

Sompting A27 Rural Group (SARG)

Co-ordinator Mike Tristram
(Sompting Estate Managing Trustee)
www.somptingestate.com/a27
c/o Stable Cottage, Binsted
Arundel, W Sussex BN180LL
01243 551635 07771 897613
mike.tristram@dsl.pipex.com

To: Alan Feist, Valerie Stephens, Sophie Hartfield
Highways England Arundel A27 Improvements Project
and by email to A27WorthingandLancingImprovements@highwaysengland.co.uk

Cc: South Downs National Park Authority
Sompting Parish Council
A27 Worthing-Lancing Working Group chairs

12.9.2017

Dear Alan, Valerie, Sophie

Sompting A27 Rural Group: Response to the Worthing-Lancing A27 scheme Public Consultation

I am writing this response to you on behalf of SARG. The group was formed in October 2014 by an initial meeting of 26 local residents and businesses with a stakeholding in the area. Rural Sompting's downland north of the A27 occupies most of the 3-mile width of the National Park at this point.

In addition to the Sompting downland residents, SARG's supporter base includes 12 organisations concerned with rural Sompting: 3 farms, 2 estates, 1 estate management company, 1 school, 1 church, 1 beekeeper, 1 construction company, 1 Parish Council, 1 small vineyard, 1 socio-environmental charity, 1 community action group.

Since the Feasibility Study commenced, the group has discussed emerging proposals mainly by email. Mike Tristram or occasionally other substitute members have attended the Worthing-Lancing A27 Working Group and kept the wider SARG group informed. During the Consultation Period, the members were consulted by email on a view of Option 1. Sixteen of the group's members were able to meet on 14th Aug 17, discussed email comments and agreed the shared response which follows.

A primary aim at SARG's inception was to ensure that Sompting's Downland and its rural community and businesses are protected from any offline bypass threat. In the present context of proposals for online A27 improvements; SARG aims to ensure that they should have beneficial and not adverse impacts on Rural Sompting, and on the interests of the wider local community of Sompting Lancing and Broadwater.

Primary areas of interest, and of informed local knowledge, are the Sompting Bypass, its side roads and its junctions at either end. Comments focus largely but not exclusively on these.

Regards,

Mike Tristram (as SARG Co-ordinator. NB I will respond separately on behalf of Sompting Estate)

SARG response to the A27 Worthing-Lancing Consultation

A. Principles of Option 1 which SARG supports

1. Online junction improvements to ease traffic flow along, on and off the A27 at Worthing-Lancing, in preference to any offline bypass.
2. Maintaining ease of access on and off the A27 using multiple local at-grade junctions at moderate (40mph) speed, rather than closing side roads and restricting access to a limited number of much larger junctions .
3. A proportionate investment in the Worthing-Lancing A27 so as to reduce tailbacks and improve flow, rather than an overdevelopment of the route which could bring as many new problems as it solved
4. The challenge, which appeared in a Highways press report, to address future capacity issues in the Worthing-Lancing area by a major funded multi-modal sustainable transport initiative.

B. Principles which need more attention in next-stage Option 1 in SARG view

- Strategic consistency throughout the Worthing-Lancing section, including calming of the Sompting Bypass for multiple benefits (see below)
- Protection and improvement of side road accessibility in between main junctions
- Promotion of sustainable transport measures including non-car modes and NMU routes along and across the A27
- As Highways have pointed out, Option 1 is not by itself a long term solution. SARG supports this statement and urge Highways to work with Worthing & Adur LAs and the MPs, public transport services and the communities to develop a transformative local transport vision and strategy, raising and investing funds to promote non-private-car modes, and other changes whose benefits would include reducing local transport use of the A27.

C. Aspects of Option 1 to which SARG objects

- a) Lack of a range of options contained within the proposal
- b) Lack of clarity within the proposals of options which were rejected
- c) Lack of proposals to address rat-running via Dankton Lane, Church Lane and through West Street in Sompting Village.
- d) Concern that the eastward access out of Lyons Farm retail park on to the A27 is dangerous due to accelerating traffic on the A27 and may become more so
- e) Ikea impact not considered at all in the plans
- f) Layouts proposed will be likely to increase traffic through North Lancing
- g) Lack of consideration for pedestrian safety and access in the plans. Particular concerns raised around accidents at Worthing college with students walking and cycling with limited safe provision for crossing and Grove Lodge area. (i.e. underpass or footbridge) Grinstead

lane (residents park), Manor roundabout, lack of safe walking or cycling options could reduce access to the National Park.

- h) Lack of joined up thinking (eg evidence of collaboration with Worthing local plan) and consideration to other solutions such as improving access to all routes east and west by alternative transport methods and cycle lanes.
- i) Limiting access to local roads by restricting access and encouraging increased speed along the A27 will :-
 - Reduce well-used access to the downs (Church lane being the most used cycle route and already hindered by lack of ability to cross the A27, as well as upper Lambleys & upper Dankton Lanes)
 - Disrupt and endanger local users and businesses either side of the A27
 - Further split the community of Sompting.
 - Be ineffective anyway, as the bottleneck has not been addressed at Lyons farm and will result in “stop-start” frustration of traffic users. (changing from 40 to 70 to 40mph)
- j) Pollution from roads is becoming a national health concern with increasing bodies of evidence supporting this. The impact of stop start and standing traffic on local residents who live close to the road should be considered. Flow should be prioritised over speed.
- k) This needs to be considered in balance with the advantages of periodic halting by traffic lights, creating waves of traffic in between which safe access from side roads become possible. In so far as the wave-gaps are removed by flow improvements at the junctions either end of the Sompting Bypass, for example, this will need to be compensated by acceleration lane improvements to the side road accesses. This would especially be the case, if any junctions are redesigned with flyovers or underpasses rather than traffic lights in the final scheme.
- l) It is not clear whether U-turn opportunities will remain at both ends of the Sompting Bypass. Retention of these U-turn opportunities or provision of reasonable alternatives is vital to local residents and businesses in this part of the National Park north side of the A27, such as Sompting Abbotts School, Sompting Estate, three farms, a heritage-oriented family construction business (Nutshell), Southern Water (upper Dankton Lane site).
- m) At Grove Lodge: a student in SARG commented that the assumption that a Toucan crossing with computer controlled lights will be safe in this location, is flawed because it disregards human and specifically young student human nature. Students in particular will try to run or ride across in gaps between traffic and there will be fatalities.
- n) Hill Barn junction: has the additional traffic this will bring through North Lancing been quantified and considered?
- o) Grinstead Lane: does it not require yellow line no parking?
- p) Improvement of the impacts of the A27, on the adjacent road network and communities, has not been adequately considered. So for example in relation to the rat-running of A27-avoiding traffic through West Street Sompting: SARG believe consideration should have been given to, for example, on lower Church Lane, signage ‘Village Access Only’ or NMU only off the A27.
- q) Insufficient consideration has been given to multimodal, non private car transport. Eg the bus services in Sompting remain poorly routed and too often stuck in off-A27 rat run queues.

D. Proposals for improvement of Option 1 from SARG

- i. The Group proposes adding in average speed cameras along with a 40mph limit and distance chevrons along the Sompting Bypass stretch of the A27. This would encourage the flow of traffic through the area, reducing the “stop-start” effect and reducing tailback accumulation between “goes” at the Lancing and Broadwater ends. At the same time it would also improve ease of access for side roads and for non motorized users crossing the A27. This could be easily and cheaply piloted immediately to demonstrate the potential impact through to Grove Lodge including on air pollution.
- ii. Strategically slowing the Sompting Bypass to 40mph would offer a number of other potential advantages.
 - a. Local access across the A27 could be facilitated by NMU traffic lights / Toucan at Church Lane, to allow access to the National Park and between the northern and southern dwellings and facilities in the community of Sompting.
 - b. The road could be narrowed slightly to accommodate a two-way cycle lane on the north (National Park) side, and some planting of trees softening the boundary with the Park.
 - c. A two way cycle lane and footpath on both sides of the Sompting Bypass would be optimum, with opportunities to cross at or near both ends and in the centre at Church Lane.
- iii. Without the speed reduction and such measures as above, the Group view is that a NMU footbridge is needed at Church Lane or Dankton Lane. It was suggested that this crossing could form part of a cycle route from Worthing Town Centre to the downs.

However the Group also considered that their proposed reduction to 40mph would make this £1M+ cost unnecessary, with instead a traffic light/Toucan crossing at Church Lane, and all the benefits of strategic speed reduction to 40mph (including noise reduction in the National Park).
- iv. Noting the section 62 obligation of Highways England to have regard to the Purposes of the South Downs National Park, including access for enjoyment of its countryside, and with a view to ensuring that consideration of this proposal is soundly based; SARG would like to be informed of what monitoring if any has taken place or is planned to take place, of numbers of pedestrians/cyclists crossing the A27 Sompting Bypass at Church Lane, Dankton Lane, Lambleys Lane, Busticle Lane and Lyons Farm.

It was suggested that a harmful or even neutral impact on National Park Purposes would not achieve the S62 obligation; it must be favourable, which is not yet achieved by Option 1.