

## **Build a better A27 (BABA27) Meeting at Assembly Rooms, North Street**

**7<sup>th</sup> Feb 2018**

Began at 5.45pm

1)Ash Pal opened to meeting by explaining that the objective is now to secure funding for A27 upgrade in **RIS2**. The submission to Highways England (HE) must be ready by the late Spring (date TBC). This means there is very little time left and we must use the conclusions reached from all the previous discussions within the group as the criteria to give to the appointed Highway Consultants, **SYSTRA**.

2)Our MP Gillian Keegan will not attend the next few sessions and will return in time to promote the RIS2 application.

3)The timing will be as follows: there will be two more BABA27 meetings in w/c 12<sup>th</sup> March and w/c 16<sup>th</sup> April, followed by a member working group meeting in the w/c 16 April; then a draft report will be issued on 20 April for comments to be returned by 4 May and a final report by 18 May. After that there will be meetings of both CDC and WSCC members to endorse the report in June before it is sent in to the RIS2 forum. At some stage HE will meet the BABA27 for a Q&A (date TBC).

4)We then heard from two members of SYSTRA (David and Katie)who wanted to agree success criteria. They introduced themselves and the experience that their consultancy had. They talked about demand management, and the possibility of reducing demand through innovation, particularly using technology. They also mentioned the more efficient use of road space citing many apps that are already available to help reduce demand as well as the more obvious interactive road signing. They explained that with such a short timeframe, before they embarked upon producing their "High level options list" that they hope will lead to a solution for the design of the A27 work, they wished to use the evening to elucidate some comment from us on what the BABA27 meant when they used certain terms and phrases from the condensed "mantra" or pledges. They wanted to hear from each table on these terms and phrases so that they can test each phrase for consistency, conflict, constraints and priorities. These are the terms and phrases:-

- Through and local traffic
- Multimodal transport
- Environmental issues
- Chichester as the jewel in the Crown
- Landscape and conservation
- Local and regional economy
- Innovation

### **Through and local traffic**

Broadly we agreed that traffic arriving at Fishbourne roundabout from the west and travelling along the A27 to the Portfield and continuing east on the A27, is regarded as through traffic. Also traffic coming from the Manhood Peninsula and going northwards towards London on the A286 was also through traffic. Someone defined through traffic as any trip where Chichester got in the way.

Local traffic is everything else. But some argued that traffic from Bognor joining the A27 from the A259 and travelling east or west on the A27 is also through traffic.

### **Multimodal transport**

This was meant to mean using different modes of transport other than the private car i.e. improvements to public transport or better provision for cycles.

### **Environmental issues**

Proper regard be paid to environmental factors including landscape, AONBs, local views and pollution from both fumes and noise.

### **Chichester as the jewel in the Crown**

Examples were given such as the need to improve footfall within the city as a result of A27 improvements

### **Landscape and conservation**

The need to avoid spoiling views of and towards the city from the Harbour and the Downs

### **Local and regional economy**

There were a number of people from businesses who relied on reliable transport, Natures Way and Covers. Some mentioned the importance of tourism on the Manhood. There were contrarian vies also expressed that economic growth of the wrong kind could be detrimental and that the relative isolation of Chichester from the larger conurbations kept Chichester a pleasant place to live. Opening up the A27 would inevitably bring more traffic and housing to the area.

### **Innovation**

Developments in modes of transport including the spread of electric vehicles.

A **Q&A** took place all through the meeting and SYSTRA then answered some points:-

**Imperfect information:** they accepted that they would have to use HE data to a large extent some of which in an ideal world would need re-evaluating. Over time, SYSTRA consider that the robustness of data will improve.

**High level options:** what are these? They explained that there will be three categories – those that involve changes “*on line*”, those that will be “*off line*” and a third category called “*modal*”. They gave the example that speed of road traffic can be maintained with variable messaging (modal) placed on roads well away from the District but which lead into the area.

SYSTRA warned about unrealistic expectations; cost (someone introduced the concept of optimism bias i.e. the percentage added to original cost estimate in order to cover cost inflation? – notorious in IT and major construction contracts); and the fact that they did not really have enough time or value in the commission to do all the research they might wish. Also the bids had to be lodged with Highways England within the next few months if the project stood a chance of being included in the RIS2 (2020-2025 cycle).

Ash Pal indicated that the next meeting will be in w/c 12 March followed by option sifting meeting in w/c 16 April.

He asked us all to report back to the groups we represent so that as many people as possible can become engaged as final conclusions are put forward.

People I spoke to were still under the impression that all options including the northern route were still on the table. I still believe we are dancing around the handbags. There are no options on the table yet. When there are I believe the group will fall apart like they did before.

Meeting ended at 8pm