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5th October 2017

The Arundel Bypass – a ‘silver bullet’ to tackle congestion or an expensive way to destroy iconic countryside?

CPRE Sussex is urging more local people to take part in the Highways England consultation on options for the Arundel Bypass before the deadline closes on 16th October and to reject damaging options 3 and 5a which will destroy some of Sussex’s most iconic landscapes.¹

CPRE Sussex Director, Kia Trainor believes that ‘that any road investment programme should be part of wider measures to tackle congestion such as a move away from car-dependant new development and investment in infrastructure for sustainable travel, particularly the rail network.’

Earlier this year the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) commissioned research into the impacts of major road building programmes using evidence from Highways England (analysis of 80 Post-Opening Project Evaluations or POPEs, 2 yearly meta-analysis of POPEs) and detailed case studies. The research showed that traffic on new roads increased faster than background traffic, new pinch points were created by additional road capacity and there was little or no evidence of economic benefits from the road schemes analysed. The CPRE ‘End of the Road’ report summarises these findings and gives recommendations for an alternative approach.²

All the current Arundel bypass proposals would damage the existing character or distinctive features in the surrounding landscape, including the South Downs National Park and its special qualities, mature woodland (most of which is ancient semi-natural woodland), the Arun floodplain, high levels of tranquillity and dark night skies, which are highly valued and cannot be replaced. The iconic view of Arundel and Arundel Castle from the south, views over the Arun floodplain and the setting of the SDNP would be heavily impacted. This some of the best Sussex has to offer in terms of beauty and heritage – our national treasures. Approving any of the current proposals would go against Government guidance to avoid major development in National Parks.

¹ <https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/he/a27-arundel-bypass/>

² <https://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/transport/roads/item/4543-the-end-of-the-road-challenging-the-road-building-consensus>

However, If a proposal is taken forward, CPRE Sussex would like to see a re-working of Option 1 which has a much greater benefit to cost ratio than the other options. In addition to a lower overall financial cost, the close alignment of the new offline section to the existing A27 would reduce landscape and visual impacts compared to the other two options. Local groups such as Arundel SCATE are developing improved proposals for Option 1 and we believe that this should be more fully explored as we move through further phases of the programme.

CPRE Sussex is supporting the 'Save Binsted Demonstration' this Sunday 8th October. The demonstration has been organised by the Arundel Bypass Neighbourhood Committee and aims to raise awareness of the damaging impacts of option '5a' of the Arundel Bypass.³

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³ <http://www.arundelbypass.co.uk/>