

## 1.0 Introduction & Summary

- 1.1 At some point in the late summer or Autumn of 2022, National Highways are expected to submit to the Planning Inspectorate their solution to improve the traffic congestion problems at Arundel.
- 1.2 This solution will be based on the preferred route – the Grey route – a decision that has mystified many as it is the preferred route of only one group, National Highways.
- 1.3 The whole scheme development process from 2017 to today can also be considered a mystery tour. It has been a process characterised by selective and mis-use of information and National policies, inaccurate and missing information, misleading and wrongly claimed benefits, selective optioneering and solution bias all adding up to poor and inappropriate decision-making.
- 1.4 Given the starting point for the determination of an application for a NSIP is a presumption in favour of development, the purpose of this document is to ensure there is a balanced view taken to this determination ahead of the submission of the application for Development Consent Order (DCO) by National Highways.
- 1.5 Since 2017, National Highways consultations have been inadequate as was the latest Statutory consultation at the start of 2022<sup>1</sup>. The reason for this, nets down to an under developed solution - circa 2 years after its announcement – due to, for example, poor solution and policy presumptions, incomplete traffic modelling and designs and much more.
- 1.6 In summary, the whole preferred route selection process has been a result of a number of solution development inadequacies and inappropriate assessments in many key areas. These include the following:
  - A. National policy decision-making presumptions inadequacies.
  - B. National policy assessments for the Community and environment inadequacies.

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<sup>1</sup> I have written to National Highways on their inadequate 2022 consultation and they have replied. This correspondence can be found in the document in Annex A.

- C. Financial assessment inadequacies.
- D. Public interest assessments inadequacies.
- E. Solution to problem assessment inadequacies.
- F. Alignment with objectives inadequacies.
- G. Other assessment inadequacies.

1.7 The following sections provide additional details to expand upon the 7 areas summarised above.

## **2.0 National policy decision-making presumptions inadequacies**

- 2.1 The selection of the preferred route was made on the presumption that the building of new roads in the South Downs National Park (SDNP) will not be granted by the Secretary of State (SoS.)
- 2.2 There should also have been a presumption by National Highways that the Secretary of State (SoS) would (should) also not sign off on a solution that is so excessively over budget with limited benefits when compared to the environmental and community destruction it will deliver.
- 2.3 Instead of working to or considering this second presumption, they worked to their own financial assumption that while “Grey is the most expensive of the options and is above the Scheme budget, this in and of itself, is not a reason to discount that particular option, provided that other positive factors out-weigh the higher cost. There is no evidence of other factors out-weighing the excessively higher and unnecessary costs.
- 2.4 Other alternative options – that are not major developments in the SDNP - provide a better return on investment, that will meet the Scheme Objectives such as capacity, reducing congestion, and that would get National Agency support have been inappropriately dismissed by National Highways. Often with misleading statements.

2.5 Bottom line: In selecting the Grey route, too much weighting has been inappropriately given to avoiding development in the SDNP and in doing so has unjustifiably cast aside suitable other alternative options that would require only minor<sup>2</sup> development in the SDNP. While on the other hand, other considerable factors (e.g., community and environment impacts, high costs and low benefits, public interests fit, etc.,) have been dismissed too lightly and without justification to allow Grey to be selected.

### **3.0 National policy assessments for the Community and environment inadequacies**

3.1 So far in the process, as was witnessed by the latest inadequate 2022 consultation, NH have demonstrated that they still only have a superficial understanding of the impacts and harm of this route on the environment and local communities (or have chosen to ignore them) and have failed to attach little to no weighting to the following:

1. The impact/harm to many designated heritage<sup>3</sup> structures/buildings.
2. Air quality impacts over the wider<sup>4</sup> Arun area likely to be affected, as well as in the near vicinity of the scheme.
3. Impacts/harms to protected species, habitats and other species of principal importance<sup>5</sup> for the conservation of biodiversity.
4. The noise and visual impacts from the South Downs National Park (SDNP), Arundel Town and Castle and on local residents and visitors to the local area.

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<sup>2</sup> National Highways should have taken into account the differences between a 'major' and a 'minor' development. In certain circumstances the SoS may grant minor developments.

<sup>3</sup> A list can be provided on request should National Highways fail to provide one.

<sup>4</sup> National Highways misleadingly concentrated on the air quality challenges at Storrington (10 miles away) to support their campaign. The Air quality here is constantly improving and is expected to be at acceptable levels for all receptors before the proposed route will even be opened.

<sup>5</sup> This includes, for example, an area defined by Natural England as of national/international importance for bats.

5. The impact/harm at the western end of the scheme along with no steps to avoid/minimise the risk of road casualties arising from the scheme.
  6. The community and social/people impact<sup>6</sup> with the loss of existing sports and recreational buildings and land, along with the close proximity impacts to local schools and playing fields.
- 3.2 National Highways have provided little useful information in their Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) on all the matters above and more.
  - 3.3 While it is understood that National Highways is afforded some discretion in the preparation of the PEIR and that this document should not be confused as a draft copy of the Environmental Statement (ES.) This is a most unfortunate aspect of the process as it allows key strategic decisions to be made on scant information and fails to ensure that stakeholders are properly informed during public consultations. The public and stakeholders were inadequately informed during the 2022 consultation.
  - 3.4 As an aside, it would be good to think that at some point in the near future this discretion will have tighter controls placed upon it including better definitions as to what is ‘reasonable and sufficient’ for the PEIR and what is not be made far clearer.
  - 3.5 Bottom line: Grey performs poorly against many National Policy Statements: even with future potential solution mitigations along with any future tweaks to the overall design this will not reduce the harm this solution will have on the Arun valley communities and environment.

#### **4.0 Financial assessment inadequacies**

- 4.1 In addition to minimising the value of many of the NSPs, National Highways are also underplaying the economic and financial aspects of this scheme that, so far in the process, fall well short of what is required

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<sup>6</sup> National Highways have blatantly misled people with many statements such as the grey route runs to the south or bypasses local villages. It does not. At Binsted it cuts this Community in two.

for investment approval. The current headlines of the financials are as follows:

Benefits:	£283M (Assumed to be a PVB number)
Costs:	£384M <sup>7</sup> (PVC <sup>8</sup> of £206M)
Benefit Cost Ratio:	1.37
Budget:	£250M (Project unaffordable.)
Value for Money:	Low

4.2 National Highways are still to validate all their costs and claimed benefits, and when they released these headline financials, they did so in the knowledge of the following:

- A. The physical road design was fundamentally flawed<sup>9</sup>
- B. The traffic model was seriously compromised/not proven
- C. Other metrics (e.g., journey savings times, reductions in accidents) underpinning the benefits were at best a stretch of the imagination.<sup>10</sup>

4.3 It is difficult to understand why National Highways do not give strong consideration to these weak financials. There have been very few road schemes approved between 2015 and 2019 that had a poor, low and medium 'Value for Money' rating and quite rightly so. Those that have been approved all had low construction costs ranging from £4M to £61M which is in sharp contrast to the costs of the Grey route.

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<sup>7</sup> NH cost/benefits model is based on £384M, but in 2017, the costs were estimated at over £700M. There is no detail to support a cost reduction of c.£300M and using such reduced costs as the baseline. Other internal NH documents show the final costs (in 2020) could be in excess of £1 billion.

<sup>8</sup> National Highways have still got a lot to do to make it clear how their PVC numbers and PVB have been calculated.

<sup>9</sup> In 2020, and at the 2022 consultation, NH's design provided less access from local roads onto the A27 than there is today, knowing improved access was key to the scheme's objectives.

<sup>10</sup> NH have misled people with false claims on journey time savings (i.e., 9.3 mins a 2041 number when it could be as low as 3.3 minutes) and also on road safety benefits.

4.4 Bottom line: The Grey route solution fails to meet the approval criteria associated with the economic and financials cases of the Government's 'Green Book' business model.

## 5.0 Public interest assessments inadequacies

5.1 National Highways claim that the public and business will benefit by improved journey times that will on average see savings of 9.3 minutes per journey.

5.2 This is a misleading statement as it does not take into account other factors, for example, the dis-benefits with the additional congestion caused by the scheme in the west at the Fontwell roundabout. When all factors are considered, the benefit could be as low as 3.3 minutes in 2041.

5.3 Irrespective of the journey time saved, in reality very few people and business will feel any net benefit. Only a very few specific and localised journeys will gain real benefit. This saving certainly does not justify the selection of the Grey route and the harm it is going to have on local communities and people in the Arun valley.

5.4 This route does not serve the public's interest given 93% of people when polled expressed a preference for anything but Grey. If the public interest is to be served, consideration would be given to all the public's preferences: (1) they do not want the Grey route; (2) they would prefer an online route, and if you are not going to do 2 then they would (3) prefer you to do nothing. This is from local people who use and commute on this section of the A27 on a daily basis.

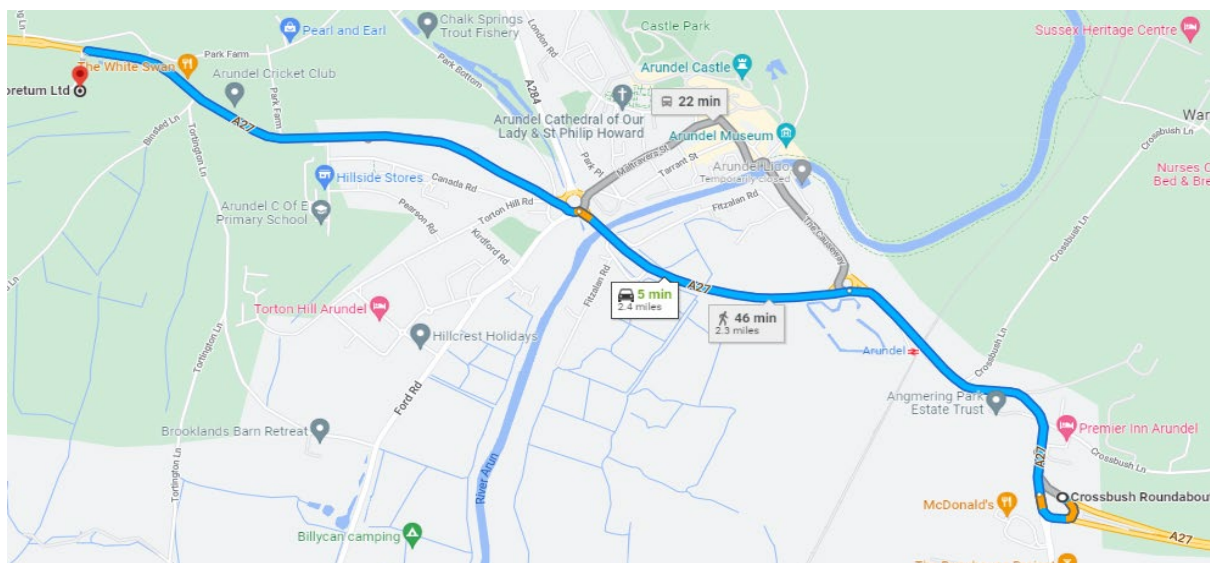
5.5 To continue with this route, this Government will not only be not serving the wishes of the public, it will also be spending a disproportionate amount of money at Arundel in comparison with the problems to be solved at other traffic bottlenecks and budgets (e.g., Worthing) to the east and west of Arundel.

5.6 Plus, it is unimaginable to think that any solution could be approved that will cost hundreds of millions to relocate, in part, the problems (congestion, shunts, rat-runs) at Arundel a few miles east and west especially when there is no existing or future economic benefit on the table to justify such a consequence.

- 5.7 These relocated issues will no doubt last for many years, maybe decades into the future until such time complimentary solutions at the other locations have been implemented.
- 5.8 The only solutions at other A27 corridor hot-spots are more likely to be low-budget traffic flow control enhancement schemes because of the options restrictions and geographic challenges at places such as Chichester, Fontwell, Worthing to Lancing and onwards to Shoreham.
- 5.9 From a regional perspective, without complementary solutions for all the locations above, there is no reason to spend anywhere near £384M. Perish the thought, the costs could be anywhere near the upper estimate of £1 billion at Arundel.
- 5.10 Bottom Line: When weighed up against high costs, low benefits, lack of any joined-up solutions for the A27 corridor, the community and environment destruction and the wishes of the public, the only conclusion that can be drawn is that the selection of Grey is not in the public interest.

## 6.0 Solution to problem assessment inadequacies

- 6.1 Congestion occurs leading up to and on the 2.5 miles of single carriageway between the dual-carriageways to the east and west of Arundel as shown in the image below. Not on the 2.5 miles dual-carriageway between Arundel and Fontwell.



6.2 Traffic congestion in Arundel (because of the single carriageway and junctions) extends travel times mainly at peak hours (the following are National Highways figures.)

- Eastward (am) – journey times extended by 35 seconds
- Westbound (am) – journey times extended by 1 minute
- Eastbound (pm) – journey times extended by 8 minutes
- Westbound (pm) – journey times extended by 1 minute

6.3 The total journey time over 5 miles without congestion takes on average 10 minutes.

6.4 To fix the additional wait times (ranging from 1 to 8 minutes), National Highways are proposing the following solution:

1. To build new 8.5 kms of dual-carriageways with associated constructions costs of anywhere between £384M to their upper estimate in excess of £1 billion.
2. To throw away 2.5 miles of existing dual-carriageway that is already fit-for-purpose.
3. To implement a route that will have significant harm on 3 communities and the people of the Arun valley. Not to mention the environment implications.
4. Have designed a solution that will also relocate the problems (congestion, shunts, rat-runs) at Arundel to Fontwell, also to the villages at the western end of the scheme and to a lesser extent to Worthing.

6.5 Bottom line: With no business case, is this really the answer? Are National Highways saying this is the most appropriate solution and it is fully justified for the problem to be resolved? It is not, it is completely disproportionate and cannot be justified.

## **7.0 Alignment with objectives inadequacies**

7.1 In selecting the Grey route, National Highways have failed to clearly differentiate it against other alternative options that align far better with



the scheme objectives and wider Strategic Road Network objectives and vision than the Grey route.

7.2 The table below shows a more specific, transparent and honest assessment of how Grey is currently standing against the Scheme Objectives.

<b>Client Scheme Objectives</b>	<b>A27 Arundel Scheme Outcomes</b>
1. Improve the safety of travellers on the A27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Savings benefits highly misleading</li> <li>• Unproven (more evidence required)</li> <li>• Safety benefits forecasted to be minimal (no better than other options)</li> </ul>
2. Reduce congestion, reduce travel time and improve capacity and reliability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Congestion moved 2.5 miles west</li> <li>• Travel time saving of just 2.3 minutes, not 9.3</li> <li>• Improved capacity, but at a premium cost</li> <li>• Traffic volumes not proven</li> </ul>
3. Deliver a scheme that minimises environmental impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At 8 Kms, this Scheme delivers maximum impact (shortest route option is c. 3Kms.)</li> <li>• Not supported by Natural England &amp; others</li> <li>• Impairs quality of life for 3 communities</li> </ul>
4. Improve accessibility for users to local services and facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivers less access points onto local roads (current design)</li> <li>• Is not aligned to local authority plans</li> <li>• Impairs local facilities and conservation areas</li> </ul>
5. Ensure that customers and communities are fully considered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The public are kept in the dark to key data</li> <li>• 93% of public do not want this scheme are ignored</li> <li>• NH mislead &amp; tell untruths to the public. (e.g., the route runs to the south of Binsted, it goes through the middle.)</li> </ul>
6. Respect the South Downs National Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SDNP Authority strongly object to the scheme. (As do Natural England &amp; Historic England.)</li> </ul>

7.3 For completeness, in approving this scheme, consideration should also be given to the wider Objectives/KPIs as stated within the Vision for the SRN. For example:

SRN Objectives/KPIS/Vision	A27 Arundel scheme outcomes
Key Performance Indicator (KPI): for every £1 pound spent there will be a return of £2.50	<p>The current solution stands at 1.37 (unsubstantiated) and is expected to deliver less than £1 for every £1 spent.</p> <p>It fails also to meet the lower National Highways threshold for escalating schemes of 1.5.</p>
To implement solutions that positively contribute to a ‘Greener’ network.	<p>At 8 Kms long compared to 3 Kms for other better and cheaper solutions, Grey works against this objective.</p> <p>It also works against other government targets such as, for example, Bio-diversity KPIs.</p>
To implement a safer and more reliable network, that is designed and operated in response to what road users want, while also taking into account the impacts that it has on people and places.”	<p>This solution has been rejected by 93% of the public.</p> <p>It destroys 8 Kms of nationally important landscape as well as 3 villages the largest of which has c. 3,700 residents.</p> <p>It will only provide minimal savings in road safety benefits for the stretch of road under consideration while making road safety worse at the western end of the scheme.</p>

7.4 Bottom line: As the solution stands, the Grey route falls well short of meeting the scheme objectives and KPIs associated with the vision for the Strategic Road Network.

## 8.0 Other assessment inadequacies

8.1 With respect to the ‘commercial case’ behind the decision to select Grey, there has been no evidence to suggest that there is a robust commercial contract in place with Bam Nuttall or any evidence to show how risks

will be shared and mitigated or evidence to suggest costs will be controlled and any slippage will be owned by Bam Nuttall.

- 8.2 There has been no ITT for this specific scheme as BAM Nuttall are National Highways chosen Delivery Integration Partner (DIP) for the scheme, awarded through the Framework and Package contracts. So, it is difficult to have any level of confidence that the costs will be the costs will be the costs without far more disclosure.
- 8.3 With respect to the 'management case' of the overall business case, again it is difficult to have any level of confidence that this aspect has been adequately considered in selecting the Grey route and that aspects such as risk management and benefits realisation and assurance will be adequately governed.
- 8.4 During the options stage of the project, National Highways do not manage separate risk registers, so it is unclear to how they can say definitely that there are less risks associated with Grey than, for example, and online alternative options. Their overriding assumption is that it will be easier to manage the traffic of an offline solution versus and online solution during construction therefore there is less risk.
- 8.5 Again, they cast to one side, other key facts that drive risks such as (a) there are many more structural and Tie-in points with Grey than with an online option; (b) There are 11 bridges (overbridge, underbridge, footbridge) with Grey and only 4 with an online option, and (c) constructing 8.5Km of dual carriageway will inherently have more risk than a solution of 4.5Km.
- 8.6 The Government recognises that for development of the national road network to be sustainable, new road solutions should be designed to minimise social and environmental impacts and improve quality of life. Grey does the exact opposite and no amount of mitigation will enable this consideration to be met.
- 8.7 There is limited to no factual evidence that the existing traffic congestion at Arundel constrains the local economy by constraining existing economic activity, or by increasing costs to businesses, damaging their competitiveness and reducing their ability to attract new employees.

- 8.8 Nor are the current constraints restraining job opportunities because workers have more difficulty accessing labour markets due to the congestion problems at Arundel.
- 8.9 Nor is there any evidence to support a case that the congestion at Arundel is causing more environmental problems locally or on the wider region.
- 8.10 There is, however, a case for those with time-pressured journeys, that congestion can cause frustration and stress, as well as inconvenience. But this can be alleviated with a far more proportional and commensurate solution to this problem. Such as a solution that allows all pass-thru traffic to constantly flow. This does not have to be a 'super-highway' solution.
- 8.11 Bottom line: Even traffic moving at a constant speed of 30 mph on a single-carriageway would work for today and the future (in terms of meeting traffic capacity needs, improving road-safety, reducing congestion) and be better aligned to all aspects of the business case.

## **9.0 Conclusion**

- 9.1 This document is presented to provide a snap-shot of some of the true facts of the Grey route and not just the edited half-truth versions that National Highways release to the public.
- 9.2 This solution should never have been selected.
- 9.3 It currently fails to meet all 5 aspects of Governments business model for new road schemes.
- 9.4 It currently fails to comply with a significant proportion of National Policy Statements and will cause great harm. Future potential mitigation will not help.
- 9.5 National Highways have lost sight of what is appropriate for the congestion problems to be resolved blinkered by the one presumption that any solution that is a development in SDNP will not be approved. Nonsense. This presumption should be down-graded to an assumption or even a risk that development in the SDNP may not be granted without good reasons for doing so.

- 9.6 There are many conditions (e.g., affordability, poor return on investment, environmental damage, etc.) of the Grey solution as to why some development should/will be allowed to happen in the SDNP.
- 9.7 There are a number of alternative options that would involve minimal development in the SDNP and importantly gain support from the SDNP Authority, Natural England and others.
- 9.8 The local public want a solution but not this solution, and the public want taxpayer money to be spent wisely.
- 9.9 There are no wider Regional or National public benefits or economic justifications for progressing with such a destructive, expensive and unaffordable scheme.
- 9.10 National Highways have still much to do between now and their solution submission. But there is no doubt, that all that will be done between now and DCO application will tantamount to putting more ‘lip-stick onto a pig’!

## **Annex A**

Attached is the correspondence between myself and National Highways on the adequacy of their 20220 Statutory Consultation.



A27ArundelAdequacyresponses.docx