

Go-ahead for bypass

Government approves £250m A27 scheme

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PLANS for a new A27 bypass at Arundel were finally given the go-ahead by the Government this week.

Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin announced on Monday that up to £250 million was being made available for the new road linking two existing dual carriageways.

The investment in the bypass is part of a £350 million package to address key A27 congestion hotspots, including improvements along the stretch of single-carriageway and narrow dual-carriageway road at Worthing and Lancing and on the road east of Lewes.

News of the funding has been met with jubilation by campaigners who have long sought a bypass for Arundel.

But some fear that a new bypass will not solve traffic problems in the area and that it will damage the countryside.

The A27 Action Campaign has been pushing for the upgrades as a way of easing congestion on the route, which is currently forcing many motorists through surrounding villages.

Arundel and South Downs MP Nick Herbert said: "This is fantastic news for West Sussex.

"Congestion at Arundel has caused delays, forcing traffic up through this historic town and the South Downs, and damaging investment in our coastal communities.

"I am delighted that the Government has heard the strong case which we have made for a bypass which will benefit the local economy and the environment alike.

"There will be full public consultation about the bypass, so everyone will get their chance to have a say.

"However, along with all of Arundel's elected representatives at the town, district and county council level, I continue to believe that the bypass is needed, and that an offline bypass on the previously agreed 'pink-blue' route is by far the best option.

"I am glad that this is the starting point for... support other...

"The county council is looking to achieve an overall balance between the needs of communities and businesses."

Chancellor George Osborne earlier paid tribute to Nick Herbert's role in campaigning for the bypass.

He said: "Nick Herbert has been a strong local voice, drawing my attention to the need for investment on this road.

"For years this road has suffered from neglect, but with a strong Conservative voice for Arundel and South Downs and a Government that's fixing the economy, we are now able to commit to funding this new bypass, as well as other improvements to the A27, bringing new jobs and opportunities to the area."

Earlier this year Mr Herbert helped launch the A27 Action Campaign, an alliance of West Sussex MPs, businesses and local councils which has been making the case for improvements to the coastal route.

The MP also invited the Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin to Arundel in the summer to see problems on the road for himself.

Mr Herbert said that although the A27 is the only east to west trunk road south of the M25, it had suffered from underinvestment for many years, with single carriageway sections creating a traffic hotspot in Arundel, diverting vehicles up through the South Downs and damaging the local economy.

The new bypass would complete the "missing link" between the two existing dual-carriageway sections, he said, subject to consultation with the South Downs National Park Authority, local authorities and the publication of alternative options.

He added that both the Arundel bypass and the Worthing/Lancing improvements now have "committed" funding which means that "provided that the necessary statutory approvals are granted and the scheme continues to demonstrate value for public money, it will enter construction during this roads period" - that is between 2015/16 and 2020/21 - by the end of the next Parliament.

Meanwhile, Arundel Mayor Michael Tu said: "Arundel Town Council welcomes the announcement that the government has

"I am glad that this is the starting point for the consultation, and I do not support other proposed routes."

West Sussex County Council leader Louise Goldsmith said: "It is fantastic news and we'd like to thank all businesses who signed up to the campaign for their help and provided evidence through the survey and case studies.

"Now we are keen to continue working with our partners and the Government on options for addressing the key blockages at Arundel, Worthing and Lancing to achieve dualling along the A27 corridor.

"It is vital that the Government consults with the local communities – residents and businesses – on the options for those improvements.

Arundel Mayor Michael Pugh said: "Arundel Town Council welcomes the announcement that the government has approved the allocation of future funding for the A27 Arundel bypass.

"For too many decades our community has suffered the problems of traffic congestion, accidents and pollution, added to the unfortunate severance of the two halves of the town by the existing temporary relief road.

"The council looks forward to contributing to any subsequent A27 By-Pass Public Inquiry, when all the issues can be considered and, hopefully, resolved in a way acceptable to the majority of those living and working in and around our historic town".

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The A27 at Crossbush

