

Environmental and Community Services Select Committee

15 September 2016

Response to Highways England's Consultation on Options for A27 Chichester Bypass

Report by Executive Director for Residents' Services and Director for Highways and Transport

Executive Summary

In June 2013, the Government made a commitment in the Spending Review announcement to improve the A27 Chichester Bypass. Following this, the Government published its first Roads Investment Strategy in December 2014 which committed to improving four junctions on the A27 Chichester Bypass in Roads Period 1 (2015-20).

In July 2016, Highways England published five options for improving the A27 at Chichester for public consultation between 14 July and 22 September 2016.

At this stage, the County Council is a consultee in the decision-making process. A technical assessment of the options has been carried out by officers based on information presented in the various technical reports on the options published by Highways England. A summary of the assessment is attached as Appendix A.

A draft Consultation Response has been prepared (attached as Appendix B) that takes account of the technical assessment and comments on the transport, economy and environmental impacts of the options.

Once all consultation responses have been analysed by Highways England, a Preferred Option will be announced by the Secretary of State in 2017. Further consultation on the Preferred Option will then take place as part of the Development Consent Order process. Following examination, the decision to grant development consent will be taken by the Secretary of State.

Separate consultations will take place in spring 2017 on schemes for improvements to the A27 at Arundel, Worthing and Lancing.

Recommendation

That the Committee consider the extent to which the options address the Strategic Objectives for the scheme as summarised in Appendix B and the draft Consultation Response (Appendix C) and submit its views on the Consultation Response to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport before it is approved and submitted to Highways England.

1. Context

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- 1.1 In June 2013, the Government made a commitment in the Spending Review announcement to improve the A27 Chichester Bypass. In December 2014, the Government published its first Roads Investment Strategy which committed to improving four junctions on the A27 Chichester Bypass in Roads Period 1 (2015-20).
- 1.2 The West Sussex Transport Plan 2011-26 identifies improvements to the A27 trunk road and complementary public transport improvements to address the current bottlenecks at Chichester, Arundel and Worthing as the highest priority. The Plan states that improvements are needed to increase capacity, improve reliability and safety and to increase the competitiveness of local businesses and attract investment. One of the aims for Chichester in the Plan is; "improvements to the junctions on the A27 at Chichester which reduce congestion, improve journey times for public and private transport and improve air quality".
- 1.3 In July 2016, Highways England published five options for improving the A27 at Chichester for public consultation between 14 July and 22 September 2016.
- 1.4 At this stage, the County Council is a consultee in the decision-making process. The County Council's Consultation Response will be approved by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport and submitted to Highways England before the consultation closes on 22 September 2016.
- 1.5 [Feedback from local stakeholders will inform decisions by Highways England and the Secretary of State about how to proceed with the project but it is understood that there is no requirement to indicate a preferred option.](#) Once all consultation responses have been analysed by Highways England, a Preferred Option will be announced by the Secretary of State in 2017. Further consultation on the Preferred Option will then take place as part of the Development Consent Order process. Following examination, the decision to grant development consent will be taken by the Secretary of State.
- 1.6 Separate consultations will take place in spring 2017 on schemes for improvements to the A27 at Arundel, Worthing and Lancing.

2. Strategic Objectives

- 2.1 Highways England have stated that the 'Strategic Objectives' for the A27 Chichester scheme are to:
 - improve capacity and support the growth of regional economies;
 - improve road safety;
 - reduce adverse environmental impacts;
 - improve journey time reliability on the strategic road network;
 - facilitate timely delivery of the scheme, to meet Highways England's delivery plan, and also to enable provision of housing demand in line with the Chichester District Local Plan;
 - improve regional connectivity; and

- improve accessibility to areas with tourist activity.

2.2 The Strategic Objectives for the scheme align closely with the aims of the West Sussex Transport Plan. Therefore, the County Council's consideration of the options has assessed whether and how each one meets the Strategic Objectives.

3. The Options

3.1 The five options published for consultation include a range of improvements to the A27 at Chichester which are summarised in Table 1. Highways England's consultation brochure is attached as Appendix A.

Table 1: Highways England's options for improving A27 at Chichester

Junction	Options				
	1	1A	2	3	3A
Fishbourne	Grade separation with A27 flyover and Terminus Rd diverted to new roundabout junction with A259 Cathedral Way	Grade separation with A27 flyover and Terminus Rd diverted to new roundabout junction with A259 Cathedral Way	Grade separation with A27 flyover and Terminus Rd diverted to new roundabout junction with A259 Cathedral Way	Signalised five arm roundabout with A27 continuing straight ahead	Signalised four arm roundabout and Terminus Rd diverted to new signalised junction with A259 Cathedral Way
Stockbridge	Signalised junction with no right turns allowed	No change (improvements by developer)	Grade separation with Stockbridge Rd flyover	Signalised junction with no right turns allowed	Signalised junction with no right turns allowed and existing footbridge to be replaced
Whyke	Signalised junction with no right turns allowed	No change (improvements by developer)	Grade separation with Whyke Rd flyover	Signalised junction with no right turns allowed	Signalised junction with no right turns allowed
Bognor	Grade separation with A27 flyover and Vinnetrow Rd diverted to new junction with A259 Bognor Rd	Grade separation with A27 flyover and Vinnetrow Rd diverted to new junction with A259 Bognor Rd	Grade separation with A27 flyover and Vinnetrow Rd diverted to new junction with A259 Bognor Rd	Signalised roundabout with all arms signalised except Vinnetrow Rd	Grade separation with A27 flyover and Vinnetrow Rd diverted to new junction with A259 Bognor Rd
Oving	Closure of Oving Rd junction	Closure of Oving Rd junction with	Closure of Oving Rd junction	No change (improvements by developer)	No change (improvements by developer)

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	with A27 westbound	A27 westbound	with A27 westbound		
Portfield	Remarking to provide three lanes from southern approach to A27 eastbound	Remarking to provide three lanes from southern approach to A27 eastbound	Remarking to provide three lanes from southern approach to A27 eastbound	No change (improvements by developer)	No change (improvements by developer)
Other amendments	n/a	n/a	New Stockbridge Link Road provided between B2145 Whyke Rd and A27 Fishbourne junction	n/a	Third lane on A27 between Fishbourne and Bognor junctions

3.2 Although options for a northern bypass of Chichester were examined earlier in the design process, they were subsequently discounted by Highways England “after detailed consideration of [the] options, the available budget and the criteria set out in the Government’s 2015 Road Investment Strategy”. Therefore, this report, the technical assessment, and the draft Consultation Response are limited to consideration of the five options published for consultation by Highways England.

4. Stakeholder Engagement

4.1 The public consultation is being supported by a series of exhibitions at locations in the Chichester area throughout the consultation period. Letters have been sent to approximately 55,000 residents in the Chichester and Bognor Regis area publicising the consultation and the events.

4.2 As the public consultation is being conducted by Highways England, the results of consultation are not available to inform the County Council’s assessment of the options and its response to the consultation.

5. Technical Assessment

5.1 To inform the draft Consultation Response, a technical assessment of various technical reports on the options has been carried out by officers. The main reports include the Economic Assessment Report (EAR), the Local Model Validation Report (LMVR), the Traffic Forecasting Report (TFR), and the Environment Study Report (ESR). A summary of the assessment is attached as Appendix B.

5.2 The assessment of the options indicates that while options 1, 1A and 3A have the potential to bring benefits overall, they are only likely to meet some of the strategic objectives for the scheme. This is because these options do not adequately improve accessibility to areas with tourist activity and by 2035,

some of the A27 junctions will be over capacity which will affect regional connectivity. Options 1A and 3A also fail to meet the objective to improve road safety. If either of these options are taken forward, consideration must be given to ways to improve access to/from the Manhood Peninsula to ensure this area benefits from the scheme. Options 1, 1A and 3A could provide some long term benefits which could support local aspirations for economic growth although the benefits reduce in options 1A and 3A as a result of dependent development.

- 5.3 The greatest benefit to journey time reliability, road safety, regional connectivity and accessibility to areas with tourist activity will be achieved through option 2. Option 2 will also provide the most support to delivery of currently planned development and scope for accommodating growth beyond planned levels (without this necessarily leading to a worsening of conditions on A27). By 2035 some of the A27 junctions will be over capacity which will affect regional connectivity. Although Option 2 is likely to achieve most of the Strategic Objectives for the scheme, it would have the greatest environmental impacts of all the options.
- 5.4 Due to the limited information which has been provided by Highways England about environmental mitigation, it is unclear at this stage whether adverse environmental impacts could be satisfactorily mitigated. It is considered that more detailed assessments should be undertaken at the earliest possible opportunity, building on the assessments carried out to date and involving all relevant environmental stakeholders in the design of the option and environmental mitigation measures.
- 5.5 Option 3 is only likely to meet some of the strategic objectives for the scheme. This is because the option will have a negative impact on access to/from the Manhood Peninsula and the additional highway capacity which will be provided will be quickly filled up as planned development takes place. Also by 2035, some of the A27 junctions will be over capacity which will affect regional connectivity. This option is unlikely to provide the type of long term benefits needed support local aspirations for economic growth although the benefits of the scheme improve as a result of dependent development.

6. Consultation Response

- 6.1 A draft Consultation Response has been prepared (attached as Appendix C) that takes account of the technical assessment and comments on the transport, economy and environmental impacts of the options (as summarised below).

Transport

- 6.2 At this stage in the scheme development process, the Chichester Area Transport Model is an appropriate tool to use to assess the performance of the options to 2035, including impacts on the local highway network.
- 6.3 All options result in a degree of traffic reduction on roads in the northern part of the Chichester City and routes north of the City in 2035. All options also result in at least some traffic rerouting via less suitable residential and rural

routes in southern parts of Chichester City (south of the railway) and in the area south of A27 where some local roads are expected to experience increases in peak hour traffic in excess of 100 vehicles per hour.

- 6.4 Option 2 has the most beneficial impact on traffic flows on local roads and appears to be the option which is most capable of catering for forecast traffic flows at the A27 junctions in 2035.
- 6.5 In all options, the Portfield junction is expected to operate over-capacity by 2035 which will increase rat-running on local roads, particularly in the PM peak. Further consideration will need to be given by Highways England to improving the Portfield junction over and above the improvements being delivered by developers.
- 6.6 By 2035, congestion is expected on local roads approaching A27 in all options. .Whichever option is taken forward, Highways England will need to give greater consideration to improving conditions on local roads approaching the junctions and improving access to/from the Manhood Peninsula and to reduce the impacts of rerouting traffic on less suitable local roads.
- 6.7 It is important to note that no analysis of the cumulative impact of improvements to the A27 at Chichester, Arundel, Worthing and Lancing has been undertaken by Highways England. In combination, these improvements could induce traffic and cause traffic reassignment across a wide geographical area and these effects should influence the designs. Therefore, it is essential that Highways England assess the cumulative impact of these schemes before selecting a preferred option for Chichester.

Economy

- 6.8 Through savings in travel time and improving journey time reliability, the options have the potential to: improve productivity; improve access to markets (customers and labour); support regeneration; and also helping to increase the supply of housing and commercial floorspace.
- 6.9 Highways England have set out the economic benefits of the options in an Economic Assessment Report (EAR) which shows the impact of the options in monetary terms. The majority of the benefits of each option are from travel time savings.
- 6.10 The total Present Value of Benefits (PVB) varies considerably between the options as each option is expected to have a different impact on travel times. The PVB (which is based largely on journey time savings) for the options range from £184.9m in option 3 to £551.3m in option 2. The value of journey time reliability benefits (which are not included in the PVB) ranges between £85.9m in option 1A to £249.8m in option 2. The greatest improvements in productivity are likely to be achieved by option 2.
- 6.11 The EAR shows that the benefits of the options vary considerably by geographical area (see Table 2), as some areas will experience significant benefits, while others will experience a negative impact overall in some options.

Table 2: Ranking of performance of the options by geographical area

Geographical area	Option				
	1	1A	2	3	3A
Bourne area (Bosham, Nutbourne, Southbourne and Emsworth)	5	4	3	1	2
The Witterings	3	4	5	1	2
Selsey area	4	2	5	1	3
Bognor Regis area	4	2	5	1	3
Chichester District and routes to the North East	4	2	5	1	3
North of Chichester District (South Downs)	4	2	5	1	3
Hampshire and beyond	4	1	5	2	3
East of Arun and beyond	4	2	5	1	3
Centre of Chichester	4	2	5	1	3

Ranking (5: most beneficial, 1: least beneficial)

- 6.12 The worst performing option for access to/from all areas (except Hampshire and beyond) is option 3. The best performing option for all areas (except the Bourne area) is option 2.
- 6.13 In general, most geographical areas will see a positive benefit as a result of the options but there are some notable exceptions including very small benefits to the Bourne area and an overall disbenefit to the Witterings in option 3. The benefits to the Witterings and Selsey areas are also very small in options 1, 1A and 3A suggesting that these options currently perform poorly for access to/from the Manhood Peninsula.
- 6.14 The option which will be most beneficial overall in terms of improving access to customers and labour is option 2. If either, option 1, 1A, 3 or 3A are taken forward, Highways England must give greater consideration to improving access to/from the Manhood Peninsula to support the important tourism and horticultural sectors.
- 6.15 Option 2 is likely to be the best performing option for access to/from Selsey, Bognor Regis and Littlehampton suggesting that this option is likely to be most beneficial to regenerating these areas. The benefits to Selsey and Bognor Regis in option 2 are significantly higher than in the other options suggesting that this option is most likely to bring about a step change in access to/from these areas.
- 6.16 Without improvement, congestion levels on A27 are such that as development takes place, there will be a gradual deterioration of an already poor level of service on A27, particularly during peak hours. Building greater highway capacity on A27 is likely to provide more options for supplying land for new development which will offer greater flexibility to local planning

authorities about how to plan for future growth. The option that would provide the greatest benefit to new development is option 2.

- 6.17 The option that would provide least highway capacity and scope for accommodating growth (beyond planned levels) without degrading the level of service on A27 is option 3. Options 1, 1A and 3A all provide some additional highway capacity to accommodate additional growth. Option 2 provides the most highway capacity and scope for accommodating growth beyond planned levels.
- 6.18 It is disappointing that no assessment of the wider economic impacts of the options has been undertaken by Highways England. The potential wider economic impacts are likely to include economic growth and the assessment (which is best practice) would have helped to inform the County Council's consideration of the options. Therefore, it is essential that Highways England undertakes the assessment and discusses it with key stakeholders (including the County Council) at the next stage of the project.

Environment

- 6.19 The ESR assesses the environmental impacts of the options. The ESR shows the options are expected to have varied and wide ranging environmental impacts. While some of these impacts can be mitigated, at this stage of the project, only limited information is available about the design of environmental mitigation measures.
- 6.20 The Stockbridge Link Rd proposed in option 2 would have the greatest environmental impacts due to impacts on ecology (Protected Species) and the historic environment (Listed Buildings, views of the Cathedral).
- 6.21 It is disappointing that only 'simple level' assessments of the environmental impacts, particularly on Chichester Harbour AONB and the South Downs National Park, have been carried out at this stage. More detailed assessments and design of mitigation measures, particularly those which are expected to have the most severe impacts, could have usefully informed views on the options. This issue must be addressed before a Preferred Option is selected.
- 6.22 In addition, further detailed assessments on a range of issues (visual, ecological, historic environment, air quality and noise) are also required at the next stage of the project.

7. Recommendation

- 7.1 It is recommended that the Committee consider the extent to which the options address the Strategic Objectives for the scheme as summarised in Appendix B and the draft Consultation Response (Appendix C) and submit its views on the draft Consultation Response to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport before it is approved and submitted to Highways England.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 Consultation has taken place with the following internal services/teams: Highways & Transport, Strategic Planning, Economy and Estates & Valuation. The responses received have informed the technical assessment and the preparation of the draft Consultation Response.
- 8.2 Informal discussions about the options have also taken place with key partners including Chichester District Council, the South Downs National Park Authority and Chichester Harbour Conservancy.

9. Resource Implications and Value for Money

- 9.1 There are no resource implications in making this response other than officer time in preparing the response which has been identified within existing service plans.
- 9.2 The County Council has offered, in principle, to contribute to the cost of implementing the A27 Chichester scheme. The Capital Programme includes provision for a £10m contribution; there are no constraints on its use other than demonstrating good value for money. No decision needs to be made at this stage about how and when the financial contribution should be used.

10. Risk Management Implications

There are no identifiable risks to the Council in making this response.

11. Equality Duty

An Equality Impact Report is not required for this decision as it is a response to a consultation by an external organisation.

12. Crime and Disorder Act Implications

There are no identifiable Crime and Disorder Act implications in making this response.

13. Human Rights Act Implications

There are no identifiable Human Rights Act implications in making this consultation response.

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Appendices

[A – A27 Chichester Consultation Brochure](#)

[B – Summary of Technical Assessments](#)

[C – Draft Consultation Response](#)

Background Papers

None

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