

Communities, Highways and Environment Scrutiny Committee

24 February 2022 – At a meeting of the Communities, Highways and Environment Scrutiny Committee held at 10.30 am at County Hall, Chichester, PO19 1RQ.

Present: Cllr Britton (Chairman)

Cllr Oakley	Cllr Greenway, left at 12.15pm	Cllr Patel, left at 12.15pm
Cllr Albury		Cllr Quinn
Cllr Ali, left at 12.25pm	Cllr Kenyon	
Cllr Baldwin	Cllr Milne	
	Cllr Oxlade, left at 2.35pm	

Apologies were received from Cllr Oppler

Absent:

Also in attendance: Cllr Bence, Cllr J Dennis, Cllr Markwell and Cllr Urquhart

Part I

44. Chairman's Introduction

44.1 The Chairman apologised for the short, 10-minute delay to the start of the meeting and gave assurance that the meeting audio would be recorded, while issues with the webcasting technology were being resolved.

45. Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee

45.1 Resolved – that the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 19 January be approved as a correct record, and that they be signed by the Chairman.

46. Responses to Recommendations

46.1 The Committee noted the responses to recommendations made at the 19 January meeting from Democratic Services.

47. Proposed Response to the National Highways Consultation on A27 Arundel Bypass

47.1 The Committee considered a report and presentation on the County Council's draft proposed response to National Highway's (NH) consultation on the A27 Arundel Bypass (copies appended to the signed minutes).

47.2 The local County Councillors representing Fontwell and Arundel & Courtwick divisions, Cllrs Bence and Markwell respectively, individually addressed the Committee for five minutes each.

47.3 Summary of responses to members comments and questions: -

- Members praised the level of detail contained within the officer report.
- It is proposed that the County Council gives support in principle to the scheme, on the basis that it is consistent with Our Council Plan and the top priority within the West Sussex Transport Plan.
- Members shared concerns over the proposed scheme's reduction in access and exit points.
- The local member expressed concern for Fontwell, Walberton and neighbouring villages that are likely to be directly impacted by the scheme. The Street in Walberton was highlighted to be at risk of being used as a rat-run.
- Members agreed that NH's consultation material does not contain sufficient information and supporting evidence on key issues.
- As part of the development consent order process, the Planning Inspectorate will appoint a planning inspector who will: assess the material presented by NH and hear from objectors and statutory bodies before making a recommendation to the Secretary of State.
- As part of a transport assessment, NH are expected to present a future traffic forecast reference case as the basis for assessing comparative scenarios with the bypass, and this has been requested of NH.
- Arun District Council's Local Plan, adopted in 2018, highlights a number of improvements necessary to mitigate the impact of development at Arundel, but it does not require an A27 Arundel bypass.
- The traffic impacts on the Local Road Network (LRN) are unknown at this stage, based on the information provided to date, and more evidence has been requested of NH.
- LRN issues need to be assessed and if mitigation measures are required, the costs should be apportioned based on the traffic impacts.
- NH need to provide a detailed understanding around the issues requiring mitigation and the associated level of funding in order to understand what can be covered by the project budget.
- If the County Council is required to deliver any mitigations, then it would do so via the capital programme.
- The A27/B2233 'Crocker hill' junction has already been flagged as one of the locations of concern due to potential increase in usage.
- More evidence of the design plans for the Yapton Lane options have been requested.
- Details of the traffic modelling assumptions have been requested of NH.

47.4 The Chairman thanked those members of the public for submitting written representations in advance of the meeting.

- 47.5 On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman thanked Mr. Hemmings and his officer team for provision of the comprehensive report.
- 47.6 The following points were raised for consideration by Cabinet – that the Committee:
1. Recognises the importance of residents having confidence in the process, and the transparency of the process.
 2. Expresses strong concerns around the lack of access and exit points on the proposed bypass.
 3. Is disappointed by the lack of evidence provided by National Highways.
 4. Acknowledges the deep concerns from local members about the impact of the proposed bypass on local villages (for example, Fontwell and Walberton) and the natural habitat.
 5. Raises concerns about the financial consequences to the County Council of the potential impacts of the proposed bypass on the LRN.
 6. Feels that the proposed bypass might only move the traffic congestion, from Crossbush to Fontwell.
 7. Raises concerns about the traffic modelling assumptions, in particular the projections for the number of new houses, which seem to be well below the ambition set out in local plans.
 8. Acknowledges that the Council's policy is to have the bypass but questions the choice of route selected (the grey route). The Committee has strong concerns about the wording in the draft response around the Council expressing "in principle" support for the grey route. Different views were expressed, as follows:
 - Although the Council should support a bypass that complements Council policies, it should not support the proposed route, having previously supported a different route, and given the lack of information provided for the grey route by National Highways.
 - The Council should support a bypass in principle, but support for the proposed route should be contingent on the concerns raised in the draft consultation response being adequately addressed, despite it not being the Council's preferred route.
 - The Council should support a bypass in principle, but the information provided by National Highways does not allow the Council to reach an informed view on the grey route.
 - The Council should support a bypass in principle, but reiterate that the grey route is not its preferred option. There remain a number of significant questions with the proposed route, as set out in the consultation response.

48. West Sussex Transport Plan

48.1 The Committee considered a report and presentation on the draft West Sussex Transport Plan, to be adopted at Full Council on 1 April (copies appended to the signed minutes).

48.2 Summary of responses to members comments and questions: -

- The Plan's Rail Strategy sets out that the development of new rail stations should be industry-led and assurance was given that local County Councillors would be consulted prior to a County Council decision.
- The Chairman sympathised with some members' inability to properly scrutinise the item's report, due to the late dispatch and explained the reasoning for the delay. He and the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport accepted joint responsibility for its lateness. The Chairman asked that members copy in Committee members to any offline comments submitted to the Cabinet Member, for transparency.
- The use of the word 'ensure' throughout the Plan was challenged as overly ambitious.
- Suggestion was given that a maintenance section be incorporated into the Plan.
- Network Rail conducted a modular study which identified potential for improvements to the West Coastway services which are to some extent, contingent on changes to the rail infrastructure.
- Real-time passenger information screens were acknowledged as one example of a revenue implication as a result of proposed changes to the network. These will be taken into account before decisions are made to invest.
- The annual monitoring report will document the corporate key performance metrics, such as the target to deliver new cycling infrastructure.

48.3 Resolved – that the Committee: -

- Raises concerns around the cycling network, which has sections of cycling route which do not connect, and as such does not constitute a coherent network.
- Acknowledges the vision of the Plan, and the importance of applying for grants and working with stakeholders to ensuring successful delivery of the Plan.
- Suggests that that the impact of bus guideways on other road users should be taken into account
- Questions whether the Plan takes sufficient account of settlements which will become towns or villages once planned development has taken place, and resilience in the face of climate change and flooding.

- Suggests that road-based vehicular transport is likely to remain the primary mode of transport throughout the term of the Plan, and questions whether the Plan will achieve the right balance between the different modes of transport.

48.4 The Chairman thanked Mr Hemmings and his team for their contributions in developing the Plan and providing the report.

49. Possible Items for Future Scrutiny

49.1 Resolved – that the Committee agreed for the Business Planning Group to receive a future update on National Highways' adequacy of consultation response regarding the A27 Arundel Bypass.

50. Date of Next Meeting

50.1 The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 10 June at 10.30am at County Hall, Chichester.

The meeting ended at 2.53 pm

Chairman