

A27 East of Lewes

Background information:

In the government's budget of 2015, £75 million was set aside for 'on line' improvements to the A27 East of Lewes and it was included in the government's 2015 – 2020 Road Investment Strategy. In 2017 Highways England consulted on a number of route options and improvements. In 2017 a preferred route was announced. See: <https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/he/a27-east-of-lewes/> These improvements include:

Improve safety, journey time and reliability with works at: Polegate, Drusillas Roundabout, Wilmington and Gainsborough Lane junctions. Better facilities for walking, cycling and other non-car travel and better access to the National Park.

These improvements were generally supported by all the parishes and the public. The target date for the works is 2020, but no further announcements have been made since 2017.

Whilst the improvements to the existing A 27 were being developed a group of MPs and others meeting in secret were developing alternative plans. These alternative plans are being drawn up by an organisation called the A27 Reference Group. Meetings of this group are held in private and no minutes are published publicly. However, we do get an insight into what this group have been working on from an update given on the 13th Feb 2017 by Maria Caulfield MP for Lewes, to Selmeston Parish Council where she said "As your local MP and Chair of the A27 Reference Group, I wanted to update you on further developments concerning the A27 consultation. As you may be aware, proposals to improve the safety of junctions along the stretch of the A27 from Lewes to Polegate were presented at a number of public meetings before Christmas. This stretch of road has been an accident blackspot for many years. While the outcome of these consultations has resulted in proposals that will improve safety and reduce congestion, they are only a short term fix. This is why the A27 Reference Group – which is made up of MP's, Council Chief Executives and County, District and Borough Council Leaders from across the County of East Sussex – are looking to put in a bid for £400 million in order to dual the road, allowing the current road to become a local access road and providing the long term solution that is needed. This will be going into central government shortly."

What may be a direct result from the decisions of the A27 Reference Group was the development of an alternative scheme by Highways England. They held a 'stakeholder' meeting in January 2018, at which there were discussions about a new road being constructed from Beddingham to Polegate. Attendance at this meeting was severely limited, and none of the parishes in the area were invited. There was a second and final stakeholder meeting held on 3 May 2018, at which some of us who have concerns about the route, were able to attend. This second meeting revealed three broad options for a new A27 road. Despite a number of us raising concerns at the meeting, Highways England advised us that they would be finalising their proposals for a new route during the summer of 2018. These proposals would then go to the Department for Transport (with a view to

including them in the new road schemes as part of phase 2 of the government's Road Investment Strategy.

In advance of the outcome of the second stakeholder meeting the [local MP Maria Caulfield was quoted in the Sussex Express on the 2nd of May 2018](#) as saying a bid has been announced for a £450 million government-funded scheme to dual the A27. The newspaper reported that the 'business case', is to be presented to Government ministers by the A27 Reference Group, which is looking to gain the multi-million investment for a dual carriageway between Lewes and Polegate.