

SPECIAL COUNCIL – 3 MARCH 2022

AGENDA ITEM 3 – PUBLIC QUESTION TIME – ORDER IN WHICH THE CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL WILL INVITE QUESTIONS BELOW RECEIVED IN WRITING IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING

1. From Councillor Vawer, Walberton Parish Council
2. From Mr Waller – Chair of the OneArundel A27 Bypass Group

FULL DETAIL OF THE QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED IS DETAILED BELOW

Note, the Chair will:

- invite questions from members of the public who have submitted in writing their questions in line with the Council's Constitution.
- explain that the questions received will be answered by the Chair of the Council
- confirm that Public Question Time allows Members of the public to ask one question at a time and that a maximum of one minute is allowed for each question;
- state that questions will be invited in the order in which they have been received and that if there is time remaining from the 15 minutes allowed for Public Question Time, questioners will be allowed to ask a supplementary question.

QUESTION ONE

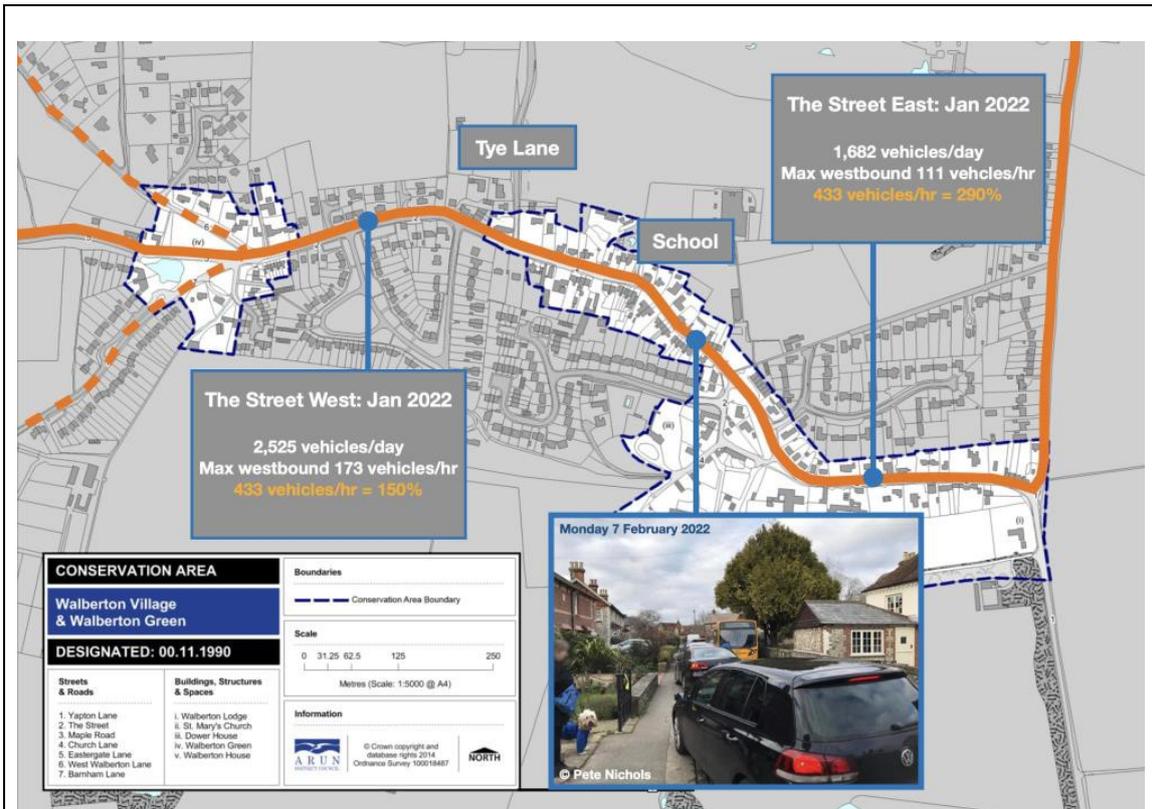
From Councillor Vawer – Walberton Parish Council

Walberton Parish Council considers the report issued by Arun District Council's officers on the A27 consultation to be woefully inadequate.

Councillors should be aware, and indeed have read, the WSCC report to their Communities, Highways, Environment and Scrutiny Committee which includes THIRTEEN pages of issues with the current Grey Route proposal and the PEIR. That Committee agreed to support a bypass but advised that they do not have enough information from National Highways in order to form a view on the consultation.

We are extremely concerned to note that the proposals have incomplete, and in many cases, out-of-date data.

Traffic - shows a dramatic increase in traffic through a conservation area, in The Street in Walberton, National Highways are forecasting a 42% increase – that's a whole week average so at school pick up and drop off times this will be up to 290%. This is based on Walberton PC's official traffic survey conducted between 19th and 26th January inclusive this year.



There are extensive negative environmental impacts, including to the very rare Alcahloe bat species, and documented adverse health effects on a significant population from noise and pollution.

The Grey route just moves traffic congestion from Crossbush to the Fontwell roundabouts. National Highways have objected to several planning applications in Walberton Parish because of the overload on these roundabouts.

It is difficult to withdraw support once given and this scheme, whose documentation is recognised to be severely lacking in information, is also potentially in conflict with the Gunning principles regarding consultation.

Why is Arun District Council even considering supporting this Grey route when surely it is preferable to withhold support until suitable information is available to make an informed, intelligent choice?

Response

Thank you, Councillor Vawer, for your question.

Arun District Council has been invited to respond to the Statutory Consultation put forward by National Highways. It would be remiss for the Council not to respond. Quite how the council will respond is before the council in the report for consideration tonight. It has recommendations, which after due debate, will be adopted, rejected, or amended. So, whilst the report suggests that the Grey route is supported, it would be wrong to assume, at this present time, that this will be the outcome of the debate.

You mention the Gunning principles. One of those principles is that consultation must take place when the proposal is still at an informative stage. The report recognises that there are still issues that are yet to be decided upon, for instance, the viaduct height and Yapton Lane crossing. The report also points out that there are other issues still being addressed in the design, therefore, the final traffic modelling and the resultant cost benefit ratio cannot be finalised, but this should be achieved prior to the development consent order application is made. The report also mentions the increase in traffic in and around local villages e.g. Walberton and that NH sees this as an issue to be resolved. It is fully anticipated that the outcome of the statutory consultation will benefit the decisions made on these issues to better inform the DCO application.

Supplementary Question

Will the Leader of the Council be reiterating the comments that he made at the A27 Representatives Forum on Monday?

Supplementary Response

If you wait about ten minutes, you will find out.

QUESTION TWO

From Mr Waller – Chair of the OneArundel A27 ByPass Group

Overall Comment

The OneArundel (OA) Bypass Support Group is pleased to note that ADC supports the NH Scheme to construct an A27 Bypass on the “Preferred” Grey Route.

There are however several Arundel-related issues, particularly concerning traffic and flood risk, which need to be highlighted to National Highways.

Traffic Issues

OA agrees with ADC about the need for additional information about various traffic issues related to the Scheme. In particular, the following topics highlighted by ADC deserve specific attention:

- a. The traffic forecasts for Ford Road Arundel, together with the implications of additional housebuilding on the Ford Airfield brown-field site in due course, make it difficult to accept that there will be a 31% reduction in the traffic on this road.
- b. In view of the doubts about the traffic forecasts, we remain to be convinced that there will be no requirement for a south-facing Ford Road junction with the new A27, and we therefore support the ongoing discussions between NH, WSCC and ADC in relation to this topic.

Additionally, there is a need for suitable Traffic Routing Orders (TRO) for vehicles using the construction compounds / laydown areas, especially those which might seek to enter and exit via Arundel's Ford Road Roundabout. The lack of such TROs could have a major adverse impact on the town. It would thus be helpful if the ADC response to NH could emphasise this requirement.

Flood Risk to Arundel

There is a lack of clarity in the NH consultation documents concerning the possible adverse impact of the Scheme on the flood risk to Arundel, and this is not highlighted in the draft ADC response.

As identified in the Environment Agency's 2014 Lower Tidal River Arun Strategy (LTRAS) Report, Arundel is at high risk of flooding, the main threat being tidal flooding from the south which would outflank the town's current River Arun-related flood defences.

The LTRAS, which is not mentioned in any of the NH documents, envisages containing this high flood risk to Arundel by ensuring that the River Arun's riverside 'hard' flood defence assets (earth embankments) to the immediate south of the town are maintained and improved. The latter are expected to be provided by the construction of new earth embankments in the floodplain on either side of the river in the immediate vicinity of the proposed A27 viaduct. Both would be constructed in 2034, and they would be raised in 2064.

Only following the eventual raising of such flanking defences should the defences in the flood plain further south be allowed to deteriorate, thus creating natural wetland. However, the risk of flooding to Arundel would increase if the flanking defences were either not in place or were compromised. Therefore, for Arundel's safety, it is essential that no new natural wetland areas should be created in the short-to-medium term to the south of Arundel in the vicinity of the new viaduct before the new flanking defences are constructed. That said, there are solutions:

1. A new road could be built across the floodplain on a raised embankment which, by definition, would incorporate the necessary flanking defences against tidal flooding from the south.

2. A viaduct could be built across the floodplain, but without any new compensatory wetlands in the Arun Valley to the south of Arundel in the vicinity of the viaduct.
3. A viaduct could be built across the floodplain, incorporating versions of the necessary flanking defences on each side of the river, thus allowing compensatory wetlands to be created to the immediate north and south of the viaduct.

On the assumption that building a new road on a raised embankment has been ruled out, the third option would seem to be best as it would bring forward the building of the necessary flanking defences, which are required in due course irrespective of the Bypass Scheme, if Arundel is to be protected from the high risk of tidal flooding.

The ADC Agenda Item No. 7 Briefing Note contains no information about either the current or future flood risk to Arundel, and thus fails to consider the flood risk implications of building the new road across the River Arun flood plain just to the south of the town. Similarly, like the NH consultation documents, there is no mention whatsoever of LTRAS.

Rather than facilitating the passage of water under the new viaduct from both the north and south of Arundel, the Scheme needs to restrict the passage of water from the south and thus ensure that the flood risk to Arundel is not increased. It is therefore recommended that this aspect of the Bypass Scheme needs to be given greater emphasis in the ADC response to NH.

Response

Thank you Mr Waller for your submission – I don't think there was a question in there, but I will exercise my discretion to address the points made.

Traffic Issues

You are already aware of our concerns about Ford Road so I will address the point about traffic management during construction.

The project will not be submitted for Planning Approval to Arun District Council, instead going to the Planning Inspectorate.

With this in mind, it would not be practicable for Arun to insist on a Traffic Routing Order – this would be best done by West Sussex County Council (as the Highway Authority) at an appropriate stage, or as a Condition imposed by the Inspectorate.

Flood Risk

I understand from Officers that flood risk has been part of the officer level focus sub-group discussions and the possibility of combining the road proposals with flood risk reduction has been explored.

As you mention, there is an existing flood risk to Arundel from the south and from the north and this has been highlighted in the LTRAS (Lower Tidal River Arun Study).