

Park authority to seek judicial review of A27 bypass choice

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Campaigners held a rally on Thursday to demonstrate against the proposed Arundel A27 bypass route.

Bearing banners saying 'A27: better not bigger' and 'save Binsted's countryside', protesters gathered at the South Downs Centre ahead of an emergency meeting about the potential bypass.

At the meeting the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) voted to call for a judicial review to challenge the Arundel A27 route decision.

Brenda Pollack, South East Campaigner at Friends of the Earth, said: "The rally showed how much people care about our beautiful countryside.

"We need 21st century solutions to tackle traffic in this area. There should be a thorough assessment and funded plans for better public transport, walking and cycling facilities.

"These changes are what will encourage a shift away from unnecessary car use."

Earlier this month Highways England announced that it had selected a slightly altered version of Option 5A as its preferred route for the A27 at Arundel.

The route would start with a new dual-carriageway from Crossbush junction and cross the River Arun south of the existing A27.

Binsted residents and environmental campaigners have long said such a route would cause significant harm to the area near the countryside village.

Reacting to the route announcement earlier this month, Nick Herbert, MP for Arundel and South Downs, said: "I'm delighted that the bypass is now in sight, in just two years' time according to the current timetable.

"I think the overwhelming majority of my constituents, in my judgement, are in favour of a bypass and they want a full offline bypass."

Addressing concerns from



campaigners earlier this month, Arun District Council leader Gillian Brown said: "I understand their concerns – of course I do – but life changes.

"We have so much more traffic than we had in years past, and the environmental impact of this increasing would do as much damage as the bypass."

The SDNPA however is calling for a judicial review to challenge the route decision.

Margaret Paren, chairman of the SDNPA, said: "We are not commencing proceedings for a judicial review lightly but we believe that Highways England has not followed the correct procedure, which was to set out, to the same level of detail, all of the options inside and outside the National Park.

"This led to them discounting options outside of the National Park too early in the process, and they have

not provided any detail on mitigation and compensation for any of the routes.

"We want to work with Highways England so that they can find a solution to the traffic issues at Arundel that also protects the National Park for future generations."

A Highways England spokesman said: "We recognise the strength of feeling about the Arundel Bypass, and we fully recognise the special environments and cultural heritage around Arundel.

"The route we announced has strong support and provides the best balance between improving journeys and limiting the impact on the environment and rural communities.

"We stand by the consultation process and will defend any legal challenge," the spokesman said.

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