

Worthing A27 Option D Downland Section:

Where is it?

and, How can we assess Damage to the Park?

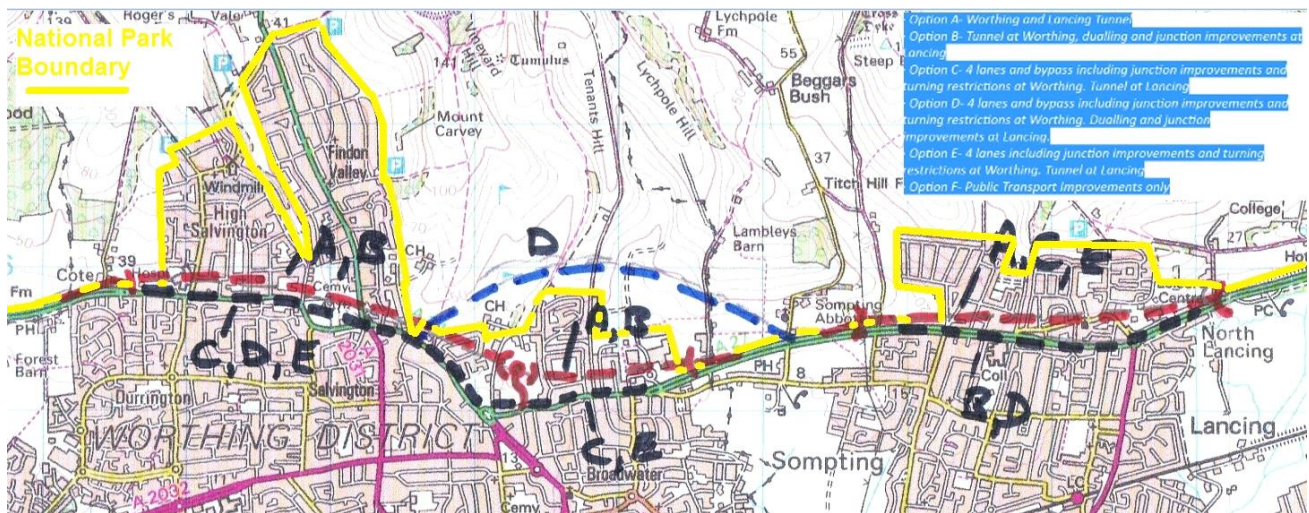


Above: overview of the National Park downland section of the indicative route for Option D.

Introduction

On 27th August 2014 the government's consultants presented, to their Stakeholder Reference Group, information about Options for A27 improvements which they are studying on behalf of the Department of Transport. No official plan showing these indicative/illustrative routes is available yet but the plan below is based on notes taken at the meeting. (Legend copied from meeting minutes.)

References to 'Option D' in this paper refer only to the dotted blue section on the map below.



What are the relevant planning policies in the National Park?

South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan 2014-2019 p10:

All public bodies ... when undertaking any activity which may have an impact on the designated area, have a duty to have regard to these purposes. Public bodies and utilities have a duty to take into consideration that we are a protected landscape under Section 62 of the Environment Act.

- Purpose 1: To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area
- Purpose 2: To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public.
- Our National Park Duty: To seek to foster the social and economic wellbeing of the local communities within the National Park in pursuit of our purposes.

The special qualities listed in the Partnership Management Plan and detailed in the State of the South Downs National Park 2012 Report are:

1. Diverse, inspirational landscapes and breathtaking views (SQ1)
2. Tranquil and unspoilt places (SQ2)
3. A rich variety of wildlife and habitats including rare and internationally important species (SQ3)
4. An environment shaped by centuries of farming and embracing new enterprise (SQ4)
5. Great opportunities for recreational activities and learning experiences (SQ5)
6. Well-conserved historical features and a rich cultural heritage (SQ6)
7. Distinctive towns and villages, and communities with real pride in their area (SQ7)

The relevant Purposes, Special Qualities, or Duty applicable to each of the National Park impacts of Option D evidenced in this paper, are summarized below, using the abbreviations underlined above.

Pros and Cons of an offline overland route through countryside

(rather than online, near-online or tunneled)

- *Pro:* Relieves built up areas of some pollution and noise
- *Con:* Relocates pollution and noise into countryside/National Park which is necessary green infrastructure for residents of those same built up areas

- *Pro:* Construction cost, and traffic disruption during construction, might be more favourable
- *Con:* Environmental cost, Public controversiality and Planning Policy conflicts could be worse

- *Pro:* Infill development opportunities could raise funds & help meet Worthing housing targets
- *Con:* This would only be acceptable if cutting off this specific landscape area from the Park by a new offline route and developing it would not result in an unacceptable loss to the special qualities of the Park.

The Pros may explain why a transport consultant without detailed knowledge of the area might suggest a downland route Option, such as Option D, for consideration.

The Cons involve judgements which are the responsibility of the National Park Authority, and of all public bodies, whose Duty it is to have regard to the Purposes of the South Downs National Park.

The evidence which follows is based on detailed knowledge of the area that would be affected. The evidence is factual and necessarily includes many photographs. The Option D downland route is indicated on some of the photographs with red lines, indicating the illustrative route described by the DfT's consultants to their Stakeholder Reference Group on 27 August.