

Arundel Bypass

A Resident's Additional Bypass Option - referred to as the new A276 Trunk Road

Introduction

With little time for people to make their minds up in terms of their response to the HE consultation, I am writing a second time, as an independent resident of the town, again to all the Town councillors, to offer an alternative option to Options 3 and 5A, which could be introduced in parallel with the limited New Purple Route proposals along the Option 1 alignment.

This is not that I believe that the issues of congestion along the Option One alignment cannot be dealt with by roads of a smaller scale than a dual carriageway (refer to attached report by David Wills (*"The Missing Link"*)), but that no one at present seems to be aware of the impact of one of the other key objectives, referred to by Highways England, which is:

"to support local planning authorities to manage the impact of planned economic growth".

I have written in the past to Highways England, questioning why no illustrated Masterplan has been drawn up, to establish how one would respond to, or design for the planned economic growth. Given this somewhat blinkered approach to managing, not only the future development in the western half specifically of the Arun District area, but also the design of a new Arundel Bypass, which is some how to be made responsible for solving this issue, then I fail to understand how Highways England, on behalf of Arun District Council and the County, can establish an effective solution.

I have already discussed this issue with Matt Bodimeade, who I have known for some time and he has expressed similar concerns and proposed similar means of resolving this issue, especially since the other Offline alternatives create so many problems, both politically and environmentally. I have therefore taken it upon myself to draw up a proposal that could be the beginnings of a Masterplan for solving the development needs of Arun District Council, the capacity and East/West requirements of journey time along this coastal highway and the concerns and longer term congestion issues experienced by the residents of Arundel and those who need to drive past it everyday at peak times.

I have attached copies of six drawings, that show the context of the existing 9 mile wide coastal development zone between Littlehampton and Chichester. Drawings 1 and 2 illustrate the existing context plan, illustrating the scale of existing population centres and commercial sites, within and to the north of Bognor Regis, up to and to the north of the coastal railway line, plus the potential future development, as highlighted under HELAA illustrations. Drawings 3 and 4 illustrate the remote connection of Options 3 and 5A and Drawing 5, shows the proposal for a new A276 road, running between Crossbush and Chichester, south of the railway line, plus the assumed New Purple route for Arundel. Drawing 6 shows all these options on the same plan.

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- All the existing options are too remote from the current and planned development areas and even though Options 3 and 5A were supposed to provide a means of access to future development, both residential and commercial, this has not been provided under current proposals.
- Options 3 and 5A both cross Ford Road and could provide a new link in a southerly direction, over the railway, but if one looks at the potential impact of scale, expressed by the HELAA proposed, planned and potential development zones, identified in the Emerging Local Plan documentation, the need for a more extensive road infrastructure, than exists at present, is clear.
- The centre of this potential development zone is 3.5 miles from the closest point on the options 3 and 5A routes. No Junction is planned under the proposals and there is no other north south route (Yapton Lane, A29) that can provide a sustainable route between the development area and the existing, or amended A27 options.
- Options 3 and 5A circumnavigate Arundel, but then turn back in a northerly direction towards the existing dual carriageway links, which suffer already from the poor links I have referred to above.
- The best course of action, would be to strengthen the links, both in the east and the west, so as to provide a direct route connection with both Crossbush and with the existing, or amended Chichester Bypass (the existing Chichester Bypass, will obviously never be removed, what ever Chichester DC decide upon for the new preferred proposal).
- With links to both the east and west of this development area, then it is a simple conceptual jump to assume that a road through this development zone, would provide quick and efficient access to the A27, in both directions; would provide a shorter route between Crossbush and Chichester, than exists or is proposed at present and could be designed to pick up on other sustainable transport objectives. For examples a well planned cycle and pedestrian route, plus a new park and ride facility, added to Barnham Station, which is at the approximate centre of a potential new road known as the A276 (for the want of any other name, as it is one of two remaining numbers in the A27? series of road numbers).
- A park and ride location here, could provide a sustainable means for commuters (associated with the new development housing zones) travelling to Chichester, Littlehampton, but more importantly London.
- A future additional north/south link, between Eastergate, over a new railway bridge, would provide a much needed link from the A29, down to the coast, rather along the existing ribbon development through Westergate, towards Bognor Regis.

I envisage that this A276 road be a continuous free flowing trunk road, with one central grade separated junction near Barnham. It need not be a dual carriageway, since the capacity can be shared with the existing A27, including the upgraded Crossbush junction, which is needed what ever the final solution is decided upon.

- The existing A259 is an important coastal route and can provide some means of east/west link, but it is not enough, or of sufficient free flowing design, to cater for the potential development that appears to be planned and clearly needed on a regional and national level. It is however important existing part of the existing local road network.
- A 60mph road between the Chichester Bypass and Crossbush would take no more than 1 minute longer to travel by vehicle than the longer distance (11 miles compared to 10.3 miles) at 70mph on the A27, given that there will remain 5 roundabouts over this section of the existing road.

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- I would suggest that the road speed be limited to 50mph, which would then add only a further minute to the journey time.
- The cost of compensation and mitigation for Options 3 and 5A, as they pass through Binsted and Binsted Woods, with a dual carriageway design at 70mph, with junctions to suit and a vertical alignment that will dictate the levels needed, for cuttings or embankments on both sides, will in my view cost way in excess per mile, of this alternative approach. The equivalent linear design through the new development zones to the south of the railway, which is already flatter, at a level generally of approximately +6m above sea level, an existing partially commercial / horticultural zone, outside of the SDNP, capable of providing the dual role of additional trunk road and central infrastructure to the existing network of roads and sites.
- I would propose that the route of the 10metre wide single carriageway connection between Crossbush and the village of Ford, runs parallel with the existing railway line and would not therefore dissect the existing Arun Valley land, but align itself with an existing, established transport route.

Conclusion

The balance that this additional proposal seeks therefore to address, examines the need to create a realistic affordable option to provide a sustainable long term solution to the increase in traffic and access needed to serve the housing provision required in the Arun District Area, which is not resolved by any of the three options that exist at present. It also continues to support and maximise a consistent traffic flow, both through Arundel with the new Purple route proposals and through the new development zones to the south. The dual approach will maximise capacity, compared to any of the other proposals and maintain journey times at very similar intervals to that of the two Offline routes. It will maintain a reduced level of traffic through Arundel, whilst retaining the visibility of the town and the economic concerns of a more remote bypass option, which turns its back on passing trade. By virtue of its masterplan intent to support the development south of the railway line, it boosts the local and regional economies, within the constraints of scale, along an option route that preserves the natural environment of the South Downs National Park and the community of Binsted, whilst maximising the benefit and potential civic pride to the residents of Arundel.

I commend this strategy for consideration by the Town Council, as an alternative to the Highways England three alternatives.