

Dr Mike Davis  
Walberton, West Sussex

24 January 2022

Cllr Grant Roberts, Arun District Council

Copies:

Cllr Trevor Bence, West Sussex County Council  
Cllr Mrs Suzanne Clark, Walberton Parish Council  
Andrew Jackson, Senior Project Manager, National Highways

Dear Grant

Thank you for inviting me to the meeting with National Highways at the consultation event in Walberton on Saturday 22 January.

Over 400 people attended and a similar number turned out again on Sunday for a protest meeting. I appreciate that you must balance the views of all your constituents. That is going to be difficult for a route that does not offer any balance.

These notes are longer than I would prefer but the alternative is unappealing. The key points are:

- There appear to be 11,775 more new homes assumed in the Ford Road model than were known about previously
- To eliminate the Walberton Rat Run (and for other reasons), National Highways must address capacity constraints at Fontwell
- Sustained and ongoing lack of transparency in communicating BCR and value for money
- Inadequacy of consultation

#### Ford Road Junction

National Highways revealed a previously unknown assumption in the model used to appraise the junction. This is the delivery of 785 new homes per annum between opening year (2027) and the design year (2042). At the meeting, I estimated this as representing a further 12,000 homes (actually 11,775) and this was confirmed by National Highways.

I cannot find any evidence for this in the documents released under FOI Ref 2375 . For example, Attachment 1 is the presentation given to Arun DC on 27 August 2021 and makes no mention of any additions beyond 2027.








## Summary of traffic modelling

- Core growth assumptions are housing growth of 785 households per year between 2015 and 2027.
- ADC Planning confirmed that scale of future housing growth in our core scenario matches the level of outturn housing growth experienced recently in Arun of completions in the region of 600 – 900 per year.
- No sensitivity analysis carried out yet. Analysis needs to be defined and can be complex task, depending on scope.
- Initial benefits assessment conducted of the junction. TUBA benefits (journey times, fuel costs, etc.). Assessment shows benefits are in the range of about £2m – £4m, overall.



Furthermore, Attachment 7 states: "The outcome is that, whilst specific housing developments are not included in the model by name, the growth assumptions in the modelling total 4710 for new houses between 2021 and 2027." Again, no mention of any new housing after 2027.

There is lengthy internal correspondence in Attachment 6 and others which I recommend you read, but none refers to the consideration of new homes in the quantity spoken about at the meeting and for the period 2027-2042.

 1.Ford Road Junction Meeting 27082021.pdf 374K <a href="#">Download</a> <a href="#">View as HTML</a>
 2.A27 Arundel Potential Ford Road Junction CONFIDENTIAL.pdf 700K <a href="#">Download</a> <a href="#">View as HTML</a>
 3.A27 Arundel Briefing Note Ford Road Junction Redacted.pdf 339K <a href="#">Download</a> <a href="#">View as HTML</a>
 4.HE551523 BAM TEC ZZ TN TR 0002.pdf 826K <a href="#">Download</a> <a href="#">View as HTML</a>
 5.TUBA A27 FixedDemand FRJ.pdf 467K <a href="#">Download</a> <a href="#">View as HTML</a>
 6.A27 Arundel Ford Road Interchange Engagement with Arun District Council.pdf 127K <a href="#">Download</a> <a href="#">View as HTML</a>
 7.FW A27 Arundel Bypass Traffic modelling and Ford Road.pdf 740K <a href="#">Download</a> <a href="#">View as HTML</a>

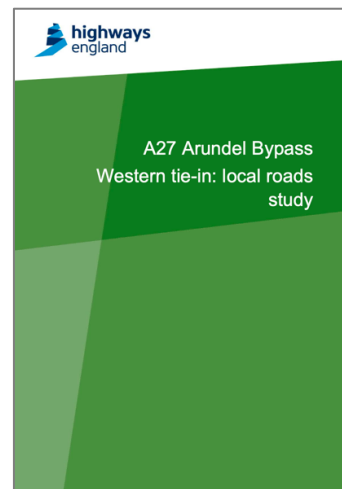
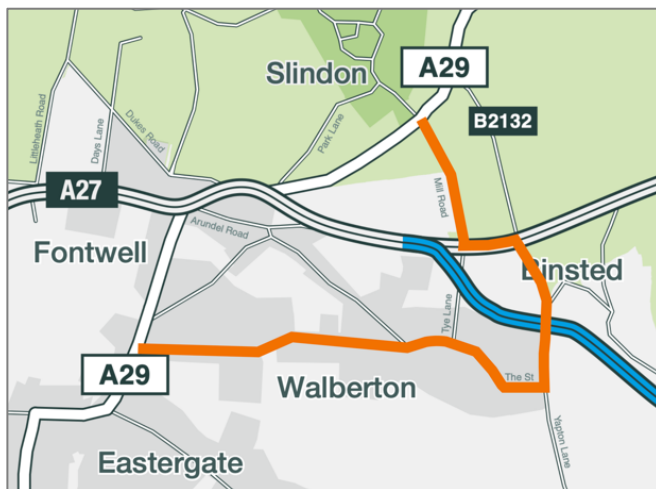
[https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/a27\\_arundel\\_bypass\\_connectivity](https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/a27_arundel_bypass_connectivity)

It may be that these additional homes have been added to the model since the Freedom of Information request was met on 9 December 2021. If so, we might expect an increase in the benefits of £2-4M based on the original assumptions. Or I may have misunderstood the new information given at the meeting.

I do think this requires clarification. May I request a copy of any follow-up in writing from National Highways which addresses the matter.

## The Walberton Rat Run

Rat running through Walberton as a result of the A27 Arundel Bypass is a new development.



During Option Selection, National Highways promised residents that local roads at the western end of the scheme would not be adversely affected by increased traffic. The 2019 Western Tie-In: Local Roads Study concluded that:

“Overall, the implementation of the A27 Arundel Bypass would reduce rat-running along lower order roads, as the scheme would draw traffic away from the local roads on to the A27 SRN” (para 4.1.1).

A modest increase in flow going north on Yapton Lane in the AM peak was forecast but this was unrelated to congestion at Fontwell (para 4.1.3). The opposite is now true. Increased traffic on the A27 SRN will draw road users away from the A29 and through the centre of Walberton, leading to a 42% increase in average daily traffic in The Street.

The Local Roads Study may be accessed here: <https://assets.highwaysengland.co.uk/roads/road-projects/A27+Arundel+Improvement/A27+Arundel+Bypass+-+Western+tie-in+local+roads+study.pdf>

A recurring and major problem is that the transport model used by National Highways is better calibrated to the SRN rather than local roads. This means that flows on local roads that are forecast by the model frequently do not match what is observed in real world counts. This has eroded trust in National Highways’ traffic assessments.

Yapton Lane is particularly poor in its calibration. This is a problem as it carries more traffic than most other local roads and a higher proportion of HGVs. Larger vehicles frequently slow to a crawl to pass safely at Blacksmith’s Corner and Hedger’s Hill. Yapton Lane is also expected to take additional construction traffic for several years serving the compound opposite Avisford Grange.

The current consultation brochure (pp36-37) forecasts a traffic flow in Yapton Lane of 2,900 vehicles a day. Observed flows are 5,000 to 6,000. Where is the missing Yapton Lane traffic

and how much of would use The Street in addition to 1,300 vehicle increase already being reported?

I was assured later by Alan Feeney that National Highways is more confident in its modelling of the A29. The theory is that, if Fontwell flows freely, rat running through Walberton will be eliminated.

This makes full mitigation of the scheme to nil detriment at Fontwell imperative. I reacted strongly against Mr Salmon's proposal of deterrence measures such as speed bumps in The Street as these would treat symptoms rather than the underlying problem. Furthermore, National Highways has not proposed speed bumps to reduce rat running in Storrington so this may be regarded as yet another example of the unequal treatment of communities. As Mr Salmon's role is to prepare the scheme for the DCO application, I am now concerned that traffic-calming measures will be introduced without any consultation with residents.

It should not be overlooked that capacity constraints at Fontwell have been known about by National Highways and the host authorities for a long time. For example, they are recognised in the South Coast Central Route Strategy (2017) and A29 Realignment Business Case (2019). Quality of life and safety in Walberton are now inseparably linked to National Highways' action or inaction at Fontwell. My view is that the statutory consultation is wholly premature without the inclusion of credible, costed and funded plans to ensure that Fontwell flows freely.

Better investigation of all these issues and others is prevented by the failure of National Highways to publish an updated Combined Modelling and Appraisal report. This was considered necessary to inform responses to both non-statutory consultations. It seems to surprise National Highways that people rely on it to scrutinise its proposals.

### BCR and Value for Money

Given the secrecy being maintained around current costs and benefits, I believe it is important to have a record how we got to where we are.

The BCR and value for money assessment on which the Preferred Route Announcement (PRA) was made in 2020 are different to those presented at the 2019 Further Public Consultation.

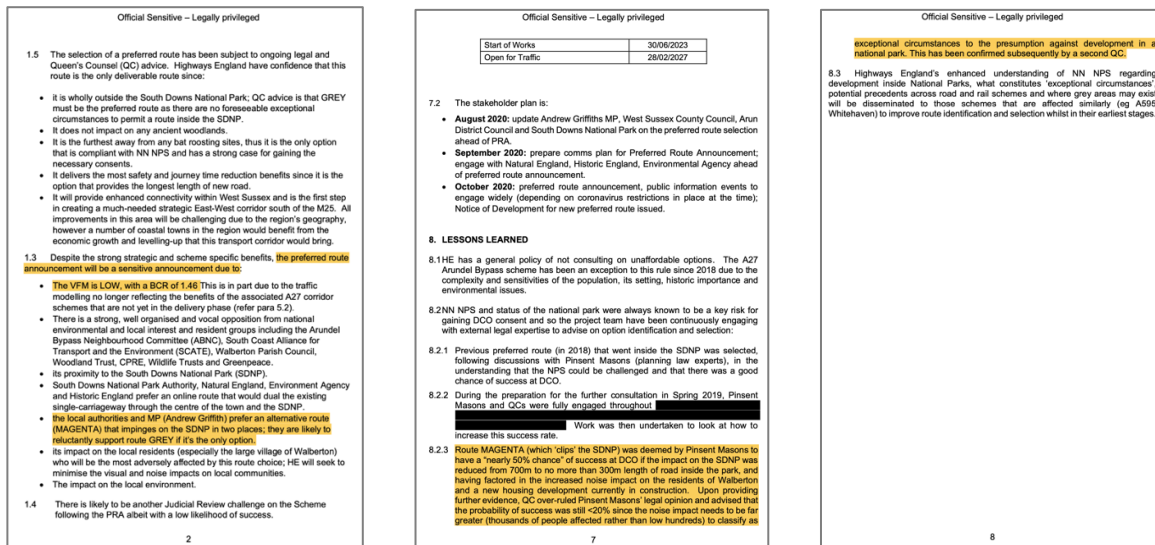
When it briefed ministers in August 2020, National Highways recognised that the PRA would be sensitive due to "The Vfm is LOW, with a BCR of 1.46". This assessment was subsequently left out of the PRA and associated publicity.

National Highways also determined that the local authorities and MP would "reluctantly support route GREY if it's the only option" and that release of the updated BCR and value for money were unnecessary to obtaining that support on an informed basis.

Why Grey became the only option is the result of unpublished legal advice which overruled National Highways' previous understanding of NN NPS on which route identification, 2 non-

statutory public consultations and selection of an earlier preferred route (5A) had been based. The new advice effectively devalued impacts on Walberton by an order of magnitude in relation to 300 m of South Downs National Park.

In scheme documentation released at PRA, National Highways also misrepresented the host authorities' responses to the 2019 Further Public Consultation. You and others have attempted to have that misrepresentation corrected but National Highways has refused. The misleading Scheme Assessment Report is still being distributed on the National Highways website without any notification of the inaccuracies it contains.



[https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/777962/response/1901444/attach/4/20200806%20df%20brief%20Arundel%20Redacted.pdf?cookie\\_passthrough=1](https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/777962/response/1901444/attach/4/20200806%20df%20brief%20Arundel%20Redacted.pdf?cookie_passthrough=1)

As you heard at the meeting, National Highways is relying on a sensitivity test in the 2019 Interim Scheme Assessment Report to promote its claim that the BCR and value for money on which the PRA was made have been communicated to stakeholders. I dispute that many stakeholders understand what National Highways expects of them.

To access and correctly interpret the updated BCR and value for money, it is first necessary to realise that it has changed and that:

- National Highways Transport Planning Group (TPG) guidance was updated in June 2020 to exclude schemes that have not achieved PRA or PCF Stage 3
- This undid short-lived TPG guidance issued in January 2018 to include all schemes within a published RIS
- Worthing-Lancing is in a published RIS but has not achieved PRA or PCF Stage 3
- Accordingly, Worthing-Lancing was included in the core scenario presented at the 2019 Further Public Consultation and has since been removed
- The PRA decision was made on a sensitivity test of the core scenario which excluded Worthing-Lancing
- The sensitivity test is calculated differently and associated with a lower level of confidence than those presented for the core scenario

Interested parties then need to know where to look for the sensitivity test as follows:

I would contend that this is a calamitously inadequate way of communicating a category-changing reduction in BCR to elected representatives (or anyone else), either at PRA or for statutory consultation. It is not clear to me that you and Cllr Bence were aware of any of these issues before I and others raised them, and I am not sure I could reasonably expect you to be if National Highways don't bother to tell you.

The BCR used to support the investment decision is different again and lower still at 1.37. Mr Jackson stated correctly that this BCR is in the public domain, but he did not explain that it had to be put there under Freedom of Information regulations.

[https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/application\\_by\\_he\\_to\\_dft\\_and\\_its#incoming-1834411](https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/application_by_he_to_dft_and_its#incoming-1834411)

As is the case with the BCR used to make the PRA announcement, the BCR used to support investment and the award of a delivery contract to Linkconnex has never been communicated except to ministers.

Finally, with regard to costs and benefits evaluated since September 2020, National Highways appears determined not to provide any update despite numerous requests. Given what has gone before, perhaps we should not be surprised.

We do now know that the previous viaduct costs of circa £300M presented by the former Chief Executive in 2017 were radically, uniquely and inexplicably overstated but by how much is not being revealed. We must hope it is not related to the choice of structures affecting one of the most beautiful vistas in England that are regarded as “too utilitarian” by the Design Council.

### ARUNDEL COSTS (£m)

	Option 1	Option 3	Option 5A
Minimum	£96	£208	£199
Most Likely (ML)**	£134	£260	£249
ML with 30:1 Land	£145	£289	£262
ML with 30:1 land and viaduct	NA	£591	£564
Maximum	£250	£853*	£772*

Budget Range - £100m - £250m

\*\*includes for 7:1 ratio for ancient woodland compensation

\*Maximum includes for viaduct

All viaduct costs are being queried with Commercial

Outside Budget Range – 



We also learnt that National Highways is searching for benefits that were not considered during Option Selection, such as weekend travel time. It seems unlikely that new benefits would be sought unless necessary.

Please let me know if you have any questions. In due course I will be writing to the Chief Executive of Arun DC to request that these matters and others be included in any Adequacy of Consultation statement.

My apologies again that there is so much to document. I will gladly consider and incorporate any additional information that National Highways is willing to provide.

Kind regards

Mike

(By email)