

19 December 2019

Prime Minister's Office  
10 Downing Street  
London SWA 2AA

Committee on Climate Change  
151 Buckingham Palace Road  
Victoria, London SW1W 9SZ

Department for Transport  
Great Minster House  
33 Horseferry Road  
Westminster, London SW1P 4DR

Dear Prime Minister Johnson, Secretary of State for Transport Shapps, Under Secretary of State for Transport Baroness Vere, and Chairman Lord Deben of the Committee on Climate Change,

We who live in and around the village of Binsted, West Sussex, wish to advise you of the following urgent concerns we have about the nationally important environment in which we live, and which we strive to protect.

1. In the 2019 'A27 Arundel Bypass Further Public Consultation' put forward by Highways England, the West Sussex County Council, the Arun District Council, and the Arundel Town Council voted to support the Magenta route, which destroys our villages of Binsted and Tortington. Binsted is part of a much larger area which the dual carriageway bypass would severely damage. This area has been acknowledged by others as too important to have a new dual carriageway through it. For instance, Natural England's response to the 2019 consultation included this statement:

'We will reiterate our advice that this area is extraordinary, necessitating a bespoke approach to assessment across the suite of priority and irreplaceable habitats and the associated array of species that this nationally important environment contains.'

2. Our greatest urgencies are to save Binsted from the Magenta option, and also other areas that would be severely impacted by any of the six dual carriageway options proposed – **before** this country's heritage and natural resources are further destroyed. But as well as wishing to save countryside, historic villages, homes, businesses and protect the South Downs National Park, we see the fight against Magenta as part of the fight against climate change.

3. The Conservative Party manifesto included this:

‘We will lead the global fight against climate change by delivering on our world-leading target of Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, as advised by the independent Committee on Climate Change.’

The Conservative pledge of £4.2bn for public transport is a start, but the commitment to spend £28bn on new roads must be reduced if the government is to fulfil its ambition on greenhouse gas emissions. This kind of very damaging dual carriageway scheme should be the first to go.

4. A dual carriageway is more than is required to solve the immediate and future problems associated with traffic in this area. In addition to the scheme ‘using a sledgehammer to crack a nut,’ as some have said, it is destructive to villages and countryside, which is not acceptable given the environment and climate emergency, and the government’s commitment to reducing carbon emissions and recovering habitat.

5. A local group in Arundel – Arundel SCATE (South Coast Alliance on Transport and the Environment) – has put forward the Arundel Alternative ([www.arundelalternative.org/](http://www.arundelalternative.org/)), a shorter length of 40 mph single carriageway, bypassing the main causes of poor traffic flow, as a solution that would relieve traffic delays in and around Arundel without destroying its unique countryside. This is less destructive and more in keeping with the size of the problem and the ‘nationally important environment’ of the area.

6. Highways England refused to include the Arundel Alternative in its 2019 consultation on the scheme, though many, many people asked them to do so. One of our residents was informed by Peter Phillips, Highways England South Coast Central route sponsor, that when a budget has been awarded, HE will always aim to design and choose an option which spends that budget as fully as possible. It would seem this is because they prefer to get a larger, more lucrative project for Highways England and its contractors rather than find a right-sized solution to the traffic problem. This is neither good business practice nor a responsible value for money approach, and leads inevitably to more damaging schemes being chosen.

7. Their stated reason for refusing to include the Arundel Alternative was that it would not have the ‘capacity’ required for their predicted increase of traffic. This conclusion is disputed by the route’s proponents. But more importantly, **Highways England should not be planning for an increase in traffic.** The old ‘predict and provide’ model is no longer relevant since the need now is to reduce traffic because of our climate emergency. New roads increase traffic and carbon emissions, and lead to more congestion problems in the not too distant future.

8. If the government is serious about its commitment to finding ways to work on the climate emergency, one of the first issues to address is how to handle transport in this country, which includes all forms of transport and reducing traffic on roads. A model for this has already been developed by the South Coast Alliance for Transport and the Environment (SCATE): <https://scate.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/A-New-Direction-briefing-lo-res.pdf>.

#### Conclusion

Surely the time for deeper consideration of how the climate emergency plays out in regions of this country is NOW. We ask that you put in motion a) the cancellation of this very destructive project as a first step in fulfilling this government's commitment on climate change, b) a fundamental review of the role of Highways England, and c) a fresh consideration of the Arundel Alternative.

Yours sincerely,

Maggie Moore and Professor Christopher Alexander, with 37 residents from the Binsted area

cc Andrew Griffith, MP

Jim O'Sullivan, Highways England CEO

Peter Phillips, Highways England South Coast Central Route Sponsor

Jason Hones, Highways England A27 Arundel Bypass Programme Leader

Sophie Hartfield, Highways England A27 Arundel Bypass Project Manager

Becky Shaw, CEO of East and West Sussex Councils

West Sussex County Council

Arun District Council

Arundel Town Council