

Coastal West Sussex Partnership

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19th September 2016

Dear Colleagues,

As the Chair of the CWS Partnership Board, I welcome the opportunity to be able to comment on the scheme proposals to improve the A27 at Chichester. This response has been sent on behalf of the CWS Partnership Board and it is requested that Highways England give due consideration to its contents before making its recommendations to the Secretary of State.

The CWS Partnership Board is a public private sector partnership that brings together leaders and senior officers from business, education institutions and the public sector to work collectively on economic issues that affect the coast. The aim of the Board is to add value and focus on the ‘larger than local’ issues that impact on the coastal economy whilst supporting business development and promoting sustainable economic growth across the area.

The A27 is the main arterial route along the West Sussex coast and as such, it is the most important transport connection between Portsmouth and Brighton so it is imperative that the A27 works effectively for the benefit of both the local, regional and national economy. The CWS Partnership Board has consistently championed the need to have both improved and reliable journey times across the area and there is an aligned business view that the optimum solution is duelling along the whole route in West Sussex which should include consideration of the northern route. Taking a more holistic and joined up approach across the wider area would ensure that the investment would have a more positive impact on the economy and yield greater return in the longer term.

However, recognising that a more staged process is being taken, the CWS Partnership have been disappointed at both the speed of progress and the extended timetabling for future consultations on the other bottlenecks across our area including Arundel, Worthing and Lancing. As such, the CWS Partnership Board would welcome a much speedier timetabling for the remaining public consultations to consider the other key areas for improvement on the A27.

The investment that will be made in delivering a scheme for the A27 in Chichester will be considerable and sufficient funds should be made available to deliver a solution that brings economic benefit for the longer term and should seek to:

* Offer improved journey times - East to West along the whole stretch of the A27 from Brighton to Portsmouth
* Offer improved journey time reliability and resilience against unplanned incidents
* Improve the attractiveness of the area as a place to do business by improving connectivity to/from the West Sussex coast
* Give better access for visitors to both the coast and the South Downs National Park
* Broaden the recruitment pool for businesses located in the area by improving connectivity to/from urban areas
* Improve the journey times and access for businesses and residents to the north and south of the A27
* Seek to complement other transport investment; eg A284 Lyminster bypass and the A259 corridor improvements at Littlehampton, because unlike other areas there are few acceptable alternative routes for users to use at times of congestion.

In our view, **Option 2** is the only option that will sufficiently improve capacity and journey times, decrease congestion and is most likely to offer the most benefit to the West Sussex coast for the medium to longer term. However, there is also a need to recognise that adverse environmental impacts of the option can be adequately mitigated.

The new route proposed as the Stockbridge link road will improve the flow of local traffic to the South of the A27 and the diversion of Vinnetrow Road onto a new roundabout junction with the A259 will also improve the north – south links for local businesses and residents.

It is disappointing that, in appraising the options for A27 Chichester, a wider economic impact analysis has not been carried out on any of the options and presented as part of the economic assessment. In our view, the wider economic impacts of the options will vary significantly because of the extent to which they will support regeneration, business growth and new development and should be used to inform the investment decision.

Improving the competitiveness of the West Sussex coastal economy to bring it into line with the regional average has the potential to bring significant benefits to the national economy. Although Option 2 the most expensive scheme that is being proposed, there seems little point making any substantial investment, enduring the pain of years of disruption, only to end up with a solution where conditions quickly begin to deteriorate, as this would not adequately support local plans for economic growth.

We look forward to hearing the announcement of the preferred route later in the year.

Best wishes,



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| Kirk Brown  Chair, CWS Partnership Board | Henry Powell,  Vice Chair, CWS Partnership Board |