

BYPASS NOT A27 THROUGHPASS UPDATE TO MEMBERS

NUMBER 28 – OCTOBER 2018

Message from Jack Delbridge, Chair of the group.

Welcome to e-update number twenty eight.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

A big thank you to everyone who came along to our Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 26th September. It was a good meeting and heartening to see such a great turnout especially with the lack of any news from Highways England - despite them promising to provide an update in May. Perhaps they meant May next year. Or the year after. Or the year after that....

I'd like to thank everyone who gave donations towards the cost of the hire of the venue and to people who renewed their membership or joined as members on the evening. A big thank you also to everyone who has offered to help with future campaigns.

In addition to formal reports about the activity of the group since it was formed, the committee and officers for the group were elected and they are:

Chairperson - Jack Delbridge

Secretary - Nigel Kerridge

Treasurer - Debbie Hopkins

Membership Secretary - Steve Hopkins

Press Officer - Ian Newman

Committee members - Ann Delbridge, Jenny Kerridge, Scott Taylor, Mark Cranford, Michael Fisher and Caroline Baxter

Everyone on the committee would like to welcome Caroline to the team. We look forward to working with her.

OPEN LETTER TO TIM LOUGHTON MP

You might like to see the letter below which I sent to Tim Loughton MP and copied to Peter Bottomley MP and the Leaders of Worthing and Adur Councils. I have reproduced his response at the end...

"I share your disappointment that Adur District Council's Planning Committee voted to approve the IKEA development at New Monks Farm on Wednesday 3 October. The additional traffic that it will generate on the already congested A27 will make the existing horrendous traffic jams throughout the Lancing and Worthing areas even worse.

I wish you well with the action you're taking to get this decision re-considered by seeking an urgent meeting with the Secretary of State for Local Government and ensure this decision is scrutinised more closely for its impact on the whole area.

If the plans do go ahead to start the development, as you have said, the impact on traffic flows on the A27 will "impact hugely on the heavily congested A27". Would you therefore re-consider your approach to a proper bypass to both Lancing and Worthing? We have been promoting and putting forward an alternative route, using existing roads to minimise the impact on the South Downs National Park and to keep the costs low. This route would leave the A27 at the Shoreham flyover, go via the A283 past Steyning to join the A24 at the Washington roundabout, going south and then via Long Furlong to join again with the

existing A27. Peter Phillips from Highways England has estimated the cost of this bypass route at approx. £500 - £600 million.

So much additional traffic on the A27 from a new IKEA, school and homes means an alternative route is needed now more than ever and should be included in Highways England's options. Replacing the traffic lights at Sussex Pad with an additional traffic light controlled roundabout like Grove Lodge is just madness.

The Bypass Not A27 Throughpass group and I would be happy to meet with you to discuss this route and how Adur District Planning Committee's decision means that our proposed route is more vital than ever before.

I look forward to hearing from you.

And Tim Loughton's response? Two words – "Thank you".

CORRESPONDENCE WITH HIGHWAYS ENGLAND

One of our members wrote into Highways England to enquire about future plans for the A27. We've reproduced the response below. It makes interesting reading.

"Ministers receive many thousands of items of correspondence each year and I am sure you will appreciate that it is not possible for them to reply individually to each one. It is usual practice for correspondence to be passed to the policy team or organisation responsible for the issues that have been raised to reply on the minister's behalf. Your letter was passed to Highways England, as we have responsibility for the strategic road network and I have been asked to reply.

With respect to the A27 at Worthing and Lancing we fully understand the desire to see a large scale improvement and recognise that there has been a great deal of frustration over the years at the lack of an intervention. As you have correctly identified in your letter there are a number of challenges to improving the road in this region, not least the number of residential properties and the presence of the protected South Downs National Park to the north.

When delivering any improvement we have to balance a number of factors and ensure that the scheme delivers value for tax payer money. In Worthing and Lancing, we have to maintain access for residential properties, improve connectivity between north and south Worthing and deliver a scheme that is affordable within the £50-100m budget range while ensuring that it doesn't damage the natural environment. I'm sure you appreciate that finding a suitable scheme that fully meets the criteria represents a significant challenge.

I understand your concerns about the option presented during the public consultation in July to September 2017. Rest assured that since consultation closed we have been working on the preliminary design taking into account feedback from the consultation while keeping in line with the above mentioned criteria. However, there is an expectation that we will achieve a value for money ratio (benefits/costs) of at least 1.5 to demonstrate that the investment is worthwhile. At the public consultation, we did present a range of discounted options to explain this position.

The single option presented at the public consultation in 2017 followed a rigorous options development and sifting process in line with the Department of Transport (DfT) guidelines. Options considered include dual carriageways, grade separated junctions and bypasses. Following the consultation we also looked at improving the long furlong route you mention in your letter and a Hybrid Option put forward by local MPs that involved narrow lane

dualling and two grade separated junctions. In each case we found that the options were well in excess of the £50-100m budget provided to us and did not offer value for money.

Option 1 online junction improvement is the only one that provides value for money and is affordable within the budget range. While I appreciate that this is not your desired solution it is the only one that can be justified in policy, economic and environmental terms. The tunnel or bypass solutions mentioned in your letter are estimated to cost in excess of £1 billion and cannot be afforded. The additional problem with such solutions is that they would only serve the minority of traffic. Modelling confirms that the two thirds of traffic in this area is local and therefore has an origin or destination within Worthing and Lancing. Improvements therefore need to be focussed on the existing network as building a new road for a third of the traffic isn't a viable solution.

I understand your concerns in relation to the scale of congestion and I recognise that this outcome would not be welcomed locally. However, we believe that online junction improvements remain the best value for money option and will help alleviate the current congestion."

ARUNDEL CONSULTATION

Highways England will carry out a further non-statutory consultation for the A27 Arundel Bypass scheme in Spring 2019. They say that it will give local people a fresh look at all the viable options for upgrading the A27 using the latest available information.

OUR EMAIL ADDRESS

Please remember, our email address is bypassworthing@gmail.com

Thank you for continuing to support us and we'll continue to keep you up to date with what we're doing. As always, any comments and ideas are always gratefully received.

Jack