

Council should take note

You report that WSCC's 'procurement process for a new highways contract' has been dropped after a legal challenge (29 August). The new contract was going to be with Ringway, but that was legally challenged by Amey. The result is that the process has been halted, Balfour Beatty will continue until March 2019, then a new process will begin.

WSCC should watch out. In June 2018 Construction News reported that Amey must pay Birmingham City Council £54m after an adjudication about road maintenance work. And Amey reported a loss of £189.8m in 2017 because of a problem roads contract with Birmingham City Council (according to Construction News).

Potholes may remain unfilled. And are Balfour Beatty and Amey really rivals? On 3 Jan 2018 Amey hired former Balfour Beatty chief executive Ian Tyler as its non-executive chairman.

Balfour Beatty have a business partnership with Highways England's chosen consultants for the Arundel Bypass scheme, WSP. In the 2017 consultation, WSP promoted the incredibly damaging Option 5A for the Arundel Bypass with a torrent of misinformation. (This is the basis of my legal case against Highways England's Preferred Route decision in favour of 5A.) Thus big business is set to ruin two villages and part of the South Downs National Park as well as the Arundel Watermeadows, if the bypass goes ahead.

Judging by the potholes I avoid every day, Balfour Beatty/WSP seem to be no better at mending potholes than at producing unbiased consultations. Like Councillor Jones I hope that WSCC take road maintenance back in-house.

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