



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

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

14 April 2020

Dear Jim,

Re: A27 Chichester – Roads Investment Strategy

Thank you for your time last week at what is an incredibly challenging time for us all.

We and other local stakeholders are grateful that the A27 Chichester scheme has been included in the pipeline for Roads Investment Strategy 3 (2025-30). This is a very positive step forward and we are anxious to support you and your colleagues in the coming months to develop options. We acknowledge that there is no guarantee that a major scheme emerging from this work will be implemented via the RIS process as there will be insufficient funding and resources to deliver every scheme that will be competing nationally. We are also acutely aware that there will be a need to demonstrate a strong business case and local support to secure funding for implementation. Therefore, we want to work closely with Highways England to ensure that a major scheme to improve this key part of the strategic road network is included in RIS3 and would like to draw your attention to two key issues that we think will need to be addressed.

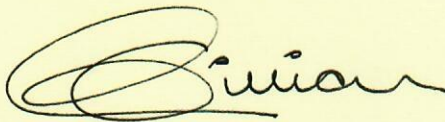
Firstly, as you are aware, the adopted Chichester Local Plan includes a scheme of small scale online A27 improvements to mitigate the impacts of development. The Local Plan anticipates these improvements being in place by the end of the plan period in 2029. The Local Plan and the associated A27 improvements are in the process of being reviewed by the District Council, but whatever form these improvements take, they will need to be built out by 2029 and will inevitably cause some disruption during construction. Therefore, we think that further technical work on developing a major scheme for A27 Chichester must take the Local Plan A27 scheme as the baseline and seek to demonstrate how a future major scheme through the RIS can deliver improved outcomes for our communities, the economy and the environment.

Secondly, you are also aware of the differing community views about the relative impacts of building a northern bypass that would be likely to impact the South Downs National Park or online improvements that would have the potential to impact the Chichester Harbour AONB. The National Park and AONB have the same status in terms of national landscape protection and so it is essential, in our view, for Highways England to consider the economic and environmental impacts of the options equally, taking the Local Plan A27 scheme as the baseline for assessment. We understand that there is a need to develop an optimal set of options that can be published for consultation with the public. This work should consider both options to provide a clear and evidence-based rationale for stakeholders to understand and we are grateful that you have agreed to produce a report setting out the deliverable and non-deliverable options over summer 2020.

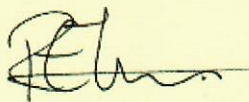
Due to the long lead-in time for major improvements and the already established timescale for implementing the Local Plan baseline scheme, it is clearly important for this work to begin quickly. Given its relevance to the Local Plan Review, we would welcome further information about the timetable and arrangements for ongoing engagement, so that this can be shared with local stakeholders.

If we can be of further assistance, then please do not hesitate to contact us.

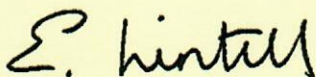
Yours sincerely



Gillian Keegan
Member of Parliament for Chichester



Roger Elkins
Cabinet Member for Highways & Infrastructure, West Sussex County Council



Eileen Lintill,
Leader, Chichester District Council