

Tim Loughton M.P.
East Worthing and Shoreham



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Chief Executive of Highways England
Jim O'Sullivan
Highways England
National Traffic Operations Centre
3 Ridgeway
Quinton Business Park
Birmingham, B32 1AF

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April 2018

Dear Jim

A27 Worthing – Lancing

Thank you for meeting us in Parliament to discuss progress with the work to identify possible improvements to the stretch of the A27 that runs through our constituencies, which, as you know, have suffered from worsening congestion over many years.

There are significant renewed calls for a full by-pass option. Whilst this would solve a lot of problems, the reasons for which the inspector ruled out the by-pass option in the 1990s still apply but clearly the traffic congestion has deteriorated significantly over that time. The cost would be substantially higher now given the designation of the National Park makes substantial tunnelling the only acceptable way forward. However there are other tunnelling options, which feature in the latest national Roads Plan, such as Stonehenge, and it would be very useful to have a full breakdown of costings that could now be informed by likely projections for the work being done on Stonehenge and how they stack up on a value for money basis against other national schemes.

We would be grateful if you would give as much information as possible about the likely cost and impact of a bypass and the other variations on this to include the upgrading of Long Furlong and link up around the north of Worthing.

The original single option for junction improvements, which was identified last year, received virtually universal disapproval as contributing little or nothing at all to traffic flow and time taken to travel from one side of Worthing to the other.

You indicated that you would be formally reporting back on your response to that consultation towards the middle of the year. This was originally expected at the beginning of this year.

We have stated repeatedly that the real problem was the amount of funding identified by the Department for Transport, putting impossible constraints on achieving any meaningful solution.

When this 'envelope' of around £60-80m is compared with the £260m estimate of what is likely to be provided at Arundel, many of our constituents understandably question why the busier stretch of the road in Worthing and Adur has been allocated only around a quarter.

www.timloughton.com loughtont@parliament.uk
The East Worthing and Shoreham Constituency includes
Coombes, Fishersgate, Kingston Buci, Lancing, Shoreham, Sompting, Southwick,
and the eastern wards of Worthing: Broadwater, Gaisford, Offington and Selden.

In view of the obvious drawbacks of the formal option put forward last year, your engineers have been working to identify other more substantial solutions, which might significantly improve traffic flow and therefore reduced delays and better journey times. This includes 'grade separation' designs at the problematic junctions, including both underpasses and bridges. If only 'online' options are being researched, inevitably improvements to journey times are much harder to achieve than building a new road as with Arundel, and we understand that is why value for money thresholds have been harder to achieve.

We look forward to hearing what 'hybrid' options you have researched and how they measure up against other national schemes on a value for money and effectiveness basis. You indicated that you would be making a further public statement as well about this by the summer.

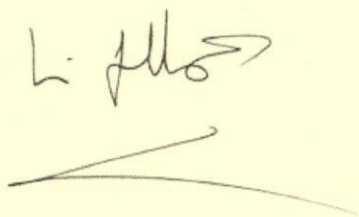
It is vital that as much information as possible is made available to our constituents and that the 'bigger picture' is taken into account which reflects the following:

- A full account of the considerable additional development proposed along the line of, or close to, the A27, including New Monks Farm at Lancing and West Sompting
- Very high levels of air pollution already recorded on the A27 in residential areas and near New Monks Farm where a new school is included in the plans.
- The impact of removing the traffic lights at Grove Lodge, which have been problematic since they were first installed, and where analysis by traffic expert Stephen Cranford for the A27 Working Group has shown considerable detriment to traffic flow, journey times and air pollution, all of which improve significantly when the lights are not functioning.
- The serious threat to the viability of new developments if meaningful infrastructure improvements cannot be achieved and the economic impact this would have.
- This stretch of the A27 by any assessment is one of the most congested roads in the south-east of England: it is having a serious effect on the economies of our villages and our town and on the quality of life of our constituents.

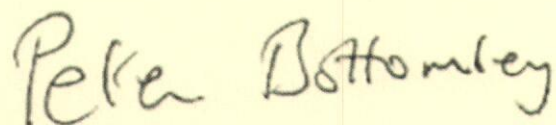
We are grateful for the serious consideration that you are giving to solving this problem, which has been allowed to deteriorate over several decades.

It is essential that as much information as possible is made available to our constituents so that a proper assessment can be made of exactly the scale of the challenges faced and how problematic and/or costly coming up with an appropriate solution actually is.

Yours sincerely



Tim Loughton MP



Sir Peter Bottomley MP