

A27 Arundel Bypass

Preferred route
announcement

October 2020



Introduction

Investing in your roads

At Highways England we believe in a connected country and our network makes these connections happen. We strive to improve our major roads and motorways – engineering the future to keep people moving today and moving better tomorrow. We want to make sure all our major roads are more dependable, durable and, most importantly, safe. That's why we're delivering £27.4 billion of investment on our strategic network over the next five years – the largest investment in a generation.

The A27 Arundel Bypass scheme is a critical part of this investment and by reducing congestion in the area the scheme will improve journeys between Brighton and Portsmouth which is great news for local people and the regional economy.



This leaflet explains the preferred route for the scheme, how we carried out further public consultation and assessed the options, and what will happen next.



Why the scheme is needed

As the only east-west trunk road south of the M25, the A27 connects many coastal communities between Portsmouth and Pevensey, near Eastbourne, and serves a combined population of more than one million¹ people.

The A27 is currently a dual carriageway on either side of Arundel, but the single carriageway section and junctions through the town cannot cope with today's traffic volumes. Long queues approaching Arundel are commonplace and, with the population predicted to rise across the region, congestion and delays will only increase if nothing is done to improve the road.

There is an above average number of accidents on this section of the A27 compared with other rural A roads, while congestion around Arundel also leads to problems elsewhere as drivers try to avoid tailbacks by using local roads that aren't designed for large numbers of vehicles.

¹Based on 2011 population data

This 'rat-running' traffic affects the quality of life for residents in local towns and villages, causes disruption across the South Downs National Park and adds to air quality issues: Storrington, for example, has been identified by the World Health Organisation as one of the poorest places for air quality in the country².

In recognition of these problems, the Government's Road Investment Strategies have set out the intention for the A27 Arundel Bypass to replace 'the existing single carriageway road with a dual carriageway bypass, linking together the two existing dual carriageway sections of the road'.

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE SCHEME ARE TO:

- Improve the safety of travellers along the A27 and consequently the wider local road network
- Reduce congestion, reduce travel time and improve journey time reliability along the A27
- Ensure that road users and nearby communities are fully considered throughout the design and delivery stages
- Improve accessibility for all users to local services and facilities
- Improve capacity of the A27 whilst supporting local planning authorities to manage the impact of planned economic growth
- Deliver a scheme that minimises environmental impact and seeks to protect and enhance the quality of the surrounding environment through its high-quality design
- Respect the South Downs National Park and its special qualities in our decision-making

THE PREFERRED ROUTE:

We have chosen Grey (Option 5BV1) as our preferred route

² World Health Organisation Global Ambient Air Quality Database (update 2018)

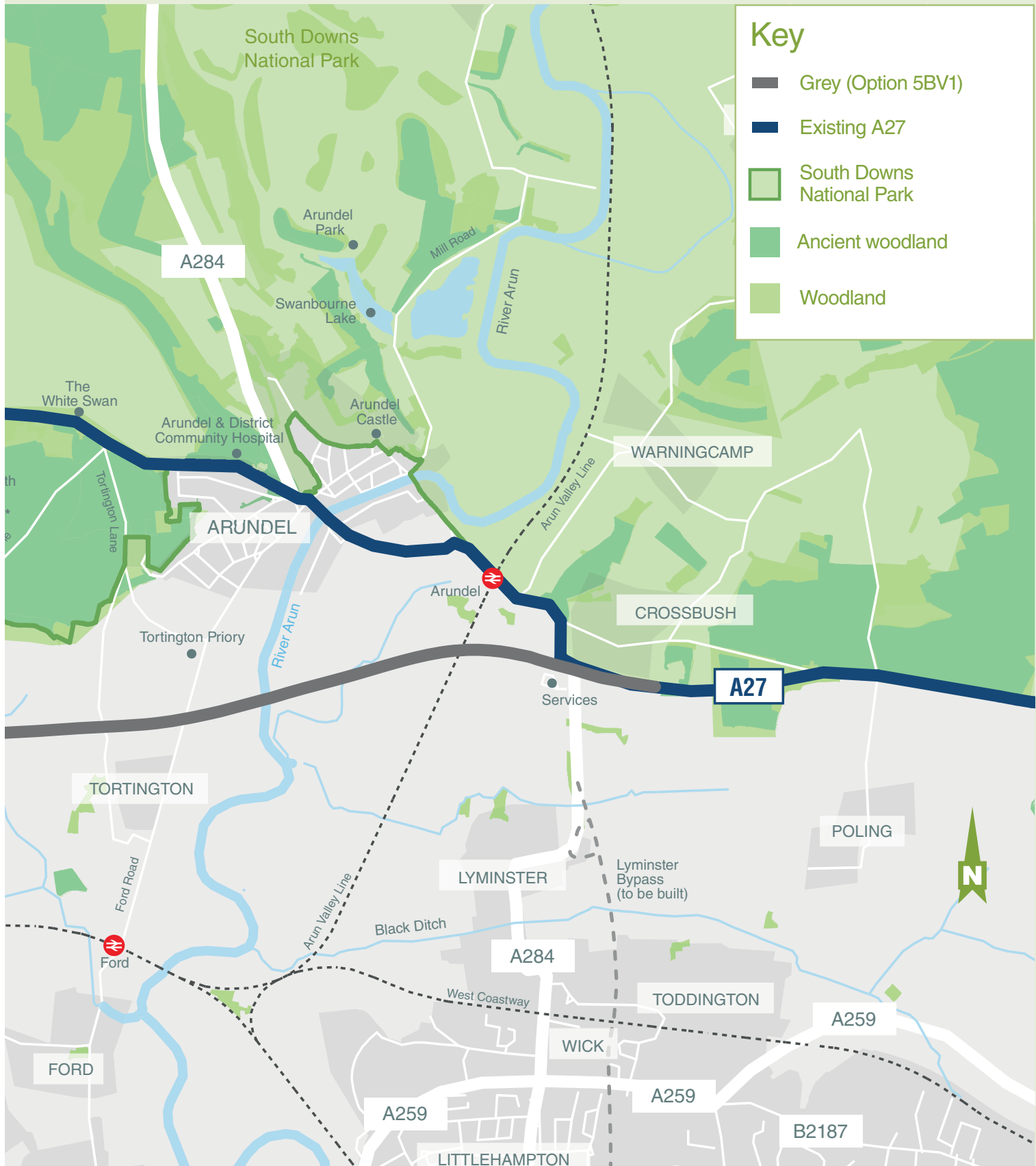
Figure 1: The preferred route



* North of A27 includes Dalesdown Wood, Danes Wood, Goblestubb's Copse, Madehurst Wood, Rewell Wood, Rough Copse, Screens Wood, Sherwood Rough, The Rough, The Waterwoods, West Stubbs Copse.

** South of A27 includes Ash Piece, Barn's Copse, Binsted Park, Binsted Wood, Brickklin Copse, Brickklin Piece, Fowler's Copse, Furzefield Copse, Hundredhouse Copse, Lake Copse, Little Dane's Wood, Paine's Wood, Pedler's Croft, Pinewoods, Singer's Piece, Spinningwheel Copse, Steward's Copse, The Shaw, Tortington Common, Wincher's Copse, Threecorner Wood.

Source: Ordnance Survey base map/DEFRA Magic Map application



8km



The new bypass will feature approximately 8km of dual two-lane carriageway to the south of the existing A27. Starting at Crossbush, the route will reconnect with the existing A27 in the west near the A27/A29 Fontwell (east) roundabout. Key features will likely include:

- A junction at Crossbush with access to and from the A27 in both directions
- A new viaduct spanning the River Arun and a bridge over the Arun Valley Railway
- A new bridge over Binsted Rife
- A new junction with the existing A27 at Tye Lane to the north of Walberton (with the A27 continuing via an underpass) enabling westbound access onto the A27 and eastbound access from the A27
- The closure of Tye Lane south of the new route

Subject to agreement with West Sussex County Council, the existing A27, approximately 6.6km in length, will be converted to a local road between the junctions with Tye Lane and Mill Road and Crossbush junction. This process, known as ‘detrunking’, could offer opportunities to deliver wider benefits that take advantage of the much lower traffic levels that will be using the road. It may be possible to improve local access for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders, for example, while also improving connectivity between habitats that are currently divided by the existing road. These opportunities will be identified and assessed as our more detailed design work develops.

The current scheme design includes an embankment across the River Arun floodplain, although we will consider a viaduct as more detailed design work is undertaken. Similarly, we know there is local interest in a new junction with Ford Road, which will also be considered further as the design work progresses, noting that it is not within the current scope of Grey. Mitigation measures will be developed, and a landscape level assessment undertaken to ensure any proposals are as sensitive to the environment and existing landscape as possible.

THE REASONS FOR CHOOSING GREY

We have weighed up a range of considerations to identify our new preferred route.

These have included:

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How well the proposed designs would meet the scheme objectives

Potential impacts on local communities and the environment around Arundel

The extent to which the proposals would comply with planning policy

Feedback received during our public consultation process

The cost of delivering the scheme and the value-for-money that would be achieved by doing so

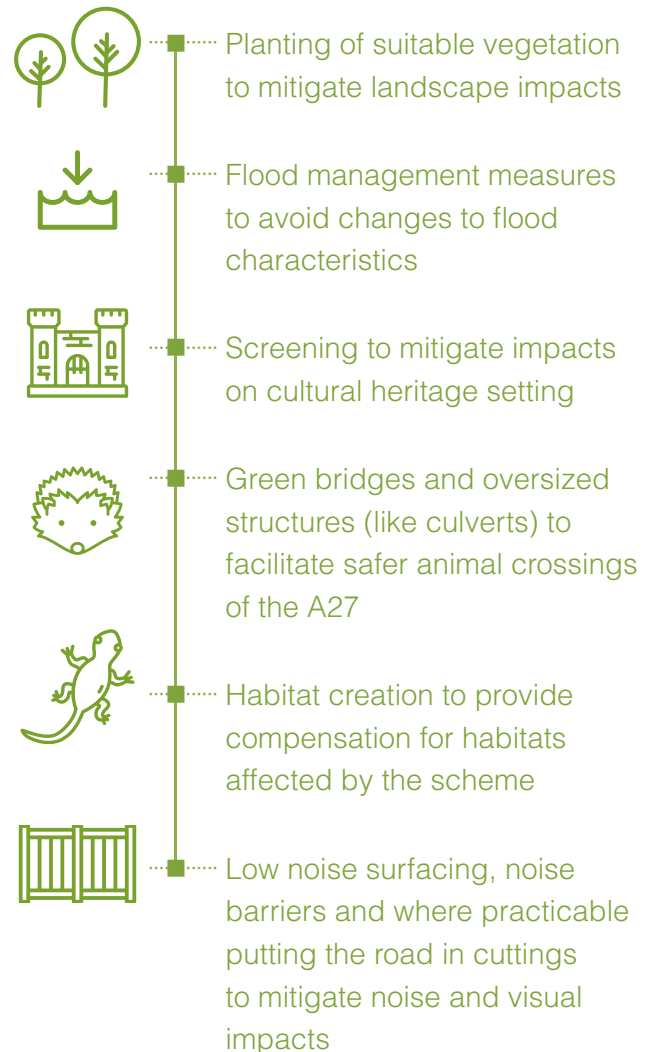
While there are no easy answers to the challenges of improving the A27 around Arundel, the results of our extensive assessment work have clearly identified Grey as the best long-term solution.

As well as removing high traffic flows from Arundel town centre, the route will cater for forecast traffic volumes while also offering the greatest time savings compared to today's travel times. The route is outside the South Downs National Park, which is very important in planning policy terms, and outside of woodland designated as ancient by Natural England.

Although the A27 at Arundel will no longer encroach on the National Park, we recognise the very special nature of this wider area in environmental terms and fully understand concerns expressed by statutory environmental bodies about the challenges of introducing any new scheme around Arundel. We are committed to minimising the environmental impact of our road network and look forward to working closely with our partners to identify practical solutions to these challenges that are still to be resolved within the detailed design work.

The responses to the further consultation (discussed in more detail later in the brochure) identified a desire to improve the A27 yet showed that views were very polarised across all options, both for and against. We recognise that Grey was not the most preferred option but it does represent a compromise option around which support can be built. We also recognise that local communities, particularly in Binsted, Tortington and Walberton, will be concerned about the impact of the new road on their villages. We will continue working closely with these communities and other relevant stakeholders, including Arun District Council and West Sussex County Council to design the most appropriate mitigation measures.

Specific mitigation and compensation measures which could be implemented include:



Funding the scheme

As the longest of the options put forward as part of the further consultation, Grey is the most expensive. This means that more funding will be required, above the budget that was allocated for the scheme prior to the further public consultation in 2019. This has clearly been a difficult issue to resolve, but following detailed consideration Highways England has identified the necessary funds from within the Road Investment Strategy allocation to deliver Grey.

Public consultations that informed this decision

We consulted on options for a proposed A27 Arundel Bypass in 2017 and following initial consultation, Option 5AV3, was announced as our preferred route in May 2018.

In developing the design for that route, new information was identified which led us to take a fresh look at all options. We therefore decided to carry out a further consultation which took place from 30 August to 24 October 2019.

The options presented for further public consultation

Each option was assigned a colour, as well as a technical number, for ease of reference. They would have all featured a junction at Crossbush, with access to and from the A27 in both directions, and a speed limit of 70 mph (unless otherwise stated):

- Cyan (Option 1V5)
- Beige (Option 1V9) (with 50 mph restriction)
- Crimson (Option 3V1)
- Magenta (Option 4/5AV1)
- Amber (Option 4/5AV2)
- Grey (Option 5BV1)

Each of the options would support the local authorities' housing and growth strategies and cater for the predicted growth in traffic until at least 2041. Yet there were significant environmental sensitivities and national planning policy risks with all the options.

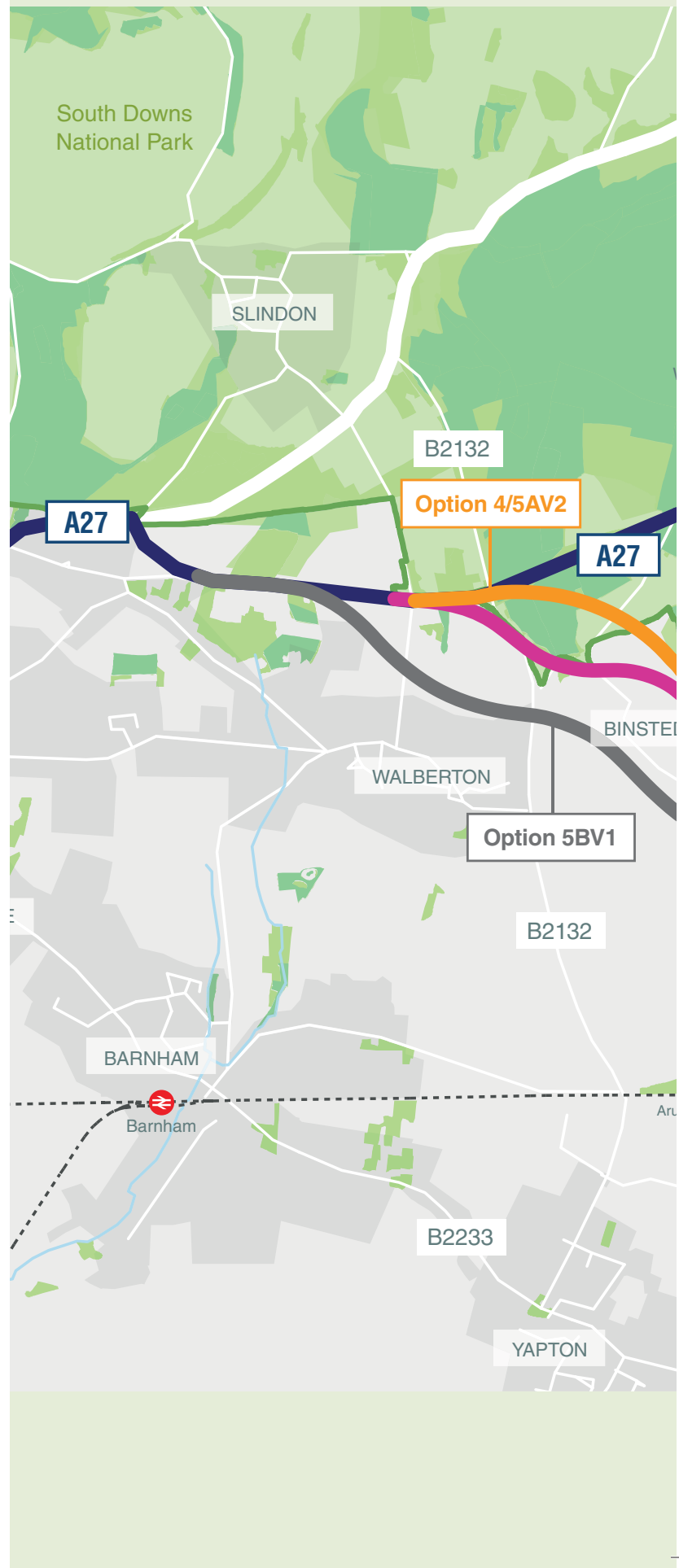
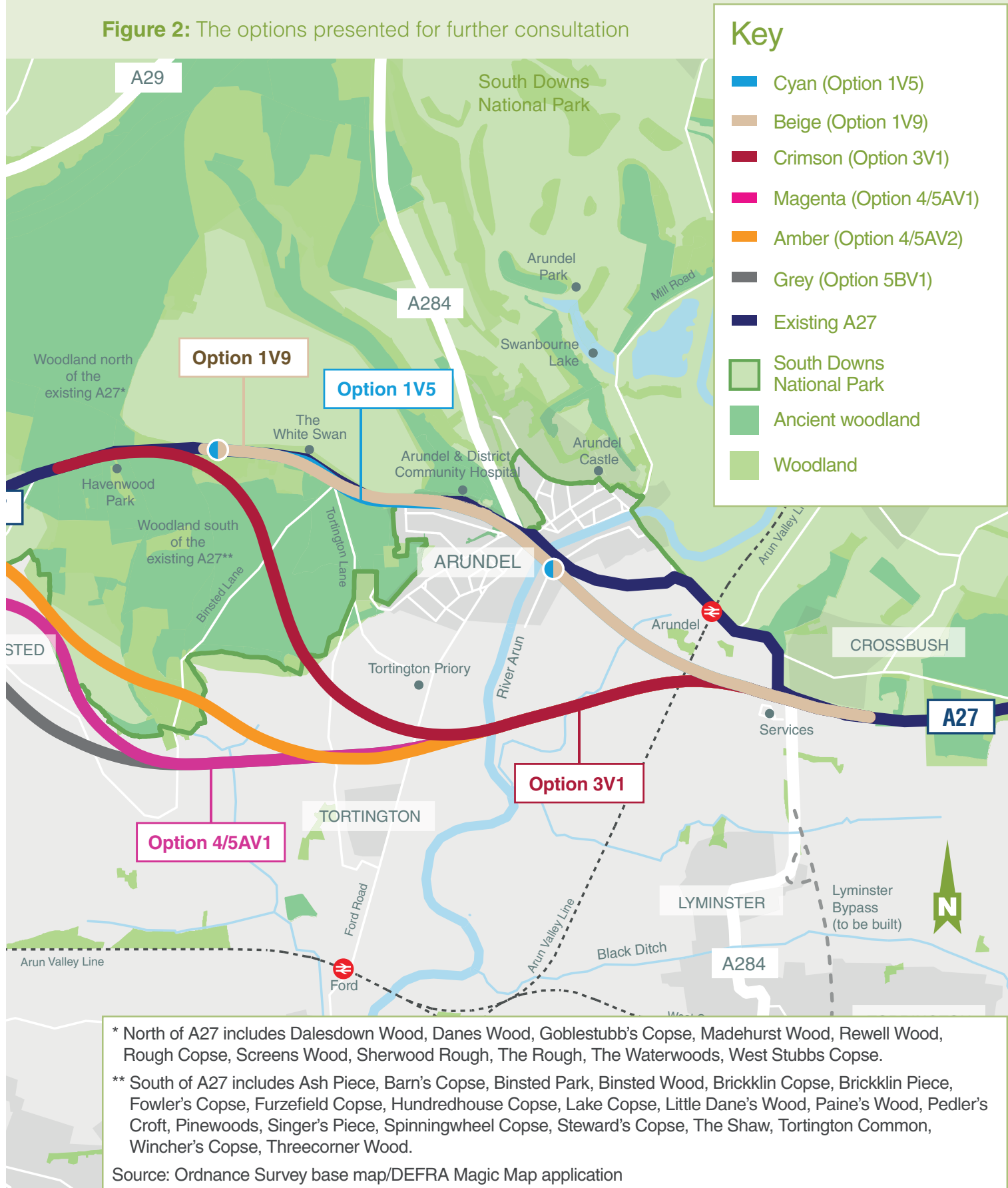


Figure 2: The options presented for further consultation





Feedback we received from the further public consultation:

Cost ranges for each option were published as part of the further consultation. These showed that two options (Cyan and Beige) were broadly deliverable within the budget of £100-250 million that was allocated for the scheme through the Government's Road Investment Strategy. However, we still wanted to understand views on all six options, as the ranges were early estimates based on work completed to date and did not necessarily reflect the final costs for the project.

More than 1,600 people attended our 2019 consultation exhibitions and we received 4,945 response forms as well as 113 other written responses. Two email campaigns that opposed the proposals were launched during the further consultation. One supported the 'Arundel Alternative' (a wide single carriageway proposal that was promoted locally) and prompted 575 emails. The other was led by the Woodland Trust and objected to all the proposed options due to their environmental impacts and it prompted 1,449 emails.

Technical corrections during further public consultation

Following the close of the further consultation, we identified some issues with the way certain information had been presented and needed to be corrected. We wanted to bring this to the attention of those who had taken part in the further consultation.

Therefore, we launched a further review period which took place between 3 February and 1 March 2020, to give people an opportunity to let us know if their views of the options had changed as a result of the corrected information.

- Two-thirds (67%) of respondents supported the need to improve the A27 around Arundel but overall opinions on the best ways of delivering improvements were divided between different sections of the community.
- Beige attracted the most support (27%) when respondents were asked which of the options they would prefer if they were all brought into an affordable range, followed by 'Do nothing' (25%) and Magenta (22%). The next most supported options were Cyan (12%), Grey (7%), Crimson (3%) and Amber (2%)³.

Further analysis of responses suggested the support for Beige or 'Do nothing' was at least partly influenced by underlying preferences for a wide single carriageway proposal, promoted locally as the 'Arundel Alternative'. This proposal had been considered earlier in the process but it had been discounted as it wouldn't meet the scheme objectives.

- Magenta appeared to be well supported by respondents from Arundel, in particular, and was the preferred option of both Arun District Council and West Sussex County Council.
- Conversely, more than one-third (37%) of respondents selected Magenta as their least preferred option. Cyan, Beige and 'Do nothing', accounted for 15%, 12% and 11% of responses, respectively.
- Statutory environmental bodies, including Natural England, the Environment Agency, the Forestry Commission and Historic England had significant concerns regarding all options, but particularly the 'offline' options (Crimson, Magenta, Amber and Grey). The South Downs National Park Authority submitted a holding objection to all routes.

³The respondent percentages don't add up to 100% due to rounding to the nearest whole number

Please refer to our Report on the Further Consultation for full details of the feedback we received. The report is available from: <https://highwaysengland.co.uk/our-work/south-east/a27-arundel-bypass/>

Next steps

We are currently at the end of Stage 2 – option selection, as indicated by the arrow in Figure 3 below.

The next step will be to develop the preliminary design which will include the need to conduct surveys and investigations. This will inform a landscape level assessment and support the development of mitigation measures to ensure the proposal is as sensitive to the environment and existing landscape as possible.

As part of this process your views will be sought on the preliminary design and the results of those further environmental assessments that we will have undertaken.

Application for Development Consent Order

This scheme is classed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project under the Planning Act 2008. Highways England will submit an application for development consent to the Planning Inspectorate who, after due examination, will make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Transport. Further information on the Development Consent Order process is available on the Planning Inspectorate’s website:

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/>

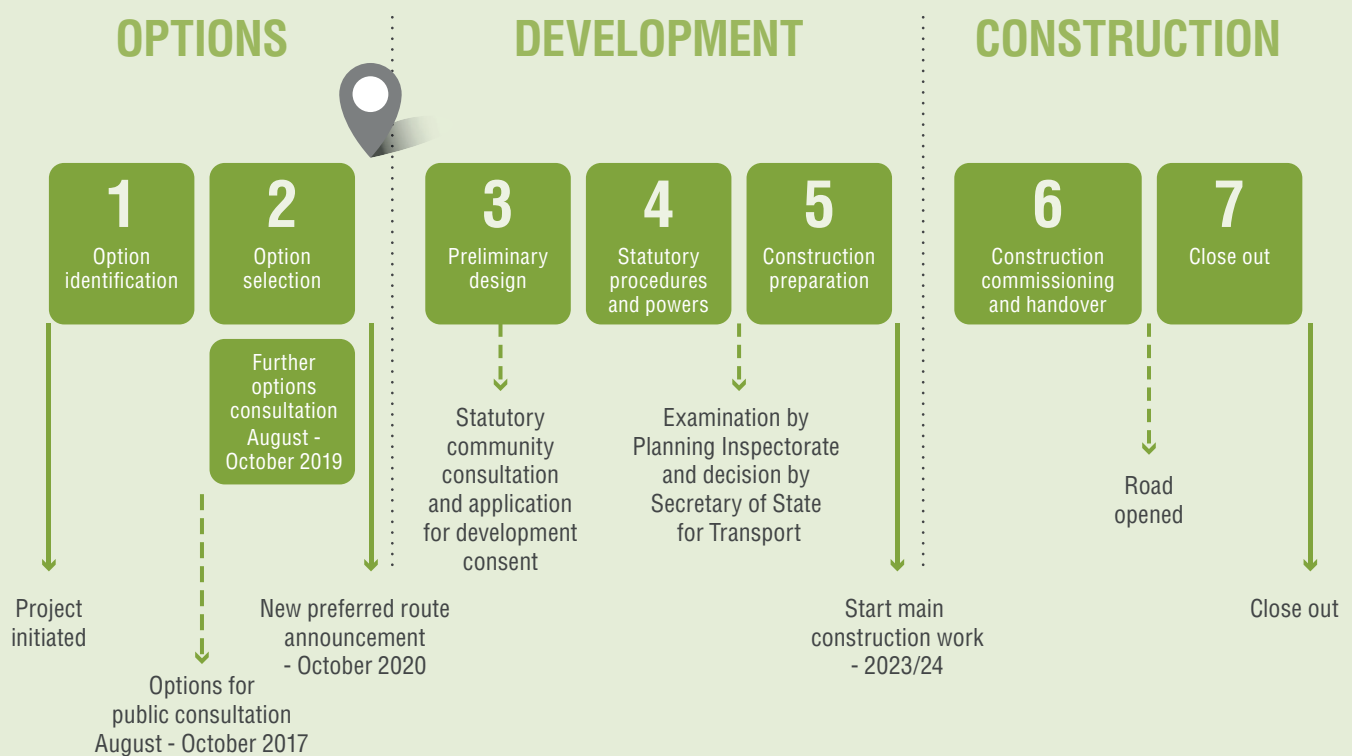


Figure 3: Stages of scheme development



Covid-19 restrictions

At the time of writing this leaflet there are Covid-19 restrictions in place which limit the way Highways England can communicate with interested parties and individuals affected by this announcement.

We will ensure all relevant documents are available electronically on the Highways England website (details given below) and as soon as the restrictions are sufficiently relaxed we will ensure this brochure is available at local deposit points as would normally be provided.

We will also provide this leaflet by post to all landowners who will be directly affected by this announcement.

Further information



For more information about the scheme, please visit our website, where you can also sign up to receive email alerts whenever it is updated:

www.highwaysengland.co.uk/a27arundel

The following documents are also available to read and download via a link on the project website:

- Report on Further Consultation
- Scheme Assessment Report

If you require a hard copy of any of the documents, you can contact the A27 Arundel Project Team using the contact details below. Please note that due to the size of the documents, a charge may be applied to cover printing and delivery costs.

In writing:

A27 Project Team, Highways England,
Bridge House, 1 Walnut Tree Close, Guildford,
Surrey, GU1 4LZ

By email:

A27ArundelBypass@highwaysengland.co.uk

By telephone (24 hours):

0300 123 5000 – our Customer Contact Centre will pass on a message to the project team

Website:

www.highwaysengland.co.uk/A27Arundel

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