvement Plan (LCWIP) as part of a more co-ordinated approach to delivering transport infrastructure that supports active travel;
- 2.4. the Consultation Options papers include welcome references to walking and cycling improvements but there is a concern that funding for these improvements is not identified at this stage;
- 2.5. the principal benefits for Worthing are reduced travel times between the key junctions on the A27 and that whilst significant in terms of the Department for Transport's Benefit Cost Ratio analysis, these represent only a modest improvement and would require a year-long construction period;
- 2.6. it is disappointing that only slight improvements are recorded for air quality and noise and the accident level impact is recorded as only neutral;
- 2.7. reduced levels of traffic for residents in Goodwood Road, Sompting Road, Upper Brighton Road and Hadley Avenue would be welcome. However, there is a concern that directing Sompting Road traffic through the Lyons Farm retail park prior to rejoining the A27 at the Lyons Farm junction could cause considerable congestion in the retail park area.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1. There is a long and chequered history of proposals for improving the stretch of the A27 across Worthing and through to Lancing. The most recent proposals prior to this current consultation were announced (by the then Highways England) as part of RIS1 (Road Investment Strategy 1 2015 – 2020) but were paused in 2018 for further review following lack of support from the local community and road users.
- 3.2. The current Consultation (now part of RIS2) began on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2023 and ends on Sunday March 19<sup>th</sup> 2023. Consultation

follows a review of the 2018 scheme which presented just one option for consultation costed at £169m. 3 options are presented this time although it is noteworthy that the finance available for the scheme is significantly less at around £20m.

- 3.3. The Staged Overview of Assessment Report (SOAR) included with the Consultation acknowledges that given the reduced scope of the scheme from the original 2017 proposals, it is not intended to address all current and forecast capacity issues; rather to address specific areas of strategic road network (SRN) performance for both local and strategic movements, whilst also supporting active travel modes.
- 3.4. Congestion occurs daily at most of the junctions along this stretch of the A27, especially during peak travel times and seasonal periods. The traffic volumes and congestion also have an impact on air quality and noise in Worthing and Lancing. The Consultation document records that:

*‘Although vehicle speeds are expected to be lower in the urban areas it is noticeable that there are several sections along the A27 where speed reduces to less than 15mph in particular during the AM and PM peak periods. This includes the single carriageway section from west of Offington Corner roundabout to Lyons Farm and the sections around Busticle Lane junction and Grinstead roundabout.’*
- 3.5. National Highways also recognises that there is a significant amount of local development planned in the area and, without improvements, traffic congestion is likely to get worse.
- 3.6. The accompanying Staged Overview of Assessment Report (SOAR) indicates that:

‘A key opportunity for capacity improvements is to ensure they are delivered in line with local strategic development plans. This ensures that any proposed housing developments are not delayed by capacity issues on the A27, and/or that such developments do not cause additional congestion. Future road improvement projects further east along the A27, such as Arundel may also have the effect of increasing traffic draw along the A27 from outside the region, which could further worsen the current situation around Worthing and Lancing.’
- 3.7. Construction of the scheme could begin by **December 2024** and finish in **June 2026**.

## 4. The Options

4.1. Mindful of the context set out above, the proposals set out in the 3 Options are designed to:

- improve road safety for everyone on the A27 and the local road network
- reduce delays and improve journey reliability
- create facilities for other travel modes such as walking and cycling alongside and crossing the A27
- make sure potential future improvements to transport in the Worthing and Lancing area can still happen
- wherever possible, seek to enhance the local environment and biodiversity

4.2. **Option 1:** focuses on improvements at two key locations: Offington Corner Roundabout and Grove Lodge Roundabout. The Offington Corner Roundabout Improvements include small areas of widening including the entry and exit in order to increase the flow of vehicles during busy periods and facilitate safe movement of pedestrians. Access to Goodwood Road will be closed to reduce the number of entry points into the junction and vehicles that previously accessed Offington Corner Roundabout via Goodwood Road will use Offington Lane instead.

Grove Lodge Roundabout Improvements include widening of the roundabout to accommodate up to four lanes and widening of the A27 entry and exits in order to increase the flow of vehicles during busy periods. The existing traffic lights will be upgraded to optimise flow and to include enhanced pedestrian crossing facilities to improve safety for walkers and cyclists around Grove Lodge Roundabout.

4.3. **Option 2:** includes the same package of measures for Offington Corner and Grove Lodge Roundabouts, but in addition, includes improvements at Lyons Way Junction, including widening the A27 eastbound and adjusting the road layout slightly to accommodate three lanes in both directions through the junction. For vehicles travelling westbound towards Lyons Way Junction, it will also provide a dedicated turning lane into Sompting Road to avoid vehicles wishing to access the retail park interfering with the flow of vehicles on the A27.

It is also proposed to convert Sompting Road into a one-way northbound direction road and vehicles would be required to use Lyons Way in order to rejoin the A27. The intention is that this would reduce the duration vehicles are required to stop on the A27 in order to allow vehicles from the retail park to rejoin the A27.

Option 2 would also close access to the A27 from Hadley Avenue to reduce the number of entry points onto the A27. Vehicles that previously accessed the A27 via Hadley Avenue would be encouraged to use Sompting Road. Upper Brighton Road would be converted into a one way road eastbound to stop vehicles using this road as a 'rat-running' opportunity to avoid Lyons Way Junction.

- 4.4. **Option 3:** includes each of the measures set out in Options 1&2 as well as improvements at Busticle Lane Junction, including widening the A27 in the eastbound direction and adjusting the road layout slightly to accommodate three lanes in both directions. Access to the A27 from Hillbarn Parade would be closed to reduce the number of entry points onto the A27 at this junction. Vehicles that previously accessed the A27 via Hillbarn Parade would use Halewick Lane.
- 4.5. Each of the Options would include technological improvements such as Variable Message Signs (VMS) located at key decision points; Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) to improve compliance with the speed limit; and upgrades of existing bus stops to include features such as Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI).
- 4.6. In addition to the options set out above, the Consultation refers to additional supporting measures, notably a new segregated shared use path for walkers and cyclists to improve connectivity between A27 Durrington Hill/ Salvington Hill and Grove Lodge Roundabout. A new toucan crossing between Offington Corner Roundabout and Grove Lodge Roundabout is proposed to make crossing safer for walkers and cyclists and National Highways also states that it is, "looking where we can upgrade existing crossing points along the route."
- 4.7. It is important to note however, that these measures are not funded as part of the proposed scheme and a different fund would need to be secured by National Highways if they are to be implemented.

## 5. Issues for Consideration

- 5.1. At its September 2022 Meeting, members of this Sub-Committee expressed support for Transport for the South East's (TfSE) Strategic

Investment Plan (SIP). The Sub-Committee welcomed the potential environmental, social and economic benefits that could be delivered from the SIP's emphasis on integrating transport, digital and energy networks, together with a high-quality, reliable, safe, and accessible transport network; and the SIP's emphasis on linking regional policy with local initiatives such as those set out in Worthing's Local Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan (LCWIP).

5.2. The September 2022 report to the Sub-committee welcomed the inclusion in the SIP of a long-term solution to the challenge presented by the A27 through Worthing and the explicit link to a package of other measures which would mean that the A27 road infrastructure is not considered in isolation. In this context, the report highlighted the potential to consider short term improvements for the A27 likely to be proposed by National Highways as part of the national Road Investment Strategy (RIS2) in the context of a longer-term option.

5.3. Whilst the Consultation Brochure refers to the SIP, the SOAR does not and this is significant as both an omission and a missed opportunity. The SOAR simply states:

'The scheme will contribute to the following vision set out within the strategy (Transport Strategy for the South East – Transport for the South East, June 2020 by improving the quality of the environment for all road users and enhancing the safety and sustainability of access along a key strategic route within the South East:

"A high-quality, reliable, safe and accessible transport network will offer seamless door-to-door journeys enabling our businesses to compete and trade more effectively in the global marketplace and giving our residents and visitors the highest quality of life."

5.4. Similarly, at a local level, the Consultation misses the opportunity to establish how the Options would integrate with Worthing's Local Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan (LCWIP) adopted by the Borough Council and once again, it is disappointing to note that the LCWIP is not referred to in the SOAR.

5.5. Referring to the lack of support for the earlier RIS1 scheme, The SOAR states that there is:

"a risk that the same key stakeholders and general population of Worthing and Lancing also oppose the RIS2 proposals, which is

considered a significant constraint to the project. In order to improve public perception and secure stakeholder support this time around, the project will pursue the delivery of local, 'non-SRN,' interventions through National Highways' Designated Funds programme alongside the main scheme, which will offer further benefit to the local community.”

- 5.6. Whilst the cycling and walking improvements that are included in the Consultation are welcome if they can be funded; and broadly consistent with Worthing's LCWIP, this statement appears to underline a lack of integration and emphasise that these measures are rather more of a 'bolt-on' to overcome a “constraint.”
- 5.7. For all three options the beneficial impacts are principally those derived from travel time savings forecasts. Forecasting was prepared for the proposed opening year 2027 and interim forecast year of 2042 and a horizon year of 2051 for the AM, inter-peak and PM periods.
- 5.8. The forecasting for each option shows significant reductions in delay along the A27 in particular in the eastbound direction between west of Durrington Hill junction and Offington Corner roundabout. This aligns with the additional lane provided as well as the introduction of traffic signals at Offington Corner roundabout in all options.
- 5.9. The interim forecast for 2042 indicates that, “particularly in the eastbound directions significant savings of over 4 minutes are forecast based on the additional capacity proposed at Offington Corner roundabout. Savings are forecast in the eastbound direction for all time periods. The savings forecast for the westbound direction in the AM peak are less significant while slight additional delays are forecast across the route for the westbound direction during the PM peak.”
- 5.10. There are slight benefits assessed for noise due to the reduction in congestion. Slight disbenefits are assessed for local air quality and greenhouse gases. The accident impact is considered neutral with junction improvements resulting in accident benefits but increased traffic volumes on the faster speed roads without improvements results in a slight disbenefit.
- 5.11. Overall, Option 1 is assessed with the highest benefits and the lowest cost resulting in the highest Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) of 3.74. This aligns with the increase in road capacity. Option 2 can be considered in the same range to Option 1 with only slightly higher costs and just over

10% less benefits. Option 3 has similar costs but significantly lower benefits than the other options and this a result of the highway improvements accommodating more traffic at each end of the scheme corridor while increasing congestion at some junctions within the corridor - <sup>1</sup>.

## **6. Engagement and Communication**

- 6.1. The consultation period will run from Monday 6 February to Sunday 19 March 2023. Once the consultation closes, a consultation report will be published on the scheme website [www.nationalhighways.co.uk/our-roads/south-east/a27-worthing-and-lancing-improvements/](http://www.nationalhighways.co.uk/our-roads/south-east/a27-worthing-and-lancing-improvements/) to explain National Highways has considered feedback received during the consultation.

## **7. Financial Implications**

- 7.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from the consultation response.

Finance Officer: Emma Thomas

Date: 27/02/2023

## **8. Legal Implications**

- 8.1. Section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 1999 (LGA 1999) contains a general duty on a best value authority to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 8.2. s1 of the Localism Act 2011 empowers the Council to do anything an individual can do apart from that which is specifically prohibited by pre-existing legislation.
- 8.3. The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019 came into force on 27th June 2019 and increased the UK's 2050 net

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<sup>1</sup> The DfT's "Value for Money" guidance says a project will generally be regarded as "medium" if the BCR is between 1.5 and 2; and "high" if it is above 2. It is noteworthy that cycling based projects typically score a BCR above 5.



greenhouse gas emissions reduction target under The Climate Change Act 2008 from 80% to 100%

Legal Officer: Joanne Lee

Date: 27/02/2023

## **Background Papers**

- [Highways England - A27 Worthing and Lancing improvements scheme Options Consultation February 2023](#)
- [Highways England - A27 Maps Option 1](#)
- [Highways England - A27 Maps Option 2](#)
- [Highways England - A27 Maps Option 3](#)
- [Highways England - A27 Worthing and Lancing improvements scheme Environmental Assessment Report \(EAR\) February 2023](#)
- [Highways England - A27 Worthing and Lancing improvements scheme Staged Overview of Assessment Report \(SOAR\) February 2023](#)
- [Worthing JSC Sub-Committee - Transport for the South East Strategic Investment Plan - consultation response report - 6 September 2022](#)

## **Sustainability & Risk Assessment**

An integrated approach to transport infrastructure with an emphasis on active travel will help to mitigate the impact of climate change and is consistent with the Council's objectives for carbon reduction with measurable benefits. The current A27 Consultation does not adequately demonstrate how the proposals would contribute to an integrated transport system to the benefit of Worthing's residents and visitors.

### **1. Economic**

The Economic benefits resulting from the proposed Options are mainly derived from improved travel times.

### **2. Social**

#### **2.1. Social Value and Equality Issues**

A more affordable and accessible transport network promotes social inclusion, improves health and wellbeing, and reduces barriers to employment, learning, social, leisure, physical and cultural activity for all communities. The A27 consultation offers some improvements in terms of connectivity, walking and cycling but there is no guarantee at this stage that these will be fully funded.

#### **2.2. Community Safety Issues (Section 17)**

A safe, reliable and accessible transport system helps to create a safer environment for travel. The Consultation Options could deliver improved connectivity for walkers and cyclists and would improve aspects such as real time information at bus stops.

#### **2.3. Human Rights Issues**

Matter considered and no direct impact identified.

### **3. Environmental**

Accelerating decarbonisation of the South East, would enable the UK to achieve net zero by 2050 or sooner, and deliver a transport network better able to protect and enhance our natural, built, and historic environments. It is not clear from the current Consultation what contribution each Option would make to achieving net zero.

### **4. Governance**

National Highways is a government company which plans, designs, builds, operates and maintains England's motorways and major A roads, known as the strategic road network (SRN).