

[Arundel Bypass Neighbourhood Committee press release 2 Dec 2014]

Roads announcement implies consultation about online alternatives to an Arundel bypass – or does it?

The Government's Roads Programme announcement of 1 December contains an important ambiguity. While proposing a bypass at Arundel, it says 'the starting point will be the previous Preferred Route, subject to consultation with the National Park Authority, local government and the public on this, and alternative options' (Road Investment Strategy, p. 21).

If the 'alternative options' include alternatives to a bypass, this is very good news. If the 'alternative options' just mean alternative offline bypass options, the Arundel Bypass Neighbourhood Committee suggests the government should think again.

Consultation about online options is essential because all the offline bypass options are so damaging. ABNC have been campaigning against the Study's Option B through Binsted and Walberton, suggested in August. Option B would destroy homes and businesses, and ruin two beautiful villages. The Study's other option, Option A (the old Pink/Blue route), was cancelled in 2003 because of the environmental damage it would cause. That damage is now greater, since Tortington Common's ancient woodland, part of Option A's route, continues to be restored, and is now within the South Downs National Park.

People in Arun District may not realise that the Arundel bypass is in fact the only scheme in the whole Road Investment Strategy for England which is a major, hugely damaging dual carriageway through unspoiled countryside. All the other schemes listed are widening of existing major roads and motorways and junctions improvements. This includes the plans for Worthing and Lancing ('improvements to the capacity of the road and junctions...including the option of full dualling', Road Investment Strategy, p. 21). This exception can and should be modified, at least by allowing online options into the public consultation.

Since 'offline' options at Worthing have all been abandoned, this is one more reason not to build an offline bypass at Arundel. As Bill Treves, a resident of Binsted, said: 'Any attempt to dual the Arundel section of the A27 would simply release the traffic flow more quickly eastwards, where it will come up against the barrier of West Worthing and cause yet more congestion at that point. To invest £200 million in a bypass that merely shunts the problem along the road by 6 or 7 miles must therefore be considered a terrible waste of all our money.'

ABNC will continue to argue the case against very damaging offline bypasses, and press for open discussion of all the options. See www.arundelneighbourhood.com for more on the issue.