

'High level' economic study to assess the impact of A27 plans on South Downs National Park

A 'high level' economic study is to be carried out to assess the impact of road changes across the South Downs National Park (SDNPA) in the wake of news that further upgrading schemes on the A27 are to be planned.

Members of the national park authority members were told the decision to commission a special study had been taken after the government announcement that no alternative A27 routes around Chichester are now to be considered.

It means neither a new northern bypass through Lavant

nor a partial new southern route will be built.

But instead the junctions on the existing stretch will be upgraded.

Members of the SDNPA were told: "The study will be commissioned to take account of likely impacts of road changes and traffic flows across the park as a whole to better inform our economic responses as further schemes at Arundel, Worthing and east of Lewes are brought forward."

In a letter to the chairman of Highways England (HE), Colin

Matthews, SDNPA chairman Margaret Paren thanked him for removing the northern routes from options.

She told him: "The SDNPA supports this decision as it considered the impacts of the proposed northern routes on the special qualities of the South Downs National Park to be unacceptable and irreversible."

Looking to future options she said the SDNPA had appreciated the chance to work closely with consultants at early stages.

The park had 'always respected the need to work in confidence

and we would hope similar arrangements will continue for upcoming schemes."

The seven week public consultation, due to start in early March has now been pushed back until late spring or earlier summer.

Mrs Paren told the HE chairman seven weeks was 'exceptionally tight' for organisations like the SDNPA 'where discussions and decisions need to be made at the appropriate committee.'

She added: "Extending the period would certainly help and we hope this can be born in mind

