

Arundel residents say a new bypass is a dead end

Proposals to build a new bypass to Arundel show outdated thinking on transport planning say residents of Arundel.

Department for Transport proposals to look at possible bypass options and the rushed nature of their feasibility study has brought residents together to demand a more up to date look at local transport options.

Rita Godfrey of Arundel SCATE said:

“There has been no debate on traffic issues around Arundel for years, just a continuing push by local authorities and business for a new bypass. But nowadays, it doesn't take a transport planner to know that more road space mean more traffic to fill it. It generates more local congestion at journey start and end points and creates more parking demand.”

She continued: “Council members seem to be locked into old-school thinking on transport. In the meantime, opportunities for more affordable and practical options that could improve access, have been ignored.”

Dr Peter Smith pointed out that a major government study in 2002 indicated that more road capacity at Arundel will cause more congestion in Worthing and Chichester and quoted the Department for Transport's assessment that the report showed there was “little justification for a long distance strategic south coast route”. The evidence was that congestion is mainly caused by local traffic, largely commuters, travelling short distances. He added that school run is an issue too. “There are other things that can be done to reduce these sorts of traffic.”

Arundel business owner, Sue White said: “Building a massive trunk road across the Arun Valley and through the woods would be devastating to our wildlife and landscape and the alternative route of expanding the existing route would devastate the town. It's a high cost, destructive method of addressing localised traffic congestion at limited peak times.”

The new group has a number of alternative proposals to help tackle local congestion including:

Remodel A27 junctions - looking at Highways Agency proposals to Crossbush, the station and the Ford roundabout, ensuring they smooth traffic flow without increasing road capacity.

Provide off-road walkway and cycle access to Ford station. Long called for, but without funds, it would open up rail services on the south coast line particularly for commuters and students. A short hop bus service would make this available to less mobile people and further rail services could be accessed if the bus service extended along Ford Road to Littlehampton station.

A foot/cycle bridge – spanning the A27 and adjoining A284 at Hospital Hill for a direct safe link for many users, but particularly schoolchildren to walk or ride to school.

Cycling and walking infrastructure across town. Currently very poor, this has great potential for residents and the visitor economy, reducing reliance on cars, but has no budget. Some residents drive across town although it is only a 10-15 minute walk.

South coast rail and bus service improvements – Rail upgrades would facilitate faster links to Brighton, with resources to support improved timetabling and a fast bus south coast service for commuter services and south coast accessibility.

'Soft' schemes like travel planning for schools and businesses and promotion of public transport, walking and cycling in the visitor economy will help to reduce car use, but this is currently not taken seriously by authorities.

Kay Wagland pointed out:

“Just providing an opportunity for a commuter to avoid using their car one day a week and getting two parents in ten to share the journey to school, will cut congestion by 20%. Resources should be made available for real targeted travel planning.”

She continued: “There is a big health element here too. Walking or cycling some of these relatively short distances has always been an important part of daily exercise for adults and, especially, school children, but so often we're missing this now. What message are we sending the next generation if we sacrifice our countryside, wildlife and health to expand a means of transport we know is short term, expensive and simply creates further problems?”

ENDS

Notes:

Department for Transport is undertaking a south coast corridor road feasibility study with a view to implementing a road-building programme, including a new Arundel bypass. It is ignoring non-road options. Little public consultation has been undertaken so far and study ends July.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/305033/a27-feasibility-study-scope.pdf

Highways Agency has proposals for junction improvements around Arundel in their Route based Strategies, but these are on hold pending the outcome of the DfT proposals.

The government commissioned 2002 South Coast Multi-Modal Study (SoCOMMS) by Halcrow showed that the source of congestion was short-hop (5-15 miles) commuter and other local traffic, rather than freight or business traffic. Increased road capacity at Arundel will generate more local traffic movements at journey start and end points, causing congestion in Worthing and Chichester town centres and surrounding villages.