

# A27 Arundel Bypass

Preferred route announcement





# Introduction

At Highways England, we believe in a connected country and our network makes these connections happen. We strive to improve our major roads and motorways – engineering the future to keep people moving today and moving better tomorrow. We want to make sure all our major roads are more dependable, durable and, most importantly, safe. That's why we're delivering £15 billion of investment on our network – the largest investment in a generation.

The A27 Arundel Bypass improvement scheme is a critical part of this investment: by reducing congestion in the area, the scheme will improve journeys along the corridor between Brighton and Portsmouth, which is great news for the local and regional economy.

In this brochure, we explain the preferred route for the scheme, how we have assessed the options and carried out public consultation. We also give details of what will happen next.

## Why is the scheme needed?

As the only east-west trunk road south of the M25, the A27 serves a population of more than 750,000 people, and connects a number of coastal communities between Portsmouth and Pevensey, near Eastbourne. On average, West Sussex also attracts 17 million visitor days per year, which, according to VisitBritain, is worth around £508 million to the local economy<sup>1</sup>.

The A27 is currently a dual carriageway on either side of Arundel, but the single carriageway section and junctions through the town cannot cope with today's traffic volumes.

Long queues approaching Arundel are commonplace and, with the population predicted to rise across the region in future, congestion and delays will only increase if nothing is done to improve the road.

Road safety is also a concern with an above average number of accidents on this section of the A27, while congestion around Arundel results in some drivers seeking alternative routes which are less suited to accommodating higher traffic flows. These alternatives include the B2139 through the South Downs National Park, disrupting the otherwise tranquil nature of the Park. Residents in local towns and villages are also affected by increases in through traffic.

In recognition of these problems, the Government, in its Road Investment Strategy 2015-2020, set out its intention to replace "the existing single carriageway road with a dual carriageway bypass, linking together the 2 existing dual carriageway sections of the road".



Figure 1: Scheme location

<sup>1</sup>The GB Day Visitor Statistics 2015, VisitBritain

## The objectives of the scheme are to:

- **Improve capacity** whilst supporting local planning authorities to manage the impact of planned growth.
- **Reduce congestion**, and make journey times shorter, and more reliable.
- **Improve the safety of travellers** and consequently the wider local road network.
- **Improve accessibility** for all users to local services and facilities.
- **Deliver a scheme that minimises environmental impact** and seeks to protect and enhance the quality of the surrounding environment through its high quality design.
- **Respect the South Downs National Park** and its special qualities in our decision making.

## Public consultation

We ran a public consultation from 22 August to 16 October 2017, to gather feedback on our proposals and provide insight to help determine the preferred route. During the consultation period we held 8 public exhibitions and attended local stakeholder meetings to discuss our proposals.

The exhibition events were publicised through a combination of channels, including letter drops, media coverage, online promotion, local community groups and social media. As well as being available at the exhibitions



and on our website, information and questionnaires could also be found at local libraries and community venues.

## The options taken to public consultation

authorities to develop options that would achieve the scheme objectives and represent value for money in line with the available budget.

We conducted a series of traffic and environmental surveys and assessments to explore a number of bypass options. We also worked with local highway and planning

Although significant environmental constraints and national planning policy risks were identified, our technical work concluded that 3 options met

### Option 1

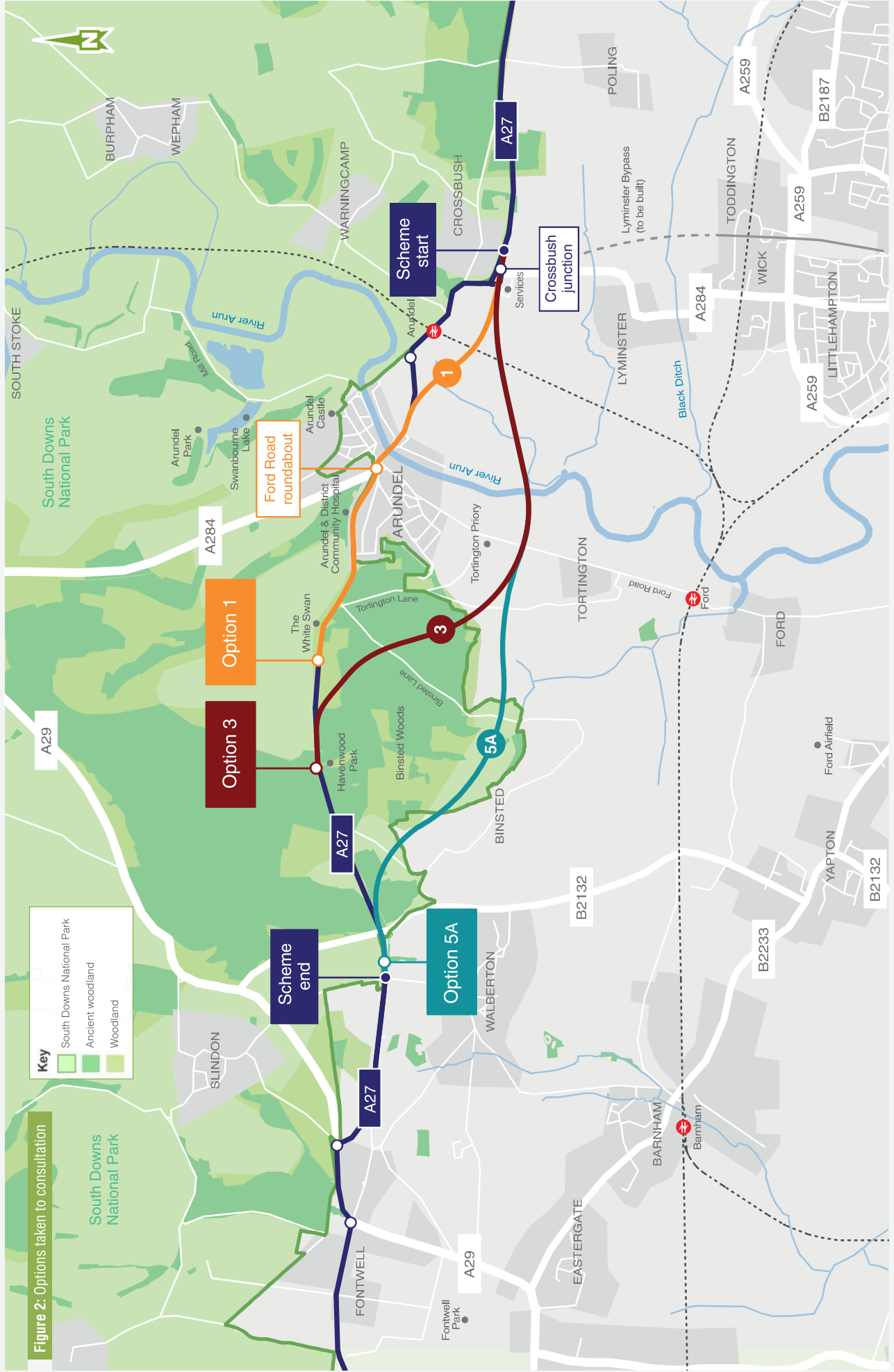
- A new dual carriageway from Crossbush junction, passing to the south-west of Arundel railway station, joining the A27 east of Ford Road.
- The existing section of the A27 west of Ford Road roundabout would be widened to a dual carriageway. The Ford Road roundabout would be signalled controlled to reduce congestion.
- A new pedestrian/cycle path would also be introduced from Crossbush junction, using the existing section of the A27. The path would continue alongside the widened carriageway as far as the Binsted Lane junction, to connect with existing Public Rights of Way and footpaths.

### Option 3

- A new dual carriageway from Crossbush junction, south of the current A27. From Ford Road, the route would continue north through Torington Common and the South Downs National Park, to re-join the existing A27 alignment at a new junction near Havenwood Park.
- There would be a continuous pedestrian/cycle path between Crossbush junction and Yapton Lane, alongside the existing A27.

### Option 5A

- A new dual carriageway following the same alignment as Option 3 between Crossbush junction and Ford Road. It would then continue west before going north through the South Downs National Park and Binsted Woods, before re-joining the existing A27 near Yapton Lane.
- There would be a continuous pedestrian/cycle path between Crossbush junction and Yapton Lane, alongside the existing A27.



# Response to the public consultation

A total of 2,062 people attended the exhibitions and stakeholder meetings, while we received 2,821 completed questionnaires, with a further 7,135 responses by letter or email. Of the written responses, 132 were from key stakeholders while there were also 2 petition email response campaigns, co-ordinated by Friends of the Earth and the Woodland Trust. These received 737 and 5,748 signatories, respectively.

The feedback we received showed that:

- 79% of people who responded agreed that the road needs to be improved.
- The majority of people who took part in the consultation were very concerned about congestion or delays at junctions, journey times and reliability.
- People were also concerned about the effects of A27 traffic on the environment, road safety and the impact that traffic trying to avoid the A27, has on other local roads.
- There are significant concerns over the environmental impact of the scheme as a whole, with 82% of environmental groups who responded opposed to the scheme. There are also specific concerns about how each of the 3 options would affect the environment.

Feedback on each option is summarised next. Please refer to our Public Consultation Report for full details. The report is available to read or download from <https://highwaysengland.co.uk/projects/a27-arundel-improvement/> or can be viewed at the deposit points listed at the end of this brochure.

## Option 1

- 27% of people supported this option.
- Analysis of 2,251 additional comments received to explain a respondent's support for or opposition to Option 1, showed that:
  - 12% thought it would have the least impact on the environment.
  - 9% believed it was the most cost-effective solution.
  - 3% did not feel that it offered a long-term solution.
  - 3% were concerned about the impact that the route would have on feelings of severance within Arundel, with a further 3% citing concerns about the route being too close and bringing traffic into the town.
  - 3% noted concerns about congestion at Ford Road roundabout.
  - 2% mentioned concerns about air quality and a further 2% suggested the route should be single carriageway through Arundel.
- Of 658 respondents who raised other concerns about this option, 66% mentioned the level of disruption that would be caused during the construction phase and 59% cited concerns about impacts on the landscape and scenery.

## Option 3

- 23% of people supported this option.
- Analysis of 1,287 additional comments received to explain a respondent's support for or opposition to Option 3, showed that:
  - 7% were related to general concerns about the environmental impact, with specific concerns also raised about impacts on Binsted Woods (4%), South Downs National Park (3%) and Tortington Common (2%).
  - 5% believed this option would have the most significant impact on congestion, while 4% stated that traffic levels would fall in Arundel.
  - 3% felt the option would minimise the impact on surrounding villages.
  - 3% specifically mentioned that this is the best option for the community and residents of Binsted, while a further 4% felt it would be best for Arundel residents.

## Option 5A

- 48% of people supported this option.
- It was also supported by the majority of local authorities and business groups who responded, including Arun District Council, Arundel Town Council, West Sussex County Council, Arundel Chamber of Commerce and the Coast to Capital Local Economic Partnership.
- Analysis of 2,943 additional comments received to explain a respondent's support for or opposition to Option 5A, showed that:
  - 5% felt it would have the greatest impact on congestion, with a further 5% viewing it as the best long-term solution and 2% stating that journey times would improve.
  - 3% were concerned about the proximity of the route to Binsted, and the resulting impacts on the local community in the village. The Arundel Bypass Neighbourhood Committee also submitted a petition with 2,508 signatures opposing this option, with Walberton Parish Council's consultation response also expressing their opposition.
  - 17% of respondents felt that it would not achieve the scheme objective of minimising environmental impact, although it was not seen to be as negative overall on the environment as Option 3.

## To summarise:

- Option 5A was the most popular with people who responded to the consultation; Option 3 was the least popular.
- There are significant causes for concern with each of the options presented, including impacts on local communities, biodiversity and ancient woodland.

## Choosing a preferred route

We carefully considered a number of factors to identify our preferred route for the scheme, including:

- The extent to which the design meets the scheme objectives.
- Build cost and the value for money that this would offer.
- How well the chosen option fits with local plans and planning policy as set out in the National Networks National Policy Statement.
- The effects on the heritage and cultural value of historic assets in Arundel.
- Feedback from the public consultation.
- And the options for keeping traffic moving and minimising disruption for local communities during construction.

## The preferred route

We have chosen a modified version of Option 5A as our preferred option for this scheme (see page 12 for a map of the route).

By providing a new dual carriageway bypass between the Crossbush junction to the east of Arundel and a new junction between Binsted Lane and Yapton Lane to the west, Option 5A will provide a long-term solution to relieve congestion and delays in the area, and help reduce severance in the town centre. It will also:

- **Improve journey times:** this modified version will reduce average journey times by up to 8 minutes westbound between the A27/Blakehurst Lane/Polling Street junction and the A27/Mill Road/Tye Lane junction, and 12 minutes eastbound.
- **Make journeys safer:** the bypass will improve safety on the highway network by encouraging motorists to use the A27, rather than seeking alternative local routes to avoid congestion around Arundel.
- **Support economic growth:** businesses across the region will benefit from efficiency improvements and improved journey times, while the additional capacity that the route provides will enable local authorities to better manage the impacts of planned population growth.
- **Help cyclists and pedestrians:** lower traffic levels on the existing A27 are likely to make the route more attractive to cyclists and pedestrians. There will also be stronger opportunities for introducing new dedicated facilities that can further encourage more walking and cycling in the area, including a continuous pedestrian/cycle path along the existing A27 around Arundel.

Developing the design: the modifications that we have made to Option 5A

Having taken feedback from the public consultation into account, we have modified the design to address some of the concerns that were raised during the consultation. Specifically:

### To further improve safety:

- The junction at the western end of the bypass will be revised so that local traffic from Yapton Lane and Shellbridge Road will be clearly separated from motorists joining/leaving the A27.

### To reduce the environmental impact:

- The alignment of the route has changed slightly so that it crosses the River Arun further south than initially proposed. This will reduce the impact on the Tortington Priory scheduled monument.
  - We are also revising the layout of the junction at the western end of the scheme to reduce the impact on ancient woodland.
- The environment-related scheme objectives will continue to guide the ongoing design development, and we will continue to seek design improvements in order to incorporate enhancements and further mitigate the environmental impacts.
- We look forward to working with the relevant stakeholders to develop these proposals.

In making the decision on the preferred route we have discounted options 1 and 3. The reasons for this are outlined below.

### Option 1

This option achieved a low level of support during the consultation. Widening the A27 through the centre of Arundel would increase severance in the feeling of division in the town, and overall there were fewer safety benefits to be gained.

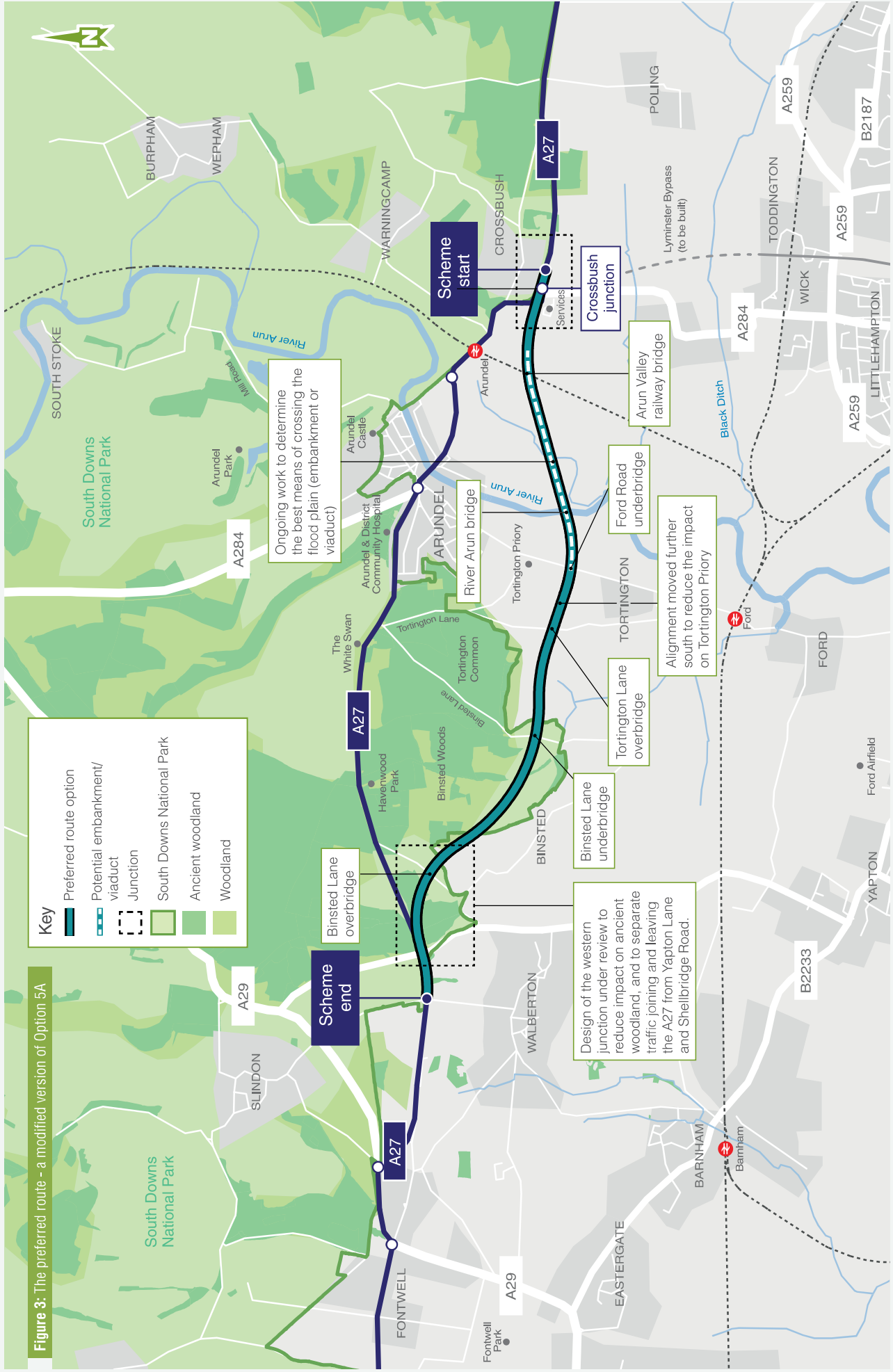
We also had concerns over the ability of the improved road to deal with anticipated future traffic volumes, particularly at Ford Road junction.

This option therefore failed to meet the scheme objectives.

We considered design changes that could help to mitigate for this, but they would impact significantly on both the environment and the local community. The potential design changes would also increase the cost of the scheme and lower the overall value for money. We discounted the option on these grounds.

### Option 3

This option was the least popular option at consultation, and it had the greatest impact on areas of ancient woodland and the South Downs National Park. We discounted it on these grounds.



# Our approach to developing road schemes

We recognise that there is an understandable level of concern about how road schemes, like this one, impact on the environment. We specifically appreciate that residents, communities and other important stakeholders are worried about the impact that the A27 Arundel Bypass scheme will have on the local area, particularly the South Downs National Park and ancient woodland. We are committed to ensuring that the adverse impacts of this scheme are reduced where possible.

We intend to develop innovative and meaningful environmental enhancements to be delivered as part of the scheme, and will continue to work closely with the South Downs National Park Authority, Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency, to integrate the route as far as possible into the area's distinctive landscape.

Similarly, we would like to work in conjunction with other key stakeholders including, but not limited to, local highway and planning authorities, community and residents' groups, and environmental bodies, to develop the full mitigation strategy as the scheme develops over time. An independent design review panel, consisting of representatives from different sector interests, will also provide advice as the scheme progresses.

We've included examples on pages 15, 16 and 17 as to how we've managed to achieve a balance on other notable road schemes. We have also outlined next some of the things we would intend to do to help mitigate for this scheme:

- The modifications to the route outlined on page 11 have reduced the extent of ancient woodland affected by the scheme.
- Using our experience of translocating ancient woodland habitats as part of other schemes, we intend to translocate soils and stools from ancient woodland within the Binsted Woods Complex Local Wildlife Site to help re-establish woodland that will be lost as the scheme is delivered. Sites for the translocation will be identified as part of the mitigation strategy for the scheme.
- We will take steps to address wildlife habitat loss, including some irreplaceable habitats, resulting from the scheme's construction, including creating new woodland, wetland and grassland habitats. The scheme design will also mitigate impacts on protected bat species by providing alternative roosting locations and foraging habitats.
- We will investigate measures to ensure that animals are able to cross the route, including introducing bespoke wildlife crossing structures or underpasses, where necessary.

- We continue to assess, and will aim to deliver, the most effective means of reducing flood risk, including improvement works to the tidal flood defences or the introduction of wetland habitats behind new tidal flood defences.

More specific detail on the mitigation strategy will be provided as the scheme design develops, with the opportunity to comment on the proposed elements given during the statutory consultation (see page 18 for more information on next steps).

## Case study: A14 Cambridge-Huntingdon upgrade

We began a £1.5 billion upgrade of the A14 between Cambridge and Huntingdon in 2016, as part of a plan to relieve congestion, unlock economic growth and better connect communities. The work, which involves building a major new bypass, widening sections of the A14 and A1 and demolishing the A14 viaduct, is currently the largest road project in the UK.

We've worked closely with environmental experts and ecologists throughout the development of the scheme. As well as planning and creating new habitats and protecting wildlife during construction, the A14 ecology team also surveyed the site for protected flora and has planned the tree replanting scheme once construction has been completed.

When the project is complete, 271 hectares of new, connected habitat for wildlife (equivalent to 269 rugby pitches) will have been created, and twice as many trees will have been replanted as were felled before the start of the scheme.

In recognition of the A14 team's efforts, the scheme was short-listed for the BBC Countryfile Magazine Awards, in the Conservation of the Year category. Here's what they said about it:

**'The Highways England Mitigation Project':** *Hardly the catchiest of titles, but a deserving nominee nonetheless. The biggest road project currently in construction in the UK is the A14 upgrade between Cambridge and Huntingdon, which will extend for 21 miles through farmland, taking out mature trees and hedgerows. Highways England's ecology team have designed a scheme to ensure the area is more biodiverse than before the works, including replanting every tree felled with two more, creating 271 hectares of connected habitat for wildlife and relocating affected species such as water voles.*

Judge Sheena Harvey says: *"It's a project that should lead the way in how to mitigate that damage done by infrastructure works – this is an example that needs to be out there for people to follow."*





## Case study: Cossington Fields

The A2/M2 scheme which was opened for traffic in 2000, sought to widen the road between Cobham and junction 4. The scheme resulted in the unavoidable loss of a number of narrow strips of ancient woodland.

To compensate for the loss, 2 areas of new woodland were created: one through the planting of native species on land next to Great Crabbles Wood, a site of special scientific interest, and another through a combination of planting and translocation of ancient woodland topsoil and Hazel coppice, at Cossington Fields (adjacent to Frith, Malling and Tunbury Woods).

The aim of soil translocation was to speed up habitat development by translocating ground flora species and ground dwelling invertebrates. From 2000-2009, detailed monitoring of the 2 sites was undertaken to determine the success of the mitigation, and to compare the 2 methods of habitat creation.

Botanical monitoring at Cossington Fields has demonstrated the successful translocation of ancient woodland topsoil, at least in the short to medium term (10 years). The ground flora is continuing to develop, with a range of woodland species established and thriving, including a number of ancient woodland indicator species.

*Pictures taken mid April 2018*



## Case study: A556 Knutsford

Construction of the new A556 link road between the M56 and the M6 in the north of England, which began in November 2014 and finished in March 2017, provides a good example of the approach. We took to the design and build of new road in an environmentally-sensitive area. We were determined to incorporate a large proportion of biodiversity mitigation and enhancements into this scheme, partly to meet legal obligations but mainly to meet our commitment to working as sustainably as possible.

The work, which included a variety of mitigation and improvement measures included the installation of:

- Replacement bat roosts – boxes already being populated by the flying mammals and 6 innovative bat 'hop-overs' being constructed using vegetation and fencing to guide bats safely over the road where it has crossed existing flight lines.
- A network of 21 ponds to provide new habitats for the area's population of great crested newts and aimed at boosting the local population as well as providing watering for small mammals such as water shrews.
- 3 new barn owl boxes which will be managed by a local conservation group to help expand owl habitats in the area.
- Mammal tunnels under the new road to provide safe crossings for badgers, hedgehogs, voles and also amphibian species like newts and frogs.
- An innovative 'green bridge' across the dual carriageway providing a route for bats, badgers and other animals with badgers in particular expected to use the bridge to interact with other outlier setts and reach foraging grounds.
- Landscape planting including new native woodlands and species-rich grassland to enhance existing habitats – with nesting and foraging birds among those benefiting.

The work has been heralded a success, and notably the work to recreate a badger sett was highly commended in the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation (CIHT) awards in 2015. The scheme also won a Green Apple Award in November 2016.



# What happens next?

We have now finished the options identification and selection part of the scheme and have made the preferred route announcement. We will now do some further work to look more closely at the local area, completing our surveys and investigations to help us design the scheme in greater detail.

There will be a further period of consultation next year, when we ask you for your views on this more detailed design before we submit our application for a Development Consent Order.

We will work with the local authorities to shape this consultation, to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to have their say.

## Development Consent Order application

This scheme is classed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project under the Planning Act 2008. This means we are required to make an application for a Development Consent Order so we can obtain permission to construct the scheme. We will make the application to the Planning Inspectorate who will examine the application in public hearings and then make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Transport who will decide on whether or not the project will go ahead.

Find out more about the Development

Consent Order process on the

Planning Inspectorate's website:

<http://infrastructure.planningportal.gov.uk>

## Further information

For more information about the scheme, please visit our website, where you can also sign up to receive email alerts whenever it is updated: <https://highwaysengland.co.uk/projects/a27-arundel-improvement/>

The following documents are also available to read and download from the project website:

- Public Consultation Report
- Scheme Assessment Report



These documents, along with copies of this preferred route announcement brochure, will also be available to view for a period of 12 weeks, at the following locations:

- **Arundel Town Hall**, Maltravers Street, Arundel, BN18 9AP
- **Arundel Library**, 2 Surrey Wharf, Arundel, BN18 9DW
- **Angmering Library**, Arundel Road, Angmering, Littlehampton, BN16 4US
- **Bognor Regis Library**, 69 London Road, Bognor Regis, PO21 1DE
- **East Preston Library**, The Street, East Preston, Littlehampton, BN16 1JJ
- **Littlehampton Library**, Maltravers Road, Littlehampton, BN17 5NA
- **Rustington Library**, Claignar Road, Rustington, Littlehampton, BN16 2NL

Copies of this preferred route announcement brochure are also available from West Sussex County Council's mobile library service.

Alternatively, if you require further copies of any of the documents, you can contact the A27 Arundel Project Team using the contact details below. Please note that due to the size of the Public Consultation Report and Scheme Assessment Report, a charge may be applied to cover printing and delivery costs, for anyone who requires a hard copy of them.



In writing:

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## Stages of scheme development



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