

ABNC Report on the Options for the Arundel A27 arising from the government's 2014 "A27 Feasibility Study"

In 2013 consultants Parsons Brinckerhoff produced a little known study making the economic case for an Arundel Bypass, which can be read by [clicking here](#). Also in 2013 the [Atkins Report](#), commissioned by WSCC, was published, giving a broad range of options for online and near-online improvements all along the A27 which would make significant improvements without the financial environmental and community costs of major new offline bypasses: these are not however being taken forward by the present government. Instead, a new A27 Feasibility Study was launched to make the case for major, headline-grabbing road infrastructure investments in the run-up to the 2015 general elections. The initial outcome was the government's Strategic Roads Investment announcements on 1st December 2014.

The Study was conducted as a highly secretive process:

[Highways Agency refused Freedom of Information Request to Walberton Parish Council](#)

Six locations around the country were selected to generate proposals for funding, including the A27 corridor. The Department for Transport employed consultants Parsons Brinckerhoff to undertake an A27 Feasibility Study; [click here to read](#) the government document explaining the scope of the Study. Papers criticising the Study approach were sent to government by the Campaign for Better Transport ([click to read](#)) and the South Coast Alliance for Transport and the Environment ([click to read](#)).

These consultants considered alternatives to the Arundel Pink/Blue route protected in the Arun Local Plan. Why would they want to do that? Some of the changes which have taken place since Pink/Blue was chosen as 'least worst compromise' route 21 years ago were influential:

1. The western end of the route (Pink) is now in the National Park. Environmentalists now value more highly the conservation-managed Ancient Woodland area at Tortington Common under Pink, also the integrity of the 420-acre block of ancient woodland and the patchwork of fields to its SW.
2. People in and around Arundel have different ideas and perspectives from 20 years ago. Many now want to weigh the environmental cost against the convenience of increased road capacity. Many are also concerned that a major capacity increase for strategic through traffic on the A27 would ultimately create more noise and congestion. Many more also now live in Tortington, close to the Pink/Blue route.
3. When the alternative A259 Chichester-Worthing route opens it may relieve peak time delays at Arundel.

On 27th August the consultants presented five route Options for Arundel A27 investment to their Stakeholder Reference Group. They showed a map and one participant noted down the route Options which are shown below. Time was not given to copy it down accurately and

the consultants have refused to release a map themselves, but the presentation is reasonably well reflected in the map. The DfT minutes of the 27 August meeting can be read by clicking [here](#). Fuller notes were taken by a CPRE member present at the meeting which can be read by clicking [here](#).



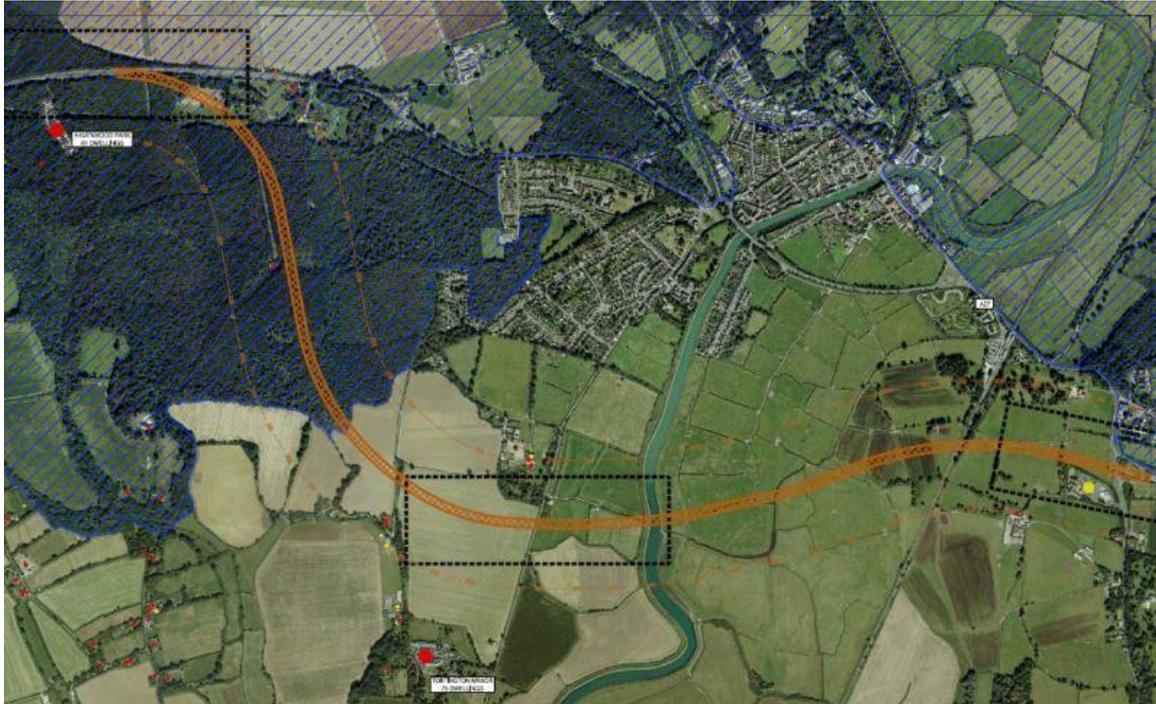
On 16th October the Minister for Transport John Hayes MP visited Sussex and, at the initiative of the Campaign for Better Transport, allocated some time to meet with representations from concerned local groups including the ABNC Secretary and ArundelSCATE. Some notes of that meeting can be read by clicking [here](#).

On 4th November the consultants presented to the same group their final recommendations as to what Options to take forward. They prioritised for value-for-money assessment just Pink/Blue (Option A) and one other even more damaging offline option ('B'), but they costed other options (CDE) and have not ruled out any online or near-online options. The SCATE representatives' notes of that meeting can be read [here](#).

The A27 Feasibility Study was 'high level': superficial and conceptual, based on poor evidence, with crude evaluation criteria. This was not how to do a good job. The stakeholder communities of Arundel, Tortington, Binsted and Walberton, Yapton Barnham and Slindon and other surrounding villages, only began to become aware of what is happening in September and October this year. ABNC argued that local politicians and government departments should promote the contribution to this process which local people and organisations should be given opportunity to make. Decisions taken behind closed doors on this have naturally lead only to high levels of controversy and discontented voters.

The Options included two offline routes: A, the old Pink/Blue; B, avoiding the National Park but going through the beautiful village and ancient parish of Binsted, much of which is in the National Park, and part of Walberton. They also included three online or near-online options – C, a short section of new road bypassing Arundel Station; D, a tunnel under one part of the road plus widening; and E, undefined ‘online and sustainable transport improvements’.

This map of Option A has been made by a Binsted resident based on the information available. Note the large land take requirements for junctions (black dotted lines), impact on the South Downs National Park (hatched blue), on the Havenwood and Tortington communities, and on the stunning views and habitats of the Arun valley's wet meadows, which caused this scheme to be cancelled by Alistair Darling:

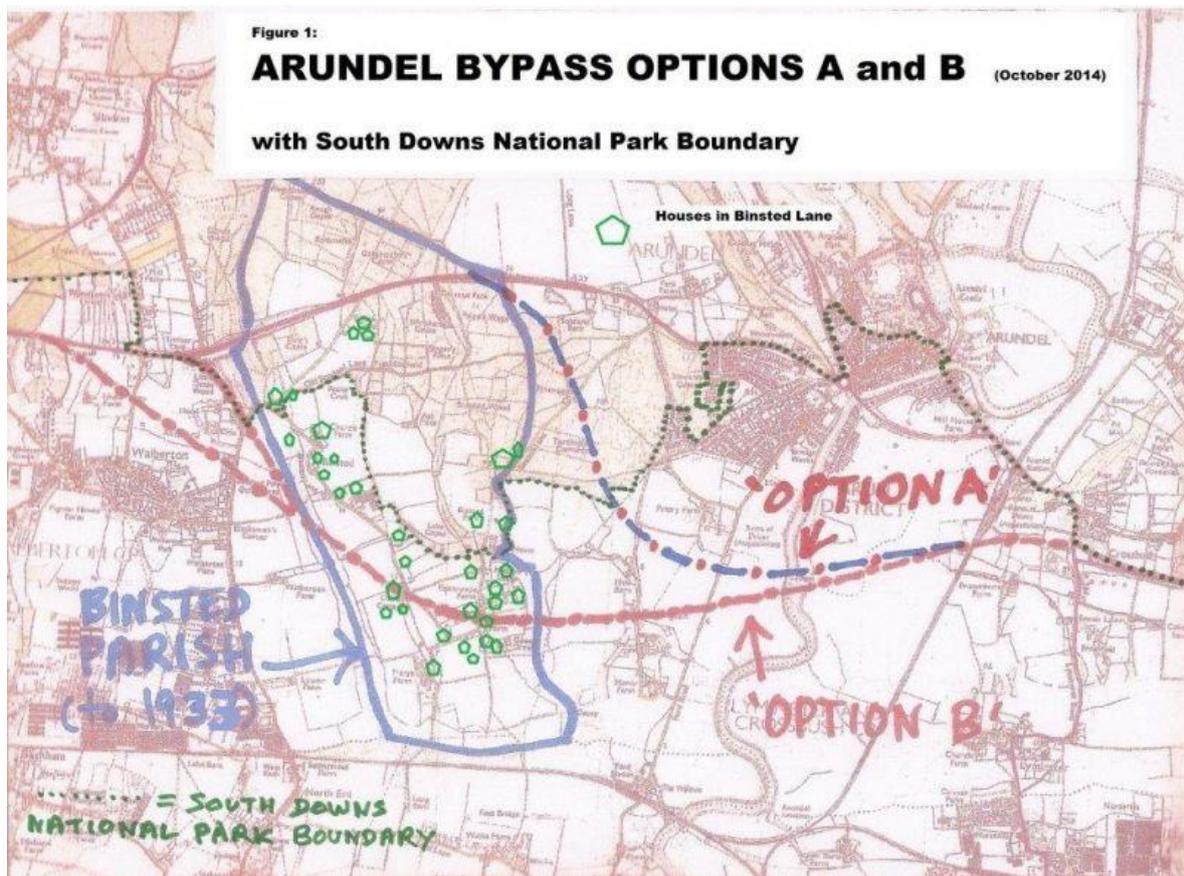


The secrecy of the Feasibility Study, and the limited focus of the Council-promoted A27 Action Campaign, have damaged the communities' trust in the process and this will need to be addressed in any future work. The public has not been consulted about the bypass since the two public consultations in 1987 and 1993. Facts and opinions have both changed since then. There is also a new demographic questioning major new trunk road developments on the A27 corridor when this is inconsistent with long term environmental policy and this corridor is not in fact a strategic inter-regional route.

On 16 October ABNC Secretary Emma Tristram presented to the Minister for Transport John Hayes MP a brief summary of reasons why Option B would be unacceptably damaging; this can be read by [clicking here](#).



Option B through Binsted, which also damages the nearby village of Walberton, is causing misery and uncertainty for people whose houses are under or near the sketched route. The Arundel Bypass Neighbourhood Committee, based in Binsted, met on 21 October and resolved to oppose Option B, but at the same time to ask for all the other options, if necessary including B, to be kept on the table so as to enable a better informed and more democratic planning process. Walberton Parish Council met on 28 October and resolved to support a similar policy.



The Campaign for Better Transport website has much relevant information including a thought-provoking page headed '[New Roads Create New Traffic](#)'. We must all be careful what we wish for.

Following many [past A27 studies](#), some more and some less thorough as regards A27 Arundel Bypass or other improvement options, the Department for Transport's A27 Feasibility Study Stakeholder Reference Group met on 4 November 2014 for the fourth and final time ([click here](#) to read the official DfT Minutes; [and click here](#) to read the fuller notes by an attendee). The meeting was informed by consultants Parsons Brinckerhoff (PB) that independent consultants had now supplied outline costings for the options they had decided to evaluate.

- Option A=Pink/Blue through the National Park £170-200M, Option B=outside the National Park (through the villages of Binsted and Walberton) £210-250M, Option C=offline close to town £170-190M, Option D=Online dualling + tunnel £300-370M, Option E=minor online and sustainable transport improvements - this last was not costed but we understand that the Atkins report recommendations were previously costed at £16M.
- Although the other options have not been ruled out, the two offline Options A and B seem to have been prioritised as only they have so far been costed in terms of Value for Money (VfM). Option A was rated Medium-High VfM, Option B Low-Medium. **But now there is a real danger that at national level, Option B may be preferred to Option A.**
- The government's consultants have said, thus far without benefit of local evidence, that they think Option B is to be preferred to A in a number of respects including societal and environmental. This superficial judgement puts a rare rural oasis in the coastal plain under grave threat. **All who wish the countryside well are asked to help us fight against Option B's destruction of the beautiful and historic village, landscape and community of Binsted and of part of Walberton village too.** ABNC will seek to inform PB/DfT better regarding the environmental societal and economic damage that would be caused by Option B; but we need more people to tell the government and its agencies that you do not want this destruction either.
- The Options need to be interpreted in the context that the Department for Transport is looking for strategic inter-regional route development. Unless a very large amount of additional long distance through traffic is to be attracted to the route, strategic road investment will not be justified in this situation. Such figures as exist show that most traffic on the A27 is within and between towns and villages rather than between regions. Except where tunnelling is deployed, speed of through traffic will be to the detriment of essential local connectivity.