

There is an alternative to the dreaded A27 bypass

To be fair to Highways England with regard to the Arundel A27 bypass, what did we expect? It's a road-building company. However, there is an other option, argues Simon Rose

THE Arundel Alternative was developed by the Arundel community. A new road that bypasses pinch points, the source of Arundel's hold-ups, it enables flow, easily meets foreseeable traffic needs, is low cost and minimises environmental damage.

Crucially, it ties in public transport and walking and cycling improvements to reduce the need for short car journeys in the immediate area which make up a third of traffic on the A27 at Arundel. Highways England refused to include the Arundel Alternative (see ArundelAlternative.org) in its options for consultation as it is a 40mph, wide single carriageway, rather than a 70mph dual carriageway.

We know we have to tackle climate change, yet Highways England options would significantly increase carbon emissions.

The UK Climate Assembly recommended we need to cut traffic to cut carbon emissions and

academic research also tells us we must cut traffic, even if we switch to electric vehicles in the most optimistic timescale.

So why is Highways England planning for more traffic?

Why consult us? In selecting its latest preferred route for the Arundel Bypass, Highways England ignored results of its consultation.

These showed an overwhelming majority opting for near-online route options (shorter routes near the existing road) or "do nothing".

Responses

Many of these responses also called for the Arundel Alternative. Yet Highways England chose the least popular option, prophetically named "Grey", with only seven per cent support.

The Grey scheme is also easily the most expensive, with estimated costs of between £320 million and 455 million, nearly twice the amount budgeted.

Highways England chose Grey as it avoids the South Downs Na-

tional Park. However, it would still impact hugely on the setting of the park and, importantly, the wildlife in the park does not recognise its boundary.

The dual carriageway road would destroy rare and valuable wildlife habitat on the park's outskirts.

The area, described by Natural England as "extraordinary", includes ancient hedgerows, rare wetland, old woodland and ancient trees which are important corridors for protected species such as dormice and rare bats.

Further to the east, the road would carve up fields, marsh riverbank and reed beds, rich in birdlife, small mammals and butterflies.

The riverbank where the road would cross, is a popular walk for Arundel people, dogs, birdwatchers and visitors. All potentially lost to acres of Tarmac raised on a bank across the Arun Valley.

The Grey route also cuts through the villages of Tortington, Binsted and Walberton and

would demolish people's homes, while rendering other homes unliveable.

In one case, the owners built their home themselves. Not all the homeowners are scheduled for compensation either, and little can compensate for forcing people to leave the homes and communities they love and have lived in for decades.

In recent years, local community groups looking for alternatives to a big bypass, Arundel Scate and Arundel Bypass Neighbourhood Committee, have attracted new members who previously supported a big road.

These are local people whose views have changed as the world has moved on, recognising that new roads just create more traffic.

The problem is that since the 1970s, people have been told that a big road will solve the congestion on the A27.

At the same time, they've had bus services cut and train fares rocket while more homes in Sussex have been built in locations



with no travel choices other than a car

It seemed that the only way to get anywhere was by car whether you liked it, or were able, or not.

However, the rise in awareness of climate change, air pollution, poor health and loss of wildlife has made them start to question the merry-go-round of road building and ever-increasing traffic.

Many are now looking for healthier ways of living.

Highways England is clearly stuck in the twentieth century when the twenty-first century demands very different solutions.

We are lobbying hard to have the Arundel Alternative put back on the table and hope the government will see the advantages of building something effective that is a far cheaper option and far less damaging to the environment that we cherish so much.

Simon Rose is an Arundel South Coast Alliance for Transport and the Environment (Scate) committee member and campaigner.

The bird-sp Grey Road

Complaints can find at Organisation complaints line and daytime to explain the information details with purpose email IPS to IPSO, London party co should online n

The sm or letter it was name- although the rig reserv neces UK ne