



A27 Consultation Meeting - 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2018 - 7pm St Nicholas Lavant

Present: Lavant Parish Council  
The Clerk

179 members of the public

The meeting was opened by the Chairman of Lavant Parish Council, Ian Hutton. He said that this meeting had been organised by Lavant Parish Council as part of its preparation on how LPC should respond to the WSCC A27 consultation. The views collected this evening would form the basis of the response to WSCC.

He introduced Cllr James Pickford who would run the remainder of the meeting.

Cllr Pickford asked if there any representatives of CDC, WSCC or the press. Cllr Jeremy Hunt WSCC was present and Cllr Mike Hall CDC came in at 7.20pm. Cllr Pickford advised that LPC had requested a WSCC representative from BABA27 to attend but no one was available.

Cllr Pickford said that the meeting would be divided into two parts: the first part would be the Consultation on the A27 proposals; the second would be time for those present to ask their questions. Through the questions asked it would give the Council a clear indication of the most important issues.

1. The A27 consultation is available on line - [\(https://haveyoursay.westsussex.gov.uk/highways-and-transport/build-a-better-a27/\)](https://haveyoursay.westsussex.gov.uk/highways-and-transport/build-a-better-a27/)  
Or in paper copies at libraries or from CDC.
2. Lavant Parish Council will make a submission collating the responses from those present. However, Cllr Pickford emphasized the importance of filling out the online (or paper copy) of the questionnaire where each person could list their own specific comments, as well as contributing to this group exercise.
3. As not everyone was up to speed with what had happened in the last year of the consultation Cllr Pickford gave a short résumé. After the HE A27 consultation on the options for the A27, WSCC wrote to HE to say that none of the options was acceptable. WSCC then created a community forum called Build a Better A27 (BABA27). This group is controlled and led by WSCC and there are no

terms of reference for this group. SYSTRA are consulting engineers contracted by WSCC. The instructions/brief to SYSTRA can be found here: <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/media/10887/baba27-consultancy-brief-final.pdf>

What are SYSTRA's instructions? Clause 6.1 task 6 states:

"Identify recommended solutions through a process of option generation, refinement, multi-criteria appraisal and engagement with the Member Working Group, BABA27 and the relevant authorities."

SYSTRA is now finding its way down to us to give our feedback. What part is WSCC playing? Nick Burrell is the Project Manager and he has requested that all views/comments by stakeholders be presented by 29<sup>th</sup> March. At the end of the process WSCC will give its instruction to SYSTRA.

4. Cllr Pickford asked those present not to fill out the Chichester Observer consultation. Although it has a large readership not everyone buys the paper or has access to it. The results would also be collated by the Observer. The Chichester Observer online version will NOT carry the same weight as filling out the WSCC online/WSCC paper version or Chichester Observer paper versions of the consultation.
5. The group response (tonight) has 3 sets of questions with a selection of proposals. Each set of proposals has already been "sifted" by SYSTRA and they have put them into two groups: "above the line" (those items they consider deliverable and worth pursuing), and "below the line" (those items/suggestions from BABA27 group or consultees which will not receive any further attention and be disregarded). The public will be asked to vote on whether they agree or not with SYSTRA's view on what should be followed up and what shouldn't.

The three groups of questions are:

- Online suggestions - i.e. existing A27 ("above the line" and "below the line" proposals)
- Offline suggestions - north/south routes ("above the line" and "below the line" proposals)
- Modal suggestions - pedestrian, bicycles, public transport etc ("above the line" and "below the line" proposals)

Cllr Pickford asked the residents to look at the papers provided and discuss briefly with the people sitting next to them. He said that he would ask the questions and the residents would indicate whether they agreed with this "sifting" or not. The information in front of them was the information given. There were several people in the room who would be counting the show of hands. He also said that if a resident wanted to write a comment on the paper

and leave it at the desk on the way out, these also would be taken into consideration.

All the proposals would also be shown on the overhead projector.

6. QUESTION 1 – **ONLINE** (existing A27) "above the line" PROPOSALS

- Marginal network gains
- Packages of individual junction improvements on the existing A27 between Fishbourne and Portfield
  - enhanced roundabouts
  - signalised junctions
  - grade separation: flyovers, underpasses
  - turning restrictions
  - junction widening junctions
  - other carriageway widening
- ‘Smart A/B-road’ concept to improve network efficiency

A member of the public asked what a smart A road was. A road which indicates road information on a computer-generated screen.

Another asked why Tunnels had been put "below the line". When Cllr Pickford said they had been considered too expensive, the resident asked how much was available. Cllr Pickford said that we do not know. The resident said that the whole thing was a waste of time if SYSTRA could make decisions about what was too expensive but not indicate how much was available.

(The votes were taken by a show of hands for indicative purposes and counted as accurately as possible in such a crowded forum.)

Cllr Pickford said that now the residents had to confirm or challenge this initial allocation by SYSTRA.

Cllr Pickford asked whether those in the room AGREED with this first Online list proposed by SYSTRA.

Agree: 90

Cllr Pickford asked if SYSTRA should spend more time on SOME of the list?

Agree: 15

Cllr Pickford asked if the residents thought they were all a waste of time?

Agree: 10

QUESTION 2 – ONLINE (existing A27) "below the line" PROPOSALS

Did those present AGREE with SYSTRA that this list was not worth pursuing?

On-line fully tunnelled route for all/most of the current A27 from Fishbourne junction to A259 or Portfield

On-line fully elevated route for all/most of the current A27 from Fishbourne to A259 or Portfield

Agree 53

Some of the suggestions should be reconsidered for going above the line?

Agree 13

The suggestions should all be re-considered?

Agree 2

7. QUESTION 3 – OFFLINE (north/south routes) "above the line" PROPOSALS

- New *local* road to segregate traffic accessing the Manhood Peninsula from 'through' traffic at Fishbourne junction
- New *strategic or multi-purpose* southern route between Fishbourne junction and the A259 Bognor Road
- New *strategic* northern route between A27 west and A27 east near to Tangmere
- New *local* northern route utilising and improving some existing local roads
- New *multi-purpose* northern route between A27 west and A27 Portfield

Cllr Pickford asked "Should there be more time talking about all items on this list?"

Agree 6

Cllr Pickford asked "Should they spend more time on some of the items on this list?"

Agree 45

Cllr Pickford asked "Should NO time be spent on ANY of these items?"

Agree 29

QUESTION 4 – OFFLINE (north/south routes) "below the line" PROPOSALS

'below the line'

New full southern route from A27 W to A27 E via A259

Upgrading of existing minor E-W routes on the Manhood

New local road to the north to A286 from the A27 west

Fully or largely tunnelled route under Chichester

Use of city centre capacity for 'through' traffic

Cllr Pickford asked if SYSTRA were correct in spending NO more time on these items?

Agree 27

Cllr Pickford asked if SYSTRA should spend more time on SOME of these items?

Agree 80

Cllr Pickford asked if SYSTRA should include the whole lot for further consideration?

Agree 5

#### 8. QUESTION 5 MODAL (pedestrian/bicycle etc) "above the line" PROPOSALS

'above the line' - headlines

- Parking – strategy refinements, improved information, park and ride
- Traffic and safety management measures
- Improved pedestrian and cycle crossings of the A27, new or improved cycle lanes
- Travel planning programmes and improved real-time and other transport information
- Land-use and planning focused on public transport corridors and reduced car use
- Improved bus priorities and reliability, delivered through new technology
- HGV and goods vehicle priorities

Cllr Pickford asked if SYSTRA were correct in spending more time on this list?

Agree 81

Cllr Pickford asked if SYSTRA should spend time on SOME of the items?

Agree 57

Cllr Pickford asked if SYSTRA should not spend any more time on this list?

Agree 19

QUESTION 6 MODAL (pedestrian/bicycle etc) "below the line" PROPOSALS

'below the line' – headlines

Road user charging or workplace parking levies

A27 high occupancy or HGV/goods vehicle lanes

Strong 'containment' strategy to planning on the Manhood

Bus subsidies to reduce fares

Bus rapid transit, tramway, light rail and similar schemes

Cllr Pickford asked if SYSTRA were correct in NOT doing any more work on this list?

Agree 66

Cllr Pickford asked if SYSTRA should time on SOME of these items?

Agree 61

Cllr Pickford asked if SYSTRA should spend time on ALL these items?

Agree 10

9. Part two of the meeting – questions from attendees
  - i. Question from resident: At the beginning you asked if the local press were here but not if our MP were here. The Parish Council has been given only two weeks to answer this consultation. What is her role in this process?

Cllr Pickford replied that the Parish Council had been given only two weeks to answer this consultation and that Gillian Keegan would receive the Parish Council comments. If included in RIS2 HE will in due course develop further proposals to upgrade the A27 at Chichester on which we will again be consulted. With all the processes involved the earliest a start could be made would be 2023.

Nick Reynolds: Gillian Keegan attended several of the BABA27 meetings and was asked to research two issues – the budget for the work at Chichester and the likely inclusion of this project in RIS2. GK met with HE and advised that the

budget is unlikely to exceed the top end of the allocation for Chichester which was in the order of £250m million. She was clear in setting that as a consideration and hence the concern that the SYSTRA brief from WSCC does not include that core constraint.

- ii. What is the chance of Chichester getting into RIS2?  
After WSCC have collated their report we understand that they will issue this to HE in June. RIS2 projects are due for announcement in early 2019 but we understand that this is virtually full and includes the over-run projects from RIS1. The National Audit office report March 2017 shows that there is an overrun cost from RIS1 of £0.5bn as well as projects left to complete valued at £8.3bn. HE has made no promises. It is difficult to see that there is any guarantee of Chichester picking up any of the residual budget in RIS2. G Keegan extracted no promise, but HE said they would look at it.
- iii. Damon Evison: BABA27 operates on 10 principles – 5 of which are making decisions based only on evidence. I am surprised that we can answer any of these questions this evening because there is no evidence of any of those suggested routes being of benefit to the A27 at Chichester.

How can we build a better A27 when it is based on opinion and not evidence?  
(This comment was met with applause.)

Cllr Pickford gave some background information. When BABA27 first started March 2017, a facilitator called Ash Pal was engaged. One of the first things he did was to set down a code of conduct that people would adhere to. That has been published and people have signed up to it. Damon has compared these pledges on how to conduct themselves with the information that you have in front of you tonight and you will find a mismatch. The two are not consistent. Damon concurred with this summing up.

Nick Reynolds reminded the meeting that realising the Chichester District Local Plan transport strategy is about WSCC upgrading the existing A27. The new housing which is to be built is dependent on the WSCC Transport Plan 2011-26 being actioned and this relates specifically to the junction upgrades on the existing road. He said that his question was quite simple: is it a problem for CDC if this work is not done in the time frame of these housing numbers coming on line? It seems that there is a total misfit between the requirements of CDC and the aspirations of WSCC.

This was his personal view, but people have spent a lot of time in developing a robust Local Plan and there is huge urgency for more housing in the area. It was interesting that the “new” northern alignment proposed by WSCC / SYSTRA goes through the housing not yet built at Westhampnett (although not verified as there are no drawings).

Another question then is to what extent are these two councils liaising about and talking about how the process is impacting on Chichester as a whole? Initially funding was withdrawn not only because of the community was divided but also because the councils were divided. He could not see that this was leading to any improvement in that situation.

iv. Cllr Mike Hall (CDC) had a map which he said had come from CDC offices. He asked how many had been consulted on a new northern route. It showed a single-track route starting at Fishbourne, north to Lavant, round Raughmere and coming down south of the runway to join Portfield roundabout. However, Cllr Pickford pointed out that HE is responsible for strategic roads, and he didn't think a single-track road was strategic.

v. Andrew Bailey: my question concerns WSCC and its strategy. WSCC strategy is well documented in its Transport Plan 2011 – 2026. It says improvement of the A27 junctions. Why are WSCC looking at offline solutions which are not addressing the junctions?

Cllr Pickford said that it was not possible to answer that question. In the last twelve months there has just been an election of all the officers of the council. That strategy referring to the election was on the website. You could argue that the election was fought on upgrading the A27.

The instruction given to HE 2012/13/14 was as you say – referring to upgrades to junctions on the A27. You can read the minutes and see the attendees at these meetings and what was said, but all of that is not consistent with what we read now.

Nick Reynolds said that agreed policies were important, and that a review of both national and local policies showed that there was not a single policy that does anything other than upgrades to the junctions.

vi. Derek Kingaby – upgrading the junctions will have to include overpasses or underpasses – it won't be just roundabouts – it is the only way. He quoted the example at Southampton.

Cllr Pickford said that the consultation process that we are at is very high level (whatever that means) – not concerned with the elevation of the roads but trying to get ideas for people to look at. However, when detailed questions like that are asked, and you look at the high-level ideas proposed, it is very clear that there is a mismatch between what is being asked and what is going to happen.

Cllr Pickford reminded the meeting that in the online consultation there was a space for residents to put comments such as these. Here, the council was collecting a collective view and the questions asked by the attendees were more important as they reflected the feelings expressed.

Mr Kingaby said that the meeting should express that view – that what is being asked is not viable. Why are we wasting our time looking at all these solutions

which are not going to happen? (and our money?) This was met with considerable applause. He continued that the way this is presented is that a solution above the line is exclusive, but it will have to include some which are below the line (local roads etc). It is a combination of all those things. It was requested to have a show of hands on Mr Kingaby's question:

Nobody here can believe that anything other than improvements to the existing A27 has any chance of succeeding. Forget all other options and say that this meeting accepts that solution. WSCC should concentrate solely on upgrading the online route.

Agree 125

- vii. Alan Taylor said that WSCC should be held accountable for its strategies. What authority do they have to spend hundreds of thousands of pounds which is not supported by any policy? They should be held to account. This was met with applause. Cllr Pickford paraphrased the question thus:  
Do we agree that WSCC should be held accountable for their strategies?

Agree 126

- viii. Wendy Ladds – in the Chichester Observer they have taken a stance and rated the options. Where did that rating come from? Did the newspaper do this?

Cllr Pickford replied that he had kept away from that rating to allow people to think freely in this meeting but in fact SYSTRA have rated their own ideas. You then get this interesting situation where a Northern bypass rates 5 and a southern bypass rates 4.

- ix. Sarah Newman – coming back to the questionnaire and how the suggestions have been evaluated. It only takes into account the ease of traffic. It doesn't take into account any cost, any maps, any human or environmental impact. Is this legal? This was met with applause.
- x. J Bleber – The consultation last time failed because those living on the south said they wanted a northern route and it wasn't clearly stated why they couldn't have it. Can't we have a really clear statement from somebody saying that there is a budget limitation?
- xi. Damon Evison said that a very small percentage of the population was driving this consultation. Of the only 4869 people that responded to the 2016 consultation (only 5.4% of the Chichester district population), 47% chose "NO OPTION" as preferred option. 85% of the "NO OPTION" votes cited a northern bypass. This is only 21.5% of all the respondents. But in the brief to SYSTRA they have implied that 56% of population asked for a northern route.

Cllr Pickford said that if you listen to HE and to Gillian Keegan it is not in line with what we are being fed by the BABA27 group. So, there is no guarantee that this process will lead anywhere. There is hope that it might lead somewhere but this is different to the reality we are being fed by the external people to the WSCC.

- xii. Michael Tucker said that all the comments in the room were as particular, as detailed, as intelligent and informed as the SYSTRA consultation was abstract, obfuscatory and clearly politically motivated. It is time this whole process was cleansed and put back on track. WSCC should account for their previous promises. When is it possible for people who believe in the democratic process to frame a cogent, rational proposal to say that people have to be held to account.

The leader of WSCC, Louise Goldsmith had derailed this whole process and barred the MP of the time from attending a meeting and it was that which dumped us in the situation we are in now. When would she and WSCC be held to account? Could not the meeting possibly consider a polite and rational motion of censure and dereliction of duty in this regard? Promises and statements have been made and money spent. This was met with huge applause.

Cllr Pickford asked if the assembly present would agree this motion.

Agree 151

Abstentions 10

- xiii. Sarah Newman pointed out that this online consultation can be answered as many times as you like which means that it is wasting everybody's time.
- xiv. A resident replied: If what Sarah says is true I suggest that we vote as many times as we like, and everyone else will vote as many times as they like. I'm sorry but everybody here is completely wasting their time, and why are WSCC wasting our time like this? They have not set up a system of gathering information in a safe and proper way. This is another dereliction of duty.

This was met with applause.

#### Summing up by Cllr Pickford

Cllr Pickford said that through this meeting the council had a feeling of what people's thoughts were. He said that all these comments would be taken into consideration

Lavant Parish Council was the first council to issue a statement against a Northern route before the first consultation and again on 3<sup>rd</sup> Sept 2017.

When the 2016 HE consultation was issued people responded from across the board and HE said they would take the comments into consideration. They were then rushed to give the results of the consultation and stopped in their tracks

before they could amalgamate the comments received into drawings and preferred options.

LPC has made a positive contribution to the online plans. Taking into account all the comments received at the HE consultation, a proposal to amalgamate the Fishbourne and Stockbridge junctions was put forward to WSCC that would mitigate the impact on the AONB and the residential area. The plan can be accessed here: <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/media/10886/lpc-contribution-paper-for-baba27-nov-17-2.pdf>

Where does tonight's meeting go? There is this steam roller effect pushing towards a solution and people tonight have voiced the need for WSCC to hold to their strategy, and to a realistic budget. What can we do in reply?

There has been plenty of good work done by many individuals on our preferred solution. For example, what has HE actually said and compare that to what the leader of WSCC has said. If the original documents are sourced, a completely different sense of the original can be found. For example, Jim O'Sullivan of HE wrote to say that "he would be very happy to come and talk to you and listen to your comments". This was relayed by the leader of WSCC to BABA27 as "HE will be happy to come when it is appropriate". This is not the same.

Lavant Parish Council will, in due course, be posting on its website an A27 fact finding file, where you will be able to access the original documents, to help you formulate your opinions. If you don't have access to the facts, you can't argue. LPC believes this website page will be informative.

Michael Tucker said that if Gillian Keegan read these notes she should be uneasy. He proposed inviting her to come and talk to the community.

Before the meeting closed Cllr Pickford invited Cllr Hall from CDC and Cllr Hunt WSCC to comment. Cllr Hall just reminded the meeting that the SDNP will not accept a major road within or just outside its boundaries.

Cllr Hunt said that most people present were aware of his position over this. He took on board what had been said this evening and appreciated the support as he was a voice in the wilderness at WSCC. There are no other county councillors who are affected by a Northern route. It is important that there is a strong voice from the north. He suspects that he has been kept in the dark as his view is well known on the council. The BABA27 group has fine ideals of working together but when push comes to shove he again suspected that many people would be entrenched in their position. The voice from up here is important and he appreciated that not everyone had the same views whether they came from the south or the north. He believed that the money that will be received will only be enough to do better options on the existing A27. The article in the Chichester Observer today cites SYSTRA as saying that lots of money will be available from other sources but Cllr Hunt thought that this might be wishful thinking. Cllr Hunt was the only WSCC

member to speak against withdrawing from RIS1 at the scrutiny committee meeting.

Cllr Pickford thanked everyone for coming.

The meeting closed at 9.10pm