

Response by the A27 Working Group for Worthing and Adur

Preliminary points:

The A27 problems affect residents, online and offline, together with travellers and the local and regional economy.

Doing little and doing nothing does not meet local interests and fails to help the wider economy.

Highways England, HE, have to show they have considered together the use and impact of the A27 on local communities from Chichester to Shoreham. Traffic modelling would give a proper idea of how much traffic would come to use a more resilient route.

HE have to put forward sensible effective options that meet local interests and allow through traffic to avoid delay and to reduce disturbance to local people.

HE and Ministers are asked to explain clearly their analysis of the issues that determine if an by-pass could be possible.

HE should prepare realistic options, including grade separations and a reduction, not an increase in traffic-light controlled junctions.

Proposals should recognise the suppressed A27 traffic that presently diverts to lengthy, risky, environmentally damaging journeys using the A259, the A280 Long Furlong/A283, the A272 and even the M25.

The A27 Working Group (WG) for Worthing and Adur represents all political parties in the area, residents associations/societies, schools and colleges, business, Members of Parliament. West Sussex County Council, Worthing Borough Council and Adur District Council. The group has been briefed by many experts including a local traffic consultant. The group has had regular meetings for nearly three years and has studied in depth the information issued by Highways England (HE).

The WG believes that the option put forward by HE is not fit for purpose and will not address the long standing problems associated with this stretch of the A27. The WG see no evidence that the proposed work would significantly alleviate any of the problems at the main pinch points, indeed the inclusion of yet another set of traffic lights at Durrington Hill is likely to cause even more congestion/pollution where the A27 is normally congestion free but risking extra Bost Hill rat-running.. HE have stated that the pollution levels will not significantly improve long term.

The WG believe that HE need to take a more holistic approach to the A27. For instance the full extent of the proposed improvement works between Lancing and Worthing must be promoted and delivered directly by HE with contributions drawn from landowners and developers connected with the new residential, retail and industrial developments along this corridor. HE's improvement scheme must therefore include the very highly congested stretch of the A27, between the Manor Roundabout and the Sussex Pad, that is currently being promoted by the new Monks Farm and Airport developers, fully understanding the requirements of existing residents, educational establishments and businesses. The wider strategy for the A27 must tie everything together. Currently the Sussex Pad traffic lights cause disproportionate delays; in the mornings the queues eastbound often extend back to Worthing.

The WG believe that HE have not produced robust or comprehensive evidence to justify their proposals. HE have not taken into account the present traffic flows surrounding, as opposed to just on, the A27. The approach has also been insufficiently joined up across West Sussex

The WG believe that HE have not produced robust or comprehensive evidence to justify their proposals. HE have not taken into account the present traffic flows surrounding, as opposed to just on, the A27. The approach has also been insufficiently joined up across West Sussex as a whole.

Worthing and Adur's Problems.

Lengthy studies and observations of all the junctions in Worthing and Lancing have been made, and we can now identify how all these junctions perform.

One of the most notorious is the **Grove Lodge** roundabout in Worthing. It is a roundabout which had traffic lights fitted in 2006 and since then, from the very first day the lights were put in, it has made the junction one of the most severely - and needlessly - congested junctions in the whole of the Sussex. It is generally the first queue to appear in the whole county each morning.

Observations show that the traffic lights at this junction can cause delays during up to **11 hours** a day during the period 7 am to 6 pm.

It has been possible to compare and record how this junction performs with and without traffic lights. Occasionally the lights at the junction fail and traffic flows very much better, when it is allowed to operate as a conventional roundabout.

In 2016 we had a 6 week period in August and half of September, including in term time when the lights were out at this junction. Traffic flowed very much better and much of the congestion vanished. This is confirmed by many Worthing residents on social media. It should be noted that the final week of the lights out period was during school term time.

Durrington Hill / Salvington Hill

This junction never causes delays for the A27. Why make traffic stop here? This is the only section of westbound the A27 which never queues. This will end once the lights are put in place. If the eastbound A27 is currently congested here it is only because of blockages further along the road. The WG believe this will also increase undesirable rat running from Bost Hill.

Offington Corner, the A24/A27 roundabout

The main source of congestion here is traffic blocking the roundabout. The roundabout is blocked because of congestion associated with Grove Lodge and Lyons Farm where eastbound traffic can't get away. Introducing traffic lights here will not solve the problem. If the Grove Lodge lights are not removed (which HE has not yet proposed) then all that will happen is that this intersection will also get congested. It will not solve anything, and if compared to a similar local traffic light controlled intersection (Hill Barn) this particular junction can cause disproportionate congestion by itself. Now, when traffic is light, vehicles on all approaches to Offington Corner can simultaneously continue with little or no delay without having to stop. If lights are put in, this can never happen again. The solution for pedestrians worsens access. Currently at the end of the Findon - Worthing cycle path, cyclists and pedestrians only need to make two crossings, not the six under the new plans.

Grove Lodge

This is the ONE EASY junction to sort out. It is baffling, disappointing and ludicrous that HE have completely missed the point of why this junction is so dreadful, and have not planned to remove the traffic lights. It has been proven many times that having traffic lights on a roundabout is the worst situation for traffic flow.

The construction of a pedestrian footbridge or underpass must be considered at this junction.

The Highways Agency (as it was then) spent £600,000 introducing traffic lights on a

The construction of a pedestrian footbridge or underpass must be considered at this junction. The Highways Agency (as it was then) spent £600,000 introducing traffic lights on a roundabout in Polegate - the Cop Hall roundabout on the A27/A22 which is similar to our Grove Lodge roundabout. These lights were removed after a year and their MP (back then) Nigel Waterson said: "The whole thing has been a waste of money. The traffic was flowing perfectly well before they put in traffic lights and as soon as they did it seized up." This is exactly what happened to Worthing.

The WG is concerned that the only remedy proposed for the Grove Lodge roundabout congestion is to widen a very short stretch within the roundabout from one to two lanes. These lanes will then need to converge into one lane as they enter Upper Brighton Road. It is hard to see where any benefit might be.

Lyons Farm

Of the six junctions HE have been looking at, this junction can cause the most severe delays at peak times. Grove Lodge wins the endurance test for holdups (typically 11 hours a day, all through the day). Lyons Farm (and Sussex Pad – but you have not considered this) can cause the longest queues at peak times. The WG has studied the proposals carefully and cannot see how it will make any meaningful difference. Double sets of lights make it even harder to get through "on green". Traffic approaching this junction eastbound is usually queued all the way back to High Salvington, which blocks Offington Corner, and the bottom end of Findon Road (A24) and Crockhurst Hill (A27). Also, how does all the traffic currently turning from the eastbound A27 on the Sompting Road get there if this option goes ahead?

Our concern is that traffic turning right to access the industrial and residential areas of Broadwater will be forced to use narrow residential roads such as Morland Avenue or Downlands Avenue. Sompting Road is currently serving as a distributor route in East Worthing, and should continue to do so.

The way to make improvement here is to allow the A27 traffic to pass through without having to stop, by means of an under or over pass. Some residents' associations are worried that traffic, diverted during construction of an underpass/flyover, will cause chaos on local and residential roads, and that this will continue for years.

Hill Barn

Your proposal here is to simply make one junction into two. How does having a double set of traffic lights improve congestion? Twin light junctions Sussex Pad and Lyons Farm do not score well and are consistently the cause of far more congestion than Hill Barn ever has now.

Under the proposals there will be a delay for traffic heading northbound on Busticle Lane, to get to North Lancing (or vice versa). Currently they are able to cross over the A27 in one sequence, and this will no longer be possible. They would be forced to turn on to, and queue to get off the A27. This could encourage traffic to reroute on to residential roads such as West Street in Sompting.

If the dual carriageway section between Lyons Farm and Hill Barn was reduced to 40mph it would make it safer for pedestrians to cross unless a over or under bridge were provided.

It is important for traffic to be able to reverse direction at either end of the Sompting bypass, especially for traffic that lives off the side roads from this dual carriageway, such as Lambleys Lane, Church Lane and Dankton Lane.

Manor Roundabout

Why does HE think introducing two sets of traffic lights here will improve congestion and pollution?. Currently, off peak, this junction flows pretty well on approaches. At peak times there can be delays, particularly the westbound approach of the

Why does HE think introducing two sets of traffic lights here will improve congestion and pollution?. Currently, off peak, this junction flows pretty well on approaches. At peak times there can be delays, particularly the westbound approach of the A27 and northbound on Grinstead Lane. But putting it in to perspective, the "roundabout only" delays are always less than the comparable twin traffic light controlled junctions. The nearby Sussex Pad traffic lights cause eastbound delays of up to 40 minutes, despite the fact that the side roads are minor.

Furthermore currently traffic is able to make a U turn at the Manor roundabout. Under the new scheme there is no scope to be able to do this. This is required in order for cars approaching from the Brighton direction to access the houses just to the east of the Manor Roundabout as well as Hoe Court and Lancing College Equestrian Centre.

Case study in delays and the costs to businesses caused by the traffic lights at the Grove Lodge roundabout

At the meeting and presentation by Highways England on October 28th 2016, much was made of the "Cost Benefit Analysis" of the A27 improvements. No mention was made of the cost of all the current delays caused by the junctions in Worthing, notably the Grove Lodge roundabout. There is evidence that the roundabout performs very much better with the lights off. A subway or footbridge for the nearby college and local residents has been cited as "too expensive".

But what about the cost to our businesses and residents? In order to calculate a provable sum, we need some data. Traffic flow data is recorded by the Department of Transport, at key "Count points" around the country.

We have taken the Grove Lodge junction as a case study - We have proven that the traffic lights typically increase the journey time by 3 to 4 times. This is backed up with traffic satellite data and video recordings which we have observed and created. In 2015, the average daily vehicle flow rate for the A27 on either side of the Grove Lodge roundabout was around 33,000

The other junctions that repeatedly cause delays are the Lyons Farm traffic lights and the Shoreham Airport / Sussex Pad junction.

Whereas Grove Lodge might cause delays for the longest amount of time, Lyons Farm and Sussex Pad can cause the most severe delays at peak times. Sometimes journey times going eastbound in the mornings can exceed an hour to get past Shoreham Airport.

The junctions cause delays. Traffic can manage itself to a certain extent, but introducing traffic lights will make traffic stop whether it needs to or not, 24 hours a day. Double sets of traffic lights (Lyons farm and Sussex pad) are worse still, and roundabouts with traffic lights are a dreadful cause of congestion too.

Journey times caused by the traffic lights can be up to 40 or even 50 minutes at their peak. To give a "figure" for a cost to businesses we have to obtain an hourly costing from various organisations.

The Freight Transport Association were able to supply vehicle running costs for commercial vehicles ranging from 7.5 tonne rigids to 44 tonne artics. Light Goods vehicles (up to 3.5t) are rated at the lowest.

For cars, we can presume that some of the passengers are also working: Taking an assumption that 10% of the cars drivers are also working, and that they are earning the minimum wage (£6.70 an hour using 2016 data) 7 days a week we can put those figures in. For buses we have assumed a running cost of £0.50 a minute.

So - for a ten minute delay the cost of waiting at the lights is calculated as follows:

Total = **£39,114** per day for commercial vehicles.

Per (6 day) week for commercial and (full 7 day) week for passenger = **£237,560**

But the impact of £1 billion

Per (6 day) week for commercial and (full 7 day) week for passenger = £237,560

Per month = just under £1 million

Per year = £11.9 million.

The Grove Lodge traffic lights were installed in **2006**, so it is a fair assumption that the cost to businesses alone has been **£125 million pounds** since they were put in. We are also being extraordinarily generous and conservative with the data, we suspect the true figure is way, way higher.

So we can **prove** that the traffic lights at the Grove Lodge place a financial burden on all drivers.

This case study covers only one junction and could be replicated on all other junctions.

Our conclusions

Overall, we are very disappointed with the HE offering. Studies show that the only way of improving traffic flow is to remove junctions, and allow traffic to keep moving. Roundabouts at the very least, but ideally underpasses or bridges with slip lanes. You have not done this and instead are adding five extra sets of lights.

We were informed that the traffic modelling to reach the HE proposals is based on the same speed sensor data that was used by our consultant (i.e. mobile phone derived tracking). How come the conclusions are so wildly different? We ask to consider together the conflicting solutions?

HE report also states that "journey times will improve by 3 minutes at peak times by 2041" IS THAT ALL? It is possible to save at least 5 minutes - maybe as much as 10, 15 sometimes 20 minutes at all times of the day simply by taking away the traffic lights at Grove Lodge.

During the morning rush it typically takes 45 minutes to an hour to get from Worthing to Shoreham/Sussex Pad. This is why so many vehicles drive to Shoreham via the A280/A24 Findon – Washington and the A283 to the Shoreham flyover. With all this potential major disruption you are only anticipating a 3 minute saving? In 24 years' time?

The health issue associated with traffic pollution have not been addressed; HE has stated they will be at the present level within 20 years.

Our Recommendations

1. In the short term, take quick action to reduce delay at Grove Lodge and at Sussex Pad, using local insights and expertise.
2. Bring together experts from our Working Group, the Councils and MPs to agree the way forward,.
3. Highways England needs to answer the questions about developing a road through the Downs and National Park.
4. Develop proposals that would bring significant affordable long term benefits to local interests and to traffic which needs to travel from the Brighton & Hove by-pass to and from Chichester without disturbing our local residents and our local economy.
5. In summary, bring forward a better fuller scheme – while taking simple action now to reduce present problems.

The attached Appendix gives a summary response to the subjects on pages 21 and 22 of the consultation document and adds some things which are missing.

The attached Appendix gives a summary response to the subjects on pages 21 and 22 of the consultation document and adds some things which are missing.