

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO AND DECISION OF PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE ON 20 JULY 2021

REPORT

SUBJECT: A259 Corridor Improvements Consultation

REPORT AUTHOR:	Kevin Owen, Planning Policy and Conservation Team Leader
DATE:	June 2021
EXTN:	x 37853
AREA:	Planning

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report seeks agreement to the proposed consultation response to the A259 Corridor Enhancement Study being progressed by West Sussex County Council (Arun District Council is joint funding work with WSCC on the A259 Transport Model for the Corridor Enhancement). The proposals set out a number of carriageway and junction improvements extending from the west through Comet Corner (Bognor Regis) and Oyster Catcher, through to the Wick Roundabout (Littlehampton) in the East. The improvements are aimed at mitigating the traffic impacts of growth, easing congestion, improving safety and connectivity (including pedestrian and cycling) east-west through the District. The consultation closes 25 July 2021.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Planning Policy Committee agree the consultation response to the A259 Corridor Enhancement Study as set out in strategic comments in section 1.6 and detailed comments in section 1.7 and Appendix 2.

1. BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 An update on the A259 Bognor Regis to Littlehampton Corridor Enhancement (A259CE) was considered and noted by the Planning Policy Sub-Committee on 15 December 2020 as part of the pre-consultation, engagement and feasibility stage, undertaken by West Sussex County Council.
- 1.2 The need to deliver safety improvements to Comet Corner and Oystercatcher Junctions along the A259 between Bognor Regis and Littlehampton are included in the Arun Transport Study (ATS) supporting the Arun Local Plan 2018. The A259 between Bognor Regis and Littlehampton was recognised, through the Local Plan Examination, as a stretch of road that would require enhancement, as a result of

growth in the District. It is also a strategically important east-west route which provides an alternative and critical diversionary route for the A27, which often is heavily congested during peak times particularly, at the Chichester and Arundel bottlenecks.

1.3 The A259CE feasibility stage highlighted that:-

- West Sussex County Council (WSCC) are undertaking work to investigate strategic level options for improving the full stretch of the A259 between Bognor Regis and Littlehampton;
- This section of the A259 has been defined, by the Department for Transport (DfT) as part of the Major Road Network (MRN) because it is a strategically important local road;
- This scheme is identified as a top-ten priority scheme by Transport for the South East;
- WSCC Highways and Transport Hub agreed to add the scheme to the Capital Programme (October 2020) commencing in 2022/23 on the basis that the capital cost will be externally funded;
- WSCC will submit an Outline Business Case (OBC) to the DfT for Major road Network (MRN) funding (there will be a requirement of a 15% local contribution)
- If the OBC is successful, a Full Business Case will be prepared whereby funding will be allocated, subject to a Ministerial decision

1.4 The A259CE feasibility stage 'Options Assessment Report' in July 2020 appraised a number of options to formulate a corridor package consisting of preferred options for a number of key junctions; which include;

- New and reconfigured roundabouts replacing staggered junctions;
- Carriageway realignment, visibility signage and signalisation measures;
- Turning restrictions;
- Physical traffic islands, crossings for pedestrians and cyclists;
- Speed restrictions;
- Bus priority measures and road access restrictions.

1.5 The current A259CE consultation stage commenced on 21 June and closes on 25 July (6 weeks). The full details of the proposals and consultation material are accessible via Background paper 1. A map of the corridor is included for illustration in Appendix 1 to this report. The detailed proposals include the key junctions assessed to be the 'preferred options'. However, further proposals have been developed (picked out underlined):-

1. A259/B2132 Yapton Road (Comet Corner) – convert staggered crossroads junctions to a 4-arm roundabout
2. Public Rights of Way east of Comet Corner junction (PROW - Footpaths 166 and 165);
3. A259/Bairds Business Park junction;
4. A259/B2233 Yapton Road (Oystercatcher) – convert staggered crossroads junction to a 4-arm roundabout;
5. A259/Church Lane – realign and convert to a 3-arm roundabout;

6. A259/Ferry Road – convert staggered crossroads junction to a 4-arm roundabout;
7. Public right of Way Footpath (206);
8. Clympwick Bridge and its approaches;
9. A259/Bridge Road (Tesco) – addition of a filter lane
10. A259/A284 (Wick) – removal of one arm to form a 4-arm roundabout.

Strategic Matters

1.6 The A259 Corridor Enhancement is essential to mitigation of the Strategic Allocations (as well as any other developments) that axis off this east west corridor. Congestion and safety are key considerations as well as strategic connectivity to the A27 at times of congestion at Chichester and Arundel. The corridor enhancement proposals are therefore, welcome in principle subject to the following points:-

- The need to ensure that the improvements are future proof – e.g. Clympwick Bridge and accommodating the potential configuration of the LEGA West Bank Strategic allocation and phases of development;
- The need to ensure that safety and comfort/utility are considered from the perspective of all users, including non motorised users of this corridor e.g. proposed reconfiguration of the shared footpath/cycle way (NCN route 2) at each junction improvement and how it intersects with existing PROW and crossing points on the A259 and connecting roads;
- A large section of the road is located in or adjoining a Strategic Gap as identified in the Arun Local Plan. Tree and hedgrow removal would be required for some upgrade options, which could have a negative impact the landscape quality. Therefore, it is suggested that the design of the various junctions should minimise visual impacts and vegetation loss where possible. The removal of screening vegetation should be avoided, whilst opportunities to improve screening vegetation and to 'green' the area/junctions should be included;
- Improvements should therefore, accommodate scope for green infrastructure and biodiversity net gain – including carbon sequestration – e.g. tree planting and greening to create an attractive route particularly on redundant highway land;
- The design of enhancement schemes infrastructure itself should accommodate resilience to climate change and mitigation of flood risk allowances that apply to new development (including risks of flooding elsewhere) e.g. the Environment Agency's 100 year lifetime allowance climate change risk;

Detailed Matters

1.7 The following detailed points summarised below are amplified further in Appendix 2 for each junction/PROW intersect point:-

- The need to ensure that the intrusion into countryside and relationship to Littlehampton – Middleton On sea Strategic Gap is addressed to ensure minimal visual (including noise and light) intrusion and impact within the landscape and the sensitivity of views to and from the South Downs National Park;
- Ensure that opportunities to retain biodiversity and landscape features, trees and hedgrows is maximised in addition to 'biodiversity net gain' secured through development contributing habitat creation within the enhancement corridor,

including on roundabouts, road verges and disused road infrastructure and where the Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOA) shown on the Arun Local Plan Policies Map, intersect with this corridor;

- The need to ensure that existing Open Space is protected or replaced with equivalent, and opportunities for new open space and Green Infrastructure enhancement is secured;
- That the corridor enhancement scheme integrates the shared footpath/cycle way 'Littlehampton to Goring – By-Sea Inland NCN route 2' (which is one of the five Arun Active Travel Study priority routes) at each junction improvement and how it intersects with existing PROW and crossing points on the A259 including connecting roads and in particular, takes into account two of the other ATS priorities:-
 - Arundel to Littlehampton via Ford Road route;
 - Fontwell to Felpham missing links route
- These measures will improve opportunities for modal shift along this corridor connecting non motorised user (including pedestrians, cyclists, wheelchair users, horse riders, and those on scooters) trips to Strategic Allocations, employment, leisure, schools and service destination places within Bognor Regis and Littlehampton, in particular addressing the ATS 'gold standard meeting DfT published LTN 1/20 guidance:-
 - Coherence;
 - Directness;
 - Safety;
 - Comfort;
 - Attractiveness
- The need to clarify and ensure that provision is made to accommodate the 'Arundel to Littlehampton (Green Link Arun River) Corridor Leisure Route' connecting Arundel to Ford and the A259 where it intersects near Clympwick Bridge (this route is an Active Travel Study route and also included within the Arun Infrastructure Capacity Development Plan 2017 as Essential infrastructure supporting the delivery of the adopted Arun Local Plan 2018;
- That the impact on heritage features, landscapes, listed buildings including non-designated heritage assets, is minimised through undertaking appropriate heritage assessment and opportunities to ensure that harm is avoided;

Conclusions

- 1.8 The Council welcomes the opportunity provided by WSCC to comment on the preferred options for A259 Corridor Enhancements. The Council is supportive of the proposals subject to the matters and clarifications set out in this report.

2. PROPOSAL(S):

To note the report.

3. OPTIONS:

The following options are available to Members:

1. To agree the report;
2. Not to agree the report.

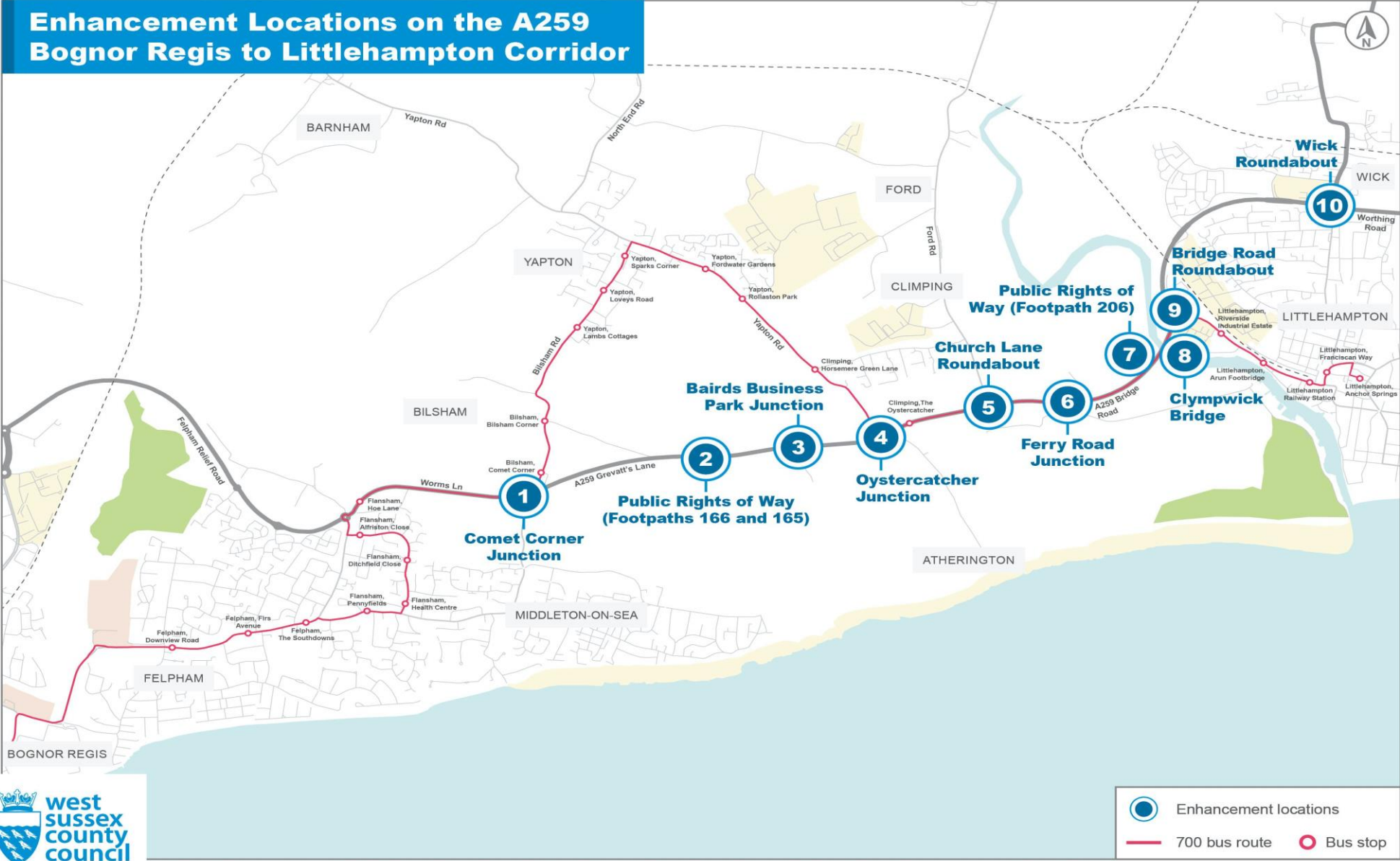
4. CONSULTATION:		
Has consultation been undertaken with:	YES	NO
Relevant Town/Parish Council		X
Relevant District Ward Councillors		X
Other groups/persons (please specify)		X
5. ARE THERE ANY IMPLICATIONS IN RELATION TO THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL POLICIES: (Explain in more detail at 6 below)	YES	NO
Financial		X
Legal		X
Human Rights/Equality Impact Assessment		X
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime & Disorder Act		X
Sustainability	X	
Asset Management/Property/Land		X
Technology		X
Other (please explain)	X	
6. IMPLICATIONS: <p>The design and implementation of A259 Corridor Enhancements will help to address mitigation of growth set out in the Adopted Arun local Plan 2018 including scope for achieving modal shift and safer and more active travel connectivity leading to more sustainable development patterns as well as relieving congestion and reducing emissions from transport.</p>		

7. REASON FOR THE DECISION: <p>The mitigation of the impacts of growth and delivery of sustainable development, modal shift, improved safety and reduction in carbon emissions, through implementation of A259 Corridor Enhancements.</p>

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS: <p>Background paper 1 - A259 Corridor Enhancement: - https://yourvoice.westsussex.gov.uk/a259</p> <p>Background paper 2:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Commet Corner: https://yourvoice.westsussex.gov.uk/9019/widgets/27609/documents/13428 2. Public Rights of Way (Footpaths 166 and 165) https://yourvoice.westsussex.gov.uk/9019/widgets/27609/documents/13429 3. Bairds Business Park Junction
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- <https://yourvoice.westsussex.gov.uk/9019/widgets/27609/documents/13430>
- 4. Oystercatcher Junction
<https://yourvoice.westsussex.gov.uk/9019/widgets/27609/documents/13431>
- 5. Church Lane Roundabout
<https://yourvoice.westsussex.gov.uk/9019/widgets/27609/documents/13432>
- 6. Ferry Road Junction
<https://yourvoice.westsussex.gov.uk/9019/widgets/27609/documents/13433>
- 7. Public Rights of Way (Footpath 206)
<https://yourvoice.westsussex.gov.uk/9019/widgets/27609/documents/13434>
- 8. Clympwick Bridge
<https://yourvoice.westsussex.gov.uk/9019/widgets/27609/documents/13435>
- 9. Bridge Road (Tesco) Roundabout
<https://yourvoice.westsussex.gov.uk/9019/widgets/27609/documents/13436>
- 10. Wick (Morrisons) Roundabout
<https://yourvoice.westsussex.gov.uk/9019/widgets/27609/documents/13437>

Appendix 1: A259 Corridor Enhancement



Appendix 2 ADC Detailed Comments

1. Commet Corner:

- Policy T SP3a of the adopted Arun Local Plan 2018 shows the protected lines on the Policies Map for the committed scheme. The proposed roundabout scheme would be more consolidated within the existing highway land and presumably require less new highway (south of Worms Lane). Although there is significant land take with the roundabout scheme – (similar to the number and size of other proposed roundabouts along the route) and there will undoubtedly be risk of incursions into the countryside and reduction in the amount of green space and existing biodiversity value. It is therefore advised that a general approach of leaving as much as possible within the centre of or placed in the centre of the new roundabouts and margins of legacy carriageway that may be left;
- Though the roundabout itself will not encroach into the countryside the subsidiary elements of the scheme, such as the proposed footway/cycleway and the realigned B2132 plus the proposed bus lane only will more significantly encroach into the open landscape that provides views towards the South Downs. Appropriate planting will be needed to help mitigate these impacts
- Though the position of the roundabout is outside of any of the flood extents, it completely falls within the highest susceptibility to groundwater flooding and so the actions under general requirements of the MM Sequential Exception test doc and W DM3 are required. Will also need to be mindful that where it is intended for the realigned B2132 to connect with the existing carriageway, is an area that is already surrounded by the higher flood extents that remain with climate change.

2. Public Rights of Way (Footpaths 166 and 165)

- Policy T SP3m of the adopted Arun Local Plan 2018 shows the safeguarded indicative line of the A259 Oyster Catcher Junction to Littlehampton on the Policies Map;
- That the corridor enhancement scheme integrates the shared footpath/cycle way 'Littlehampton to Goring – By-Sea Inland NCN route 2' (which is one of the five Arun Active Travel Study priority routes) at each junction improvement and how it intersects with existing PROW and crossing points on the A259 including connecting roads and in particular, takes into account two of the other Arun Active Travel Study priorities:-
 - Arundel to Littlehampton via Ford Road route;
 - Fontwell to Felpham missing links route

3. Bairds Business Park Junction

- Policy T SP3m of the adopted Arun Local Plan 2018 shows the safeguarded indicative line of the A259 Oyster Catcher Junction to Littlehampton on the Policies Map;
- Active Travel opportunities to employment centres in Littlehampton and Bognor Regis including Bairds Business Park connecting with Strategic Allocations, will be critical to encourage modal shift on this corridor and this should be clarified at this section through ensuring foot/cycle path and safe crossing points are provided

4. Oystercatcher Junction A259 / B2233 Yapton Road and Climping Street 'Oystercatcher' Junction

- Policy T SP3m of the adopted Arun Local Plan 2018 shows the safeguarded indicative line of the A259 Oyster Catcher Junction to Littlehampton on the Policies Map;

- The need to clarify how this proposal would impact upon the strategic housing allocation as it would appear that the new roundabout would be constructed on that part of the allocation, which is to become open space;
- The proposals may affect a Listed Building located at the top end of Climping Street and a traditional street/directional sign, which is a non-designated heritage asset;
- Any development in this location would have to ensure that the heritage assets are not harmed and ensure that the design and layout of the new junction does not impact on the setting of the listed building, which is currently the country lane to its side. Further, the traditional street sign should remain somewhere close to its current, historical location.
- There appears to be an electrical substation (in the vicinity of the bus shelter on the southern side), currently outside the main flood extents but has a medium to high susceptibility to groundwater flooding, so will require the actions identified under general requirements in the Sequential Exception Test and Strategic Policy W DM3 (Adopted Arun Local Plan 2018).
- The realigned B2233 and the new T junction, along with the new bus only lane, will be new incursions into the open countryside to the north, it is recommended that appropriate hedging or trees are planted along the northern boundary to provide an element of screening in longer views.

5. Church Lane /Roundabout A259

- Policy T SP3m of the adopted Arun Local Plan 2018 shows the safeguarded indicative line of the A259 Oyster Catcher Junction to Littlehampton on the Policies Map;
- The proposal would appear to affect the two stretches of road which are identified on the Tithe Map. It would be positive if the lines of the section of the roads to be closed would remain identifiable and information boards provided regarding their history and the history of the local area
- There is a proposed footway/cycleway, but it is unclear how far this would extend northwards along Church Lane?
- This improvement scheme should take into account the findings of the Active Travel Study (the Arundel to Littlehampton (Ford Road) route);
- Though outside any flood extents the whole area has a medium to high susceptibility to groundwater and so the actions under general requirements in the Sequential Exception test and Strategic Policy W DM3 (Adopted Arun Local Plan 2018) will be required.
- The existing roundabout is inside the Climping to Houghton Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOA) and the movement of the roundabout to the west will take it outside. However, it would appear to remain in proximity and Strategic policies within the adopted Local Plan - Policies ENV SP1 and ENV DM3 shall apply. These require the preservation, restoration and enhancement of biodiversity and the natural environment through development, plus where possible, creation of new habitat. Therefore, an ecological assessment will be required to prove there shall be no loss of habitat or species within or that may use the BOAs. The importance of this is increased due to the fact that the boundary of the Arun Valley Impact Risk Zone 2 also extends to the western side of the existing roundabout.
Dependent on the result of the assessment but taking account of the above, it is recommended that appropriate planting on the residual triangle between the realigned and existing Church Lane, be restored to habitat and or appropriate planting and management for encouraging biodiversity.

6. Ferry Road Junction/ A259

- Policy T SP3m of the adopted Arun Local Plan 2018 shows the safeguarded indicative line of the A259 Oyster Catcher Junction to Littlehampton on the Policies Map;
- The new junction would create a large roundabout directly next to two listed buildings, which could have a negative/harmful impact on their settings;
- Consider scope for alternative options to ensure that the roundabout is located further away from the heritage assets;
- Confirmation that the need for heritage assessment will be undertaken at the appropriate stage;
- This junction adjoins the West Bank, Littlehampton Strategic allocation, and it is assumed that it would have to be improved or upgraded as a result of that development. Would the proposals be able to support the level of development proposed there?
- The need to clarify how the proposed shared-use footway/cycle way (on the A259) would continue on over the River Arun/Clympwick_bridge. At present the cycleway stops prior to the bridge and is therefore a break in the safe cycle route;
- The position of the roundabout falls within FZ3a in an undefended case but in a defended case situation (site analysis App J of SFRA Update 2016) falls just beyond, almost on the boundary. When climate change predictions are taken into account this will be fully taken over by flood water.
- The new connection between Brookpit Lane and Ferry Road fall partially (eastern end) within the flood extents. As this is also in an area of medium to high susceptibility to groundwater flooding, it is advised that a site FRA is done and that nature based flood solutions are considered to help reduce flood risk, especially to the south of the site, to help linked to the new open space;
- This location is adjacent to the Middleton to Littlehampton Strategic Gap and inside both Arun Valley IRZ and the Climping to Houghton BOA, meaning that Strategic policies ENV SP1 and ENV DM3 of the adopted Arun local Plan 2018 apply. An ecological assessment will be required to show that there will be no impact to the habitat or species and importantly the to the characteristics for which the BOA has been recognised. It shall also need to consider potential use by species and planting/seeding regimes for birds (being in the IRZ) and so any functional link;
- Consideration should be given to provision for potential enhancement schemes for biodiversity.

7. Public Rights of Way (Footpath 206)

- Policy T SP3m of the adopted Arun Local Plan 2018 shows the safeguarded indicative line of the A259 Oyster Catcher Junction to Littlehampton on the Policies Map;
- The need to clarify how this proposal relates to delivering a Littlehampton to Arundel West Bank cycle path as identified as the 'Arundel to Littlehampton (Green Link Arun River) Corridor Leisure Route' connecting Arundel to Ford and the A259 where it intersects near Cympwick Bridge;
- It appears that in an undefended case the scheme location of the new connection would be in FZ 2&3a, although within the defended case shown on the relevant map for the LEGA site in App J of the SFRA Update, it may be entirely outside or partially remaining within FZ2, dependent on its exact location;
- This scheme location is inside the Climping to Houghton BOA and Arun Valley IRZ2 meaning that although a small scheme, these policy designations along with its closer proximity to the river, must demonstrate compliance with Strategic Policy ENV

SP1, para 17.1.26 and ENV DM3 of the adopted Arun local Plan 2018; so an ecological assessment will be needed to show the value of the site in terms of habitats and species including its use by bird and any planting regimes.

- Further consideration of measures (e.g. planting for pollinators or birds) that can be taken to encourage enhancement towards the creation of new habitat should be considered.

8. Clympwick Bridge

- As above;
- Policy T SP3m of the adopted Arun Local Plan 2018 shows the safeguarded indicative line of the A259 Oyster Catcher Junction to Littlehampton on the Policies Map;
- The proposals for cycle improvements across the bridge should also clarify whether the bridge is to be improved. The scale of growth along the corridor would suggest a new or improved bridge should be considered;
- The design of any scheme should be in keeping with setting a high quality feature approach to Littlehampton and the LEGA site.

9. Bridge Road (Tesco) Roundabout

- Policy T SP3m of the adopted Arun Local Plan 2018 shows the safeguarded indicative line of the A259 Oyster Catcher Junction to Littlehampton on the Policies Map;
- In an undefended case, this area is currently covered by FZ3a and remains so in all future scenarios when climate change is applied. Importantly when the defended case is demonstrated, as shown on the relevant map for the LEGA site in App J of the SFRA Update, this coverage is reduced.
- There is significant risk of surface water flooding in this area, which combined with a high susceptibility to groundwater flooding means that the recommended actions under General Requirements in the Sequential and Exception test and Strategic Policy W DM3 (Adopted Arun Local Plan 2018) should be followed.

10. Wick (Morrisons) Roundabout

- The need to clarify whether the proposed new junction with Hawthorn Road and A284 Lyminster Road will also provide access to the other units currently served by the roundabout and the Hawthorn Road Roundabout Arm;
- The need to clarify whether the existing Morrisons internal road is able to accommodate the additional traffic, including delivery vehicles (at present it is quite restricted in width)
- Consider whether the roundabout improvements would offer scope to enhance the two car park areas on the southern side of Wick Street (which may be used in association with the neighbouring school).