

South Coast Alliance on Transport and the Environment (SCATE) seeks alternatives to the Bypass.

But some residents say new road is 'a dead end'

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SOME Arundel residents are opposed to proposals to build a new bypass to Arundel and say they show outdated thinking on transport planning. And they are now demanding a more up to date look at local transport options.

Rita Godfrey of the newly formed protest group Arundel and South Coast Alliance for Transport and Environment group - SCATE - said: "There has been no debate on traffic issues around Arundel for years, just a continued push by local authorities and business for a new bypass. But nowadays, it doesn't take a transport planner to know that more road space means more traffic to fill it.

"It generates more local congestion at journey start and end points and creates more parking demand."

Dr Peter Smith pointed out that a major government study in 2002 showed that more road capacity at Arundel will cause more congestion in Worthing and Chichester and quoted the report saying there was 'little justification for a long distance strategic south coast route'.

The evidence was that congestion is caused by commuters. He added that school run is a noticeable contributor too. "There are other things that can be done to reduce these sorts of traffic."

Sue White, business owner at Rolys Fudge

Pantry in Arundel High Street said: "Building a massive trunk road across the Arun Valley and through the woods would be devastating to our wildlife and landscape and the alternative route of expanding the existing route would devastate the town.

"It's high cost, destructive method of addressing localised traffic congestion at limited peak times."

The new group has a number of alternative proposals to help tackle local congestion including:

- remodel A27 junctions - looking at Highways Agency proposals to Crossbush, the station and the Ford roundabout, ensuring they smooth traffic flow without increasing road capacity.

- providing off-road walkway and cycle access to Ford station. Long called for, but without funds, it would open up rail services on the south coast line particularly for commuters and students. An short hop bus service would make this available to less mobile people and further rail services could be accessed if the bus service extended along Ford Road to Littlehampton station.

- A foot/cycle bridge - spanning the A27 and adjoining A284 at Hospital Hill for a direct safe link for many users, but particularly schoolchildren to walk or ride to school.

- Cycling and walking infrastructure across town. Currently very poor, this has great potential for residents and the visitor economy, but

no budget. Some residents drive across town although it is only a 10-15 minute walk.

- South coast rail and bus service improvements - rail upgrades to facilitate faster links to Brighton and resources to support improved timetabling and a fast bus south coast service for commuter services and south coast accessibility.

- 'Soft' schemes like travel planning for schools and businesses and promotion of public transport, walking and cycling in the visitor economy will help to reduce car use, but this is currently not taken seriously by authorities. Other areas show this works.

Arundel resident Kay Wagland said: "Just providing an opportunity for commuters to avoid using their car one day a week or getting two parents in ten to share the journey to school, will cut congestion by 20%.

"Resources should be made available for real targeted travel planning."

She added: "There is a big health element here too. Walking or cycling some of these relatively short distances always used to be an important part of daily exercise for adults and school children and so often we're missing this now.

"What message are we sending the next generation if we sacrifice our countryside, wildlife and health to expand a means of transport we know is short term, expensive and simply creates further problems?"