

## A27 Worthing Lancing improvements: Environmental Assessment Summary

### Introduction

This note describes how and why we assess the potential environmental impacts of the A27 Worthing and Lancing improvements scheme. More detailed documents covering this topic are available on our website: [www.highways.gov.uk/a27Worthing-and-Lancing](http://www.highways.gov.uk/a27Worthing-and-Lancing)

### How are environmental impacts assessed, measured and documented?

Potential environmental impacts are assessed through a combination of desk-based studies, site visits and surveys, and modelling of future environmental conditions. They are measured using a combination of an environmental asset's sensitivity (usually defined by its importance e.g. an internationally important wildlife site or World Heritage Site, and its existing quality or condition) and the size or scale of the anticipated impact resulting from a proposed scheme.

The environmental assessment findings are reported in the Stage 1 Environmental Study Report, which is available on the scheme website and at the public exhibitions. The Environmental Study Report sets out how the initial assessment has been undertaken, the information on existing conditions collected and a preliminary assessment of potential impacts. The Environmental Study Report is used to help us to identify the option that will be taken forward for further assessment.

### What is environmental assessment?

Environmental assessment is the process of assessing the likely significant environmental impacts of a proposed scheme. It looks at a series of environmental factors and uses industry-standard criteria to measure the likely environmental changes resulting from the proposed option. It measures the likely environmental performance and helps us develop the proposal in a way that avoids (where possible) or reduces negative environmental impacts and enhances positive environmental impacts.

### What topics are examined for the Environmental Assessment?

The environmental assessment process considers the potential for impacts on:

- Air quality
- Noise and vibration
- Landscape and visual
- Cultural heritage
- Biodiversity
- Geology and soils
- Climate change
- Water and flood risk
- Materials and resources
- People and communities
- Human health
- Equality
- Vulnerability to major accidents and disasters

A geographical study area is designated for each of these topics, which is identified through initial scoping studies and published industry best practice guidance. These geographical study areas vary by topic, since some effects can be experienced across a wider area than others. Further information on the individual study areas is provided in the Stage 1 Environmental Study Report.

### When is environmental assessment required?

Infrastructure developments of certain sizes, significant impacted and in environmentally sensitive areas are required to undertake a statutory (legally compliant) Environmental Impact Assessment.

It is currently assumed that the A27 Worthing and Lancing improvements scheme will require an Environmental Impact Assessment due to the nature and scale of the scheme. The findings of the Environmental Impact Assessment are reported in an Environmental Statement which is one of the documents required in support of an application for consent.

However, future revision of the scheme design may reduce the scale of potential impacts to environmentally sensitive areas which may then mean that a statutory Environmental Impact Assessment is not a requirement.

Where Environmental Impact Assessment is not required, non-statutory environmental assessment would still need to be undertaken and the resulting reporting would be submitted as part of the application for consent.

The environmental assessment process aims to be transparent in identifying the potential positive and negative environmental impacts of a scheme, and gives the public the opportunity to comment on the proposals as well as the measures to reduce, offset, or eliminate significant negative environmental impacts (referred to collectively as 'mitigation measures').

### When is survey work undertaken and why?

Surveys are undertaken to establish the existing conditions within the topic specific geographical study area. We can then identify the possible impacts and mitigation on sensitive resources, such as protected species, habitats, designated sites, historic features, and people and communities. A number of environmental surveys are taking place between February 2017 and early 2018. These surveys will investigate a number of different factors, including ecology, noise levels, cultural heritage, landscape and water quality. Landowners have been approached to request land access prior to the surveys being undertaken.

### Who checks and comments on whether the work is carried out to a sufficient standard?

Prior to any application material being submitted the technical content of the environmental assessment will be reviewed by senior technical specialists. Statutory organisations, such as the Environment Agency, Natural England, Historic England, and South Downs National Park Authority, will be engaged from early in the process to inform the full scope of the assessment. These parties will then be consulted by the decision maker once the application has been submitted.

### What further work will be undertaken at the next design stage?

The next stage of design is the preliminary design phase. This is concerned with the development of the preferred option, taking it through the necessary statutory processes. In order to do this the following will need to be undertaken:

- Further surveys (such as topographical, geotechnical, environmental)
- Complete and fix the preliminary design of the preferred route
- Prepare an application for consent
- Complete the statutory Environmental Impact Assessment or non-statutory environmental assessment reporting for inclusion as part of the scheme application.