

A27 Worthing and Lancing improvements: Planning Policy Summary

Introduction

This note describes the planning context in which the A27 Worthing and Lancing improvement scheme would be assessed and what we must do to obtain consent to deliver the project.

What is the Government's vision for the national transport network?

The *National Policy Statement for National Networks* (NPSNN) establishes Government policy on the need for development of the national transport network, and sets criteria to assess and evaluate the planning merits of such projects.

The NPSNN states that the Government will deliver national transport networks that meet the country's long-term needs, supporting a prosperous and competitive economy and improving overall quality of life, as part of a wider transport system. This means creating road networks which:

- Have the capacity, connectivity and resilience to support growth and create jobs
- Support and improve journey quality, reliability and safety
- Help meet environmental goals and the move to a low carbon economy
- Join up our communities.

The *Roads Investment Strategy 2015* specifies major projects, including the A27 Worthing and Lancing improvements, to meet the need for development of the highway network.

What are Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs)?

If a highway improvement project is of a certain scale and significance, it is designated as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) according to the Planning Act 2008.

The A27 Worthing Lancing improvements scheme is likely to be defined as a *Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP)* by the Planning Act 2008. This will depend on the eventual size and impacts of the scheme, which may change as we develop our designs. If the scheme is a NSIP, we must obtain a *Development Consent Order (DCO)* from the Secretary of State, after examination by the Planning Inspectorate. A DCO is a comprehensive type of planning permission combined with powers necessary to develop complex infrastructure schemes, such as powers to compulsorily purchase land.

A key feature of a DCO application is that it is mandatory for the promoter (i.e. us, Highways England) to have regard to pre-application consultation undertaken in accordance with a published *Statement of Community Consultation (SOCC)*. We plan to publish this in spring 2018 and then there will be a further round of (statutory) consultation later in 2018 on the Preferred Route for the scheme.

Following the consultation, we will then prepare and lodge the planning application with PINS. Inspectors will carry out a six-month public examination, where they hear evidence from a range of sources to inform their recommendation report.

The final decision on the scheme will be made by the Secretary of State for Transport, who will take into account the following factors:

- National planning policy, principally the policies contained in the *National Policy Statement for National Networks* (NPSNN).
- The impacts and benefits of the scheme (which might include local impacts and local policy matters).
- Legal and international obligations.

More information on the planning process and opportunities to be involved is available from the Planning Inspectorate at: <http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk>.
The scheme cannot be built without consent from the Secretary of State for Transport.

What are the National Planning Policy Statement Issues for Worthing and Lancing?

The A27 Worthing and Lancing improvement scheme project helps deliver NPSNN objectives for economic performance, safety and sustainable transport. However, the NPSNN also protects special features that may be harmed by the scheme. Our project could affect one such area:

National Parks

As set out in the consultation brochure, the proposal for the Busticle Lane / Halewick Lane Junction would require some land from the South Downs National Park.

However, Policy 5.150 – 5.151 requires that for projects in national parks *“the Secretary of State should refuse development consent in these areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that it is in the public interest.”* Policies 5.154 - 5.155 state that projects outside of national parks should aim to *“avoid compromising the purposes of designation and ... be designed sensitively given the various siting, operational, and other relevant constraints”*. Major development within or in the setting of a national park could, in some cases, affect the special purposes of national parks.