

## A27 East of Lewes Public Information Exhibitions

### Facts and Questions

#### Introduction

The purpose of this document is to supplement the information available at the Public Information Exhibitions and answer questions about the A27 East of Lewes scheme.

The document covers a range of topics but if you need further information please contact Highways England at [info@highwaysengland.co.uk](mailto:info@highwaysengland.co.uk)

### General questions

#### Why is the scheme happening?

The Government is funding a £2.2bn programme of schemes across the south east to relieve congestion, improve journey times and safety, and mitigate environmental impacts.

This project is included in the 2014 Roads Investment Strategy. Highways England is investing up to £72 million on a 9-mile (15km) stretch of the A27 through mostly rural areas between Beddingham roundabout and Cophall roundabout near Polegate.

The key problems with the A27 at the moment are:

- **Route congestion:** This route has poor journey time reliability – delays lead to low speeds and congestion and can lead to drivers diverting to unsuitable local roads. Polegate junction is a key congestion pinch point. A high number of complaints have been received relating to journey time and reliability along this route.
- **Road safety:** Incidents and accidents cause significant disruption, delays and long detours on unsuitable local roads.
- **Pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders and others:** There is limited provision along the corridor for these groups.
- **Severance and access:** The route runs through and close to towns and villages causing severance issues for pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable user groups.
- **Economics:** Accessibility and capacity issues on the A27 are barriers to existing and prospective employers. Residential and business developers are likely to be discouraged from investing if major infrastructure improvements are not made.

#### What is Highways England planning to do?

The following improvements are proposed:

**Polegate junction:** Reconfiguration of the A27/A2270 Junction to provide more capacity, bridge widening, widening of the road to two lanes between the junction and the Cophall roundabout and signalisation of Gainsborough Lane.

**Wilmington junction:** Provision of Pegasus crossing and upgraded footways.

**Berwick roundabout:** Enlargement of existing roundabout, widened junction entry and exits to two lanes and upgrade of crossing to Pegasus standard.

**Shared use path:** Provision of new shared use path between Firle and Polegate with signalised crossing at Firle and pedestrian crossing island at Selmeston.

### How did we decide on this improvement?

Highways England developed a range of options and presented them at the public consultation which was held between September and December 2016. Following the consultation, Highways England reviewed the responses and made changes to the design which was then published as the preferred route in September 2017.

Since the preferred route announcement, Highways England has been undertaking a range of surveys to gather information to inform the next stage of design. The preliminary design has now been completed and is available to view at the exhibitions.

### What are the objectives of this scheme?

The objectives of this scheme were developed in consultation with the local authorities, South Downs National Park Authority and other consultees.

The objectives are to:

- Smooth the flow of traffic by improving journey time reliability and reducing delay on the section of the A27 east of Lewes through small scale interventions
- Improve safety for all road users
- Support sustainable modes of travel
- Reduce community separation and provide better access to local services and facilities. Provide opportunities for improved accessibility for all users into the South Downs National Park.
- Have regard to the National Park purposes and the special qualities the SDNP authority is seeking to preserve in designing and evaluating improvement options.

### What is the budget?

We have a scheme budget of up to £72m.

### How long will it be before I see a scheme in place?

Construction work is expected to start in spring 2020 and be completed in 2022.

### Why is the scheme being delivered in two phases?

To help phase the construction of the scheme the junction improvements at Polegate and Berwick are being delivered first followed by the shared use path. This approach also allows for more time to have detailed discussions with the land owners affected by the path proposals. The designs for the junctions are available to view today and plans for the path will be available in the summer.

### What is the consenting route for the scheme?

The scheme is being delivered using powers under the Highways Act 1980. This means that Highways England doesn't need planning consent for the scheme but

does need to use compulsory purchase powers to acquire the land needed for the scheme.

#### Will any properties be purchased using compulsory purchase powers?

Compulsory purchase orders for the Phase 1 work will be published shortly. The plans do not include any housing acquisition. Anybody affected will have had a meeting to discuss the next steps.

### Longer term scheme

#### Why are we not looking at a new road / bypass option?

The analysis undertaken during the A27 Corridor Feasibility Study (2014) could not find a bypass option for the A27 East of Lewes suitable for investment.

Since then a new study was commissioned in 2018 which looked at the feasibility of a bypass based on revised development figures in the county. The results of the new study will inform future Highways England investment. At present however, there is no bypass scheme planned.

#### Will current proposals make delivering a bigger scheme later more difficult?

The proposals as part of the current A27 East of Lewes scheme do not prevent options for investment being considered in the future.

#### Does Highways England appreciate the development and business pressures (Wealden growth) driving travel demand in the corridor?

Yes, Highways England is aware of the longer term strategic ambitions for the corridor and will work with Local Enterprise Partnerships and authorities to review long term growth to inform potential options post-2020. However, the aim of this current scheme is to make improvements that are sensitive to the local environment, increase capacity and improve access, reliability and safety in the short to medium term.

### Data analysis

#### Does the scheme provide value for money?

Yes, the benefit cost ratio (BCR) is 7.4 indicating very high value for money. The BCR is a ratio of the monetised benefits such as accident savings and journey time savings and the overall cost of the scheme. Schemes with a BCR of 2 and above are considered to offer high value for money.

#### What does the travel demand data show?

Historically the trend for travel demand reflected in the Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) figures shows a reduction in activity. This was the case at the time of the A27 Feasibility Study which showed traffic volumes decreasing slightly between 2007-2012.

More recently, demand is beginning to increase. The latest average traffic volumes suggest the road is near or above capacity along the single carriageway sections, particularly between the A26 and Drusillas.

#### Have you looked at the accidents record along the corridor?

Yes. Sussex Police gave us accident data for January 2011 to January 2016.

Of the 148 accidents recorded in these five years, four were fatal and 22 were serious. Our assessment of accidents has been compared with the Department for Transport's Reported Road Casualties Great Britain Annual Report, 2014 for rural A roads which indicates that this section of the A27 has an above average accident rate.

## Disruption

### Will scheme construction cause disruption on the A27?

Construction plans have not been finalised but schemes of this nature will cause a degree of disruption. We will endeavour to minimise the impact on road users and residents but during the works, speed limits will need to be reduced through some sections to protect the workforce and it may be necessary to carry out lane closures and overnight closures of some sections of the road. Over the next few months we will be working to develop plans to minimise the disruption as much as possible and these will be shared with residents at the earliest opportunity.

### How long could disruption last?

Construction will be phased to minimise disruption. Berwick roundabout is likely to be the first junction to enter construction followed by Polegate, Wilmington and finally the shared use path. The whole construction duration is likely to be two years.

## Environment

### How will this scheme affect the environment?

The impact of the scheme on the environment has been assessed within the Environmental Assessment Report. This document is still being finalised but sections are available on request.

### Do the options impact on the South Downs National Park?

Yes, the shared use path will be constructed on the south side of the A27 within the South Downs National Park. The path will be constructed taking into account the special qualities of the National Park. To ensure we adhere to the strict requirements we will develop the detailed design for the path in consultation with the National Park Authority.