

Scarring the landscape forever

IT SEEMS that the Department of Transport (DfT) are in a headlong, crazed rush to scar landscape with a new motorway thinking that this will solve economic problems. But will it? If they get their way this beautiful valley will be marred for ever.

In 2013 the Government announced its plans for the biggest ever 'upgrade' of the strategic national roads network, including the tripling of annual investment on Highways Agency major roads rising to £3 billion in less than 6 years!

The Government proposed £multi-billions increase in expenditure is being made when, in other areas, they are saying major cuts are required to balance the books. Cuts mean not repairing pot-holes, putting up rail fares and cutting bus services! With this sort of chaotic financial planning the country will never get its national debt down!

Improvements in road transport in West Sussex are needed as are improvements in the railways and bus transport. But it seems that George Osborne, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, is just throwing money at the 'problem' without thinking whether or not it will actually solve it.

For some crazy reason the government has embarked on a 'quick fix' solution for the A27 road issues. The DfT road studies are not using evidence-based decision-making. The way the current reports are written by the government's consultants looks like a decision has already been made! The Chancellor is going to announce on 3 December in his autumn statement the allocations of monies.

Maybe the Chancellor is in a hurry to put forward new road plans which he thinks will be vote winners. However, really solving the problem requires an integrated transport plan and not just slapping a motorway down cutting through our ever diminishing beautiful countryside.

A multi-mode transport study (road, rail and public transport etc) was carried out in 2002. This was never implemented, probably because the recession came along in 2007/8. If the present government, when they came to power in 2010, had taken this study on board we could already be seeing some sensible road, rail & bus improvements all along the south coast.

The government seem to like 'grand schemes' which hit the headlines; when in reality it is detailed research, consultative planning that brings real benefits; not so glamorous but is more likely to solve our problem. We need improved:

- Road junctions
- Access to railway stations
- Foot/cycle infrastructure
- South coast rail and bus services

Spending billions on motorways isn't necessarily the solution. We ask those who are driving hard for motorways to think again. Be careful what you ask for, new roads create new traffic!

The government's consultation meetings so far have been by invitation only and they haven't handed out much information. For instance the various dual carriageway



THIS photo of deer at Peworth was emailed to us by Louise

options around Arundel are not documented on any public document. Those who did get to some of the meetings had to sketch down what the consultants showed on their presentations.

Here is a sketch made at one of the meetings by a CPRE member:

Routes A & B are the most devastating for the countryside. Route C connects the western dual carriageway directly to the current A27 and includes improvements. For details of the routes please ask the minister as the government didn't give out any information at the meetings.

Everyone needs to ask the government to consult the local people now and not after decisions have been reached when you can only choose option A or B with both being disastrous to the countryside and local communities. The public should make their voice heard by writing to the Minister responsible:

The public should make their voice heard by writing to their MPs and the Minister responsible John Hayes MP john.hayes@dft.gov.uk and George Osborne MP public.enquiries@hm-treasury.gov.uk

Vic Ient,
CPRE member (Sussex)

'Terminate immigration'

A GOOD example of a truth that lies, much quoted by developers, is that less than three per cent of this country is covered by buildings and roads. This aggregates something which is dispersed and affects the character of the whole country, as if to portray it as if it is a block by itself with vast open spaces everywhere else. But the National Ecosystem Assessment also implies something far more peculiar.

If we were foolish enough to allow the whole of England to become urbanised, most of this country would still be 'open space', but in the form of gardens and recreation areas which are part of the urban landscape and have nothing to do with rural countryside. In England, it is impossible to travel more than