

# Minutes A27 Arundel Bypass Scheme

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<b>Title:</b>	<b>A27 Arundel Elected Representatives Forum</b>		
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<b>Date:</b>	23 March 2021	<b>Time:</b>	19:00-21:00	<b>Location:</b>	MS Teams Meeting
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Sandra Fryer – Independent Chair  
Andrew Griffith – Member of Parliament (MP)  
Roger Elkins – West Sussex County Council (WSCC)  
Gary Markwell – West Sussex County Council  
Derek Whittington – West Sussex County Council  
James Walsh – Arun District Council (ADC)  
Faye Catterson – Arun District Council  
Paul Dendle – Arun District Council  
Grant Roberts – Arun District Council  
Jeremy Johnstone – Arundel Town Council  
Angela Standing – Arundel Town Council  
Roger Davies – Lyminster and Crossbush Parish Council  
Andrew Lark – Lyminster and Crossbush Parish Council  
Jan Rees – Slindon Parish Council  
Peter Fenton – Slindon Parish Council  
Sarah Linfield – Slindon Parish Council

**Attendees:** Suzanne Clark – Walberton Parish Council  
Andrew Ratcliffe – Walberton Parish Council  
Andy Vawyer – Walberton Parish Council  
Alun Alesbury – South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA)

Andrew Jackson – Highways England  
[REDACTED] – Highways England  
[REDACTED] – Highways England  
[REDACTED] – Highways England  
[REDACTED] – Linkconnex  
[REDACTED] – Linkconnex

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**Observers:** [REDACTED] – Arun District Council  
[REDACTED] – South Downs National Park Authority  
[REDACTED] – Senior Parliamentary Researcher (MP)  
[REDACTED] - West Sussex County Council

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**Apologies:** Sam Langmead – Lyminster and Crossbush Parish Council

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[REDACTED] – West Sussex County Council  
 Tony Hunt (Mayor) – Arundel Town Council  
 Robin Parr – South Downs National Park Authority

**Circulation list:** Attendees

**Meeting Organiser:** [REDACTED] – Highways England

DISCUSSION POINTS		
No.	Item	Action <i>(By whom, by when)</i>
1.	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b>	
	The Independent Chair welcomed attendees.	
	We were introduced to Linkconnex, the Scheme Delivery Integration Partner. Linkconnex's role on project was explained and team members were introduced.	
	We were introduced to the Highways England project team.	
2.	<b>Agenda</b>	
	We were informed that the forum would include a project update, summary of next steps, indicative programme, key engagement activities and an opportunity for Elected Representatives to ask questions.	
3.	<b>Introduction to Elected Representatives meeting attendees</b>	
	Attendees were introduced.	
4.	<b>Wellbeing moment</b>	
	We reflected on the lives lost during the coronavirus pandemic, exactly one year since the first UK lockdown was announced. We were reminded of the importance of respect and empathy during virtual meetings.	
5.	<b>Meeting conduct</b>	
	We were advised of the meeting conduct and how questions could be asked of the project team.	
6.	<b>Terms of Reference (TOR)</b>	
	We were reminded that the Elected Representatives' Forum provides a way for Highways England to engage with communities local to the A27 Arundel scheme. It is be a forum for local elected bodies to get up-to-date information about the scheme, feed back into the scheme about any local issues, and understand how the scheme will progress.	
7.	<b>Project update</b>	
	Andrew Jackson explained the process that HE had followed when choosing Grey as the Preferred Route. The consultation was undertaken on six options which were detailed in the Scheme Assessment Report. The decision was	

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	based on range of factors including environment (ecology, landscape, flood, trees, etc.), planning policy (noting the NPPS has a strong policy presumption against building roads in a national park) and cost and value for money.	
	The initial budget was £250M. The Grey route will exceed this budget but additional funding will be found by Highways England. The actual cost remains commercially sensitive.	
	There are a number of issues that fall outside the A27 Bypass Scheme and which are not part of the project but will have influences on delivery of the scheme. It was explained that the A27 Arundel Scheme is a defined project and should not be held up on the basis that there are problems on the A27 elsewhere; this would never deliver any improvements.	
	The Fontwell roundabouts are outside the scheme boundary. However, traffic modelling will need to be conducted to better understand the effect of the A27 Bypass at this end of the scheme.	
	Highways England has access to 'designated funds' for enhancements which would be external to the core scheme (and therefore cannot be guaranteed) but will be sought for projects such as enhancements to walking, cycling, horse riding, routes. It was explained that Elected Representatives (Reps) may wish to feed into this process with ideas.	
	There are a number of surveys which are planned and ongoing through 2021 (ecology, environment, ground investigation, archaeology). It was noted that all surveys during 2020 were non-intrusive, whereas in 2021 the surveys include ground investigation (GI) starting to the eastern side of scheme.	
<b>8.</b>	<b>Planned engagement</b>	
	Andrew Jackson explained the current and planned engagement with stakeholders and explained how it fits into the design process.	
	It was noted that technical engagement is slightly ahead of community/political engagement and wider engagement. Technical attendees and broad discussion topics at Focus Groups were set out.	
	The Elected Representatives' Forum forms part of the community/ political engagement and will sit alongside 1:1 engagement with Elected Reps.	
	A range of wider engagement will take place over coming months. Early engagement with landowners has been undertaken and is ongoing.	
<b>9.</b>	<b>Design development</b>	
	██████████ introduced that the starting point for design development is Grey route. The design team are starting with the design that was developed at Stage 2 and moving it forward as part of an iterative and environmentally-led approach.	
	The design work is informed by earlier consultations and engagement, as well as information such as the landscape and environment study, traffic and flood model outputs, ongoing surveys, studies regarding opportunities for betterment, and planning and programming for construction.	

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	<p>There are two key design milestones before the Development Consent Order (DCO) application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design fix 3A, mid-summer 2021 – sufficient detail to take scheme to stat con (proposed autumn 2021). Noted that at this stage the design team will take on board as many comments as possible.</li> <li>• Design fix 3B early spring 2022 – refined scheme for DCO application.</li> </ul>	
<b>10.</b>	<b>Programme</b>	
	The indicative programme from the Preferred Route Announcement to start of construction was outlined. Key milestones relevant to the Forum include the submission of the EIA scoping report, local elections and statutory consultation.	
	It is likely that the Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) will be informally shared in draft with the three host authorities, followed by formal engagement on the SoCC. It was noted that informal consultation will be ongoing throughout this period.	
	Formal statutory consultation is when statutory consultees, landowners, affected parties, the general public and other stakeholders have the opportunity to formally engage.	
	The aim is for construction to begin in 2023/2024.	
<b>11.</b>	<b>Questions</b>	
	<p>A member of the forum asked a question about tree replacement ratio for any ancient woodland sacrificed.</p> <p>There is currently no anticipated direct loss of ancient woodland. Arboricultural surveys are currently being undertaken to verify and complement previous years' survey data.</p>	
	<p>Several members of the forum asked about a junction at Ford Road and bridge over the railway near Ford Junction.</p> <p>The project team explained the team cannot provide a guarantee as the traffic modelling outputs need to be fully assessed by traffic modellers. It was reiterated that the traffic forecasts being produced and implications of growth (both background traffic growth and that from new housing) need to be fully understood in terms of their impacts on the scheme and any proposed new junction before decisions can be made. Traffic 'rat runs' will be considered in traffic modelling (some modelling has already been undertaken) and Highways England will work with WSCC on this.</p> <p>Highways England has committed to considering the need for a junction on Ford Road. However, a bridge over the railway at Ford Road is outside the scope of the scheme. Comments on Ford Road will be received and will feed into the design.</p> <p>There is also interest in a possible cycleway and Highways England recognises support for this.</p>	
	A member of the forum asked a question about the cost of the scheme and logistics of additional funding, including whether this would hinder improvements associated with other schemes.	

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	<p>Andrew Jackson responded that the projects are independent and stand on their own merits regarding funding.</p>	
	<p>A question was asked regarding the Avisford Grange development and the implications for those who choose to pull out of house purchases.</p> <p>It was explained that the rules on compensation are independent from Highways England. The compensation code is unlikely to provide compensation to those who voluntarily pull out of sales.</p>	
	<p>It was noted that previously the construction start date was 2022 and the completion date was 2026. Clarification was requested regarding the Secretary of State (SoS) decision and whether this would be before or after the general election in May 2024.</p> <p>The project team confirmed that the start date had slipped and the current start of works date is 2023/2024.</p>	
	<p>A question was asked about when residents will be informed of planned mitigation measures and have the opportunity to comment.</p> <p>Communities and residents will be provided with more information in June and July as part of the informal presentation of design development. Following this, statutory consultation is the formal process and there will be document called a Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) setting out details of the scheme, traffic information and an indication of the likely significant environmental effects.</p>	
	<p>The Chair of Walberton Parish Council noted that a school close to the scheme had not been contacted regarding the Preferred Route Announcement in 2020.</p> <p>Andrew Jackson clarified that domestic landowners were contacted as a priority. Future engagement will take place as we work through the design development and assessment process. In addition, there will be an Environmental Statement (ES) chapter on population and human health which will address community issues such as schools and accessibility.</p> <p>In recognition of the number of issues to be discussed with the village of Walberton, it was agreed that a meeting will be set up in May to discuss approach to mitigation.</p>	<p><b>HE to arrange meeting with Walberton Parish Council to discuss mitigation.</b></p>
	<p>It was questioned why the Grey route was chosen when only 7% of consultees chose Grey during consultation.</p> <p>Andrew Jackson noted that all feedback was considered in the route options appraisal and that the public consultation feedback was one of many factors. The project team listened and gained understanding of route priorities through this process.</p>	
	<p>A member of the forum asked about mitigation costs and whether it would be appropriate to ringfence mitigation funds.</p> <p>It was explained that ringfencing would be inappropriate as any impacts would first be reduced and only then would be mitigated</p>	

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	<p>and offset. It was clarified that mitigation is integral to the design of the scheme as part of complete project.</p>	
	<p>The project team were asked to clarify how the impact on the Binsted Rife and St Mary's Church would be mitigated.</p> <p>The Stage 2 design was based on available data, known constraints and an initial process of balancing the need for an efficient design, with minimal waste, against the requirement to minimise the impact on the environment and setting. The team are now developing the design in this location with a focus on achieving a refined horizontal and vertical alignment which seeks to address the known environmental and construction issues and in particular the impact on St Mary's Church, veteran trees and bat flight routes.</p> <p>The project team explained that the design team are currently refining the vertical alignment in the vicinity of the church and are aware of the challenges. Options are being explored to minimise the impact and identify opportunities for mitigation. Update to be provided at the next forum.</p> <p>The relationship between environmental aspects was highlighted: the vertical alignment needs to be elevated enough for bats to pass underneath, but low enough for St Mary's Church to be less impacted. There will be an ongoing process to review likely effects and the mitigation needed.</p>	<p><b>HE to provide update on opportunities for mitigation at next meeting.</b></p>
	<p>The project team recognised there are concerns regarding the proposed crossing of the flood plain. The project team is currently carrying out a detailed review of the embankment vs viaduct options with the intent of making a decision before the summer design freeze.</p>	<p><b>HE to provide update at next meeting</b></p>
	<p>Regarding detrunking of the existing A27, Highways England confirmed that conversations with WSCC have started and the team are working together to identify the requirements and opportunities for improvement. The detrunking will be delivered through the DCO process in partnership with WSCC as the receiving highways authority.</p>	
	<p>A member of the forum asked whether Highways England can commit to a 10-day turnaround on questions from elected reps, and whether a specific email address could be provided.</p> <p>Andrew Jackson apologised for length of time it has taken to respond to recent correspondence including answers to Walberton Parish Council. The team want to give accurate info that has been fully checked before it gets issued and hope to improve over coming months as the design progresses. The team have also been affected by Covid-19 restrictions which make it more difficult to compile responses. The aspiration remains to respond as quickly as possible.</p> <p>Highways England agreed to look at the practicalities of setting up new A27 Arundel email. <b>[Afternote: after examination, the</b></p>	<p><b>HE to look into setting</b></p>

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	most appropriate solution is to retain use of the <a href="mailto:A27arundelbypass@highwaysengland.co.uk">A27arundelbypass@highwaysengland.co.uk</a> email address for all correspondence. Members of the Elected Representatives' Forum should indicate this in the subject of the email.]	<b>up new email address</b>
	A member of the forum asked a question about an equestrian crossing near Fontwell.  Andrew Jackson noted that this is outside of scheme boundary and it will be passed on to the Operations Directorate.	<b>HE to pass question to Ops Directorate</b>
	<b>Next meeting</b>	
	The next meeting will be on 25 <sup>th</sup> May at 7:30-9:30pm (Teams invite already issued). It is assumed the meeting will be held via Microsoft Teams.  This will be 30 mins later than the usual time to allow for a Walberton Parish Council meeting; however, the room will be opened to allow participants to join from 7:15pm.	
	Suggestions were provided by members of the forum regarding potential content for the next meeting.	
	The independent chair thanked attendees and closed the meeting.	

### NEXT MEETING

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**Date:** Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> May      **Time:** 19:30-21:30      **Location:** MS Teams

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