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Andrew Tyrie has written to the Secretary of State for Transport insisting results are published

MP calls for action over A27

BY RUTH SCAMMELL

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THE MP for Chichester has demanded that the results of the A27 consultation are published immediately.

In a strongly worded letter to Chris Grayling, the Secretary of State for Transport, Andrew Tyrie said the results need to be published in order to provide

transparency and win back the public's trust.

He also said that full reasons must be given as to why the two northern options were excluded from the consultation.

The consultation on how to improve the heavily congested road closed in September yet Highways England has still not published the results.

The process has split the community with many people sharing differing

views on improvements to the road.

In the letter Mr Tyrie said: "While opposition to a route to the north of Chichester remains strong, I have received even stronger representations from those in Chichester and to the south about the process by which southern route options are being considered."

"Transparency in the decision-making process is now essential.

"The first step must be for you to

publish all submissions and conclusions from the consultation, which closed in September.

"The fact that they will only be published when Highways England presents its preferred option, which some will view as a fait accompli, has led many of my constituents to question the validity of the decision-making process."

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A27 results must be published - MP

BY RUTH SCAMMELL

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Continued from page 1

"Secondly, it is essential to demonstrate that the case for and against all the options has been thoroughly explained. This should cover the northern and southern bypass routes, which were set out in the preliminary consultation documents, but dropped prior to the formal consultation that began in March. The consultation included five different options for improvement of the congested road. The options included building new slip roads and making improvements to junctions.

Mr Tyrie said the results should take into account evidence supplied by the local councils. He also raised concerns about the loss of confidence in the whole process.

He added: "I appreciate that we are now approaching a point at which many millions of pounds could be committed to schemes to ease the unacceptable traffic problems on the A27.

"However, there has been a considerable loss of confidence in the decision-making process, and confidence can only be restored if there is full transparency before any firm decisions are made.

"Many constituents argue that this will require another round of consultation on all possible options, which could take some time. We certainly do need a comprehensive comparison of all

options.

"You should be in no doubt about the strength of feeling on this. Were a further consultation to be undertaken, it would be crucial not to permit any consequential delay to serve as an excuse for Chichester to lose altogether funding from Highways England to ease congestion."

Speaking exclusively to The Chichester Post, he said: "Highways England must immediately publish the consultation results, and in full. They must also give much more detailed reasoning for their rejection of other routes.

"Only with that level of transparency can confidence be restored in the process. Otherwise, my constituents will continue to feel that their views have been ignored. That's why I've written to the Secretary of State to press him on this, yet again.

"The current options to upgrade the existing road are not acceptable to many of my constituents. These views need to be heard.

"Any of the schemes on offer would need a good deal of work before they could be acceptable locally.

"Any scheme must avoid cutting off the southern part of the constituency.

"It must also avoid ending up forcing local traffic, which currently uses the A27, into the city centre. That would just create a different traffic nightmare at peak times."

As reported in The Chichester Post, Chichester District Council joined West Sussex County Council's leader Louise Goldsmith in asking for the consultation to be completely re-run.

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People show love for Markwells

AN EVENT was held at Markwells Wood to continue the fight against the threat of drilling inside the South Downs National Park.

Residents of Forestside and the surrounding villages met on Valentine's Day to show their love for Markwells Wood and the South Downs National Park.

People of all ages spent a creative hour making badges, bunting and eating cakes and biscuits, all with a "heart" theme.

Villagers were asked to write a Valentine's message on why the woods are so important to them.

Markwells Wood is an area of ancient woodland that is threatened with an oil development that will include four horizontal wells and a

reinjection well.

The planning application is being considered by the South Downs National Park.

Sarah Sharp, city councillor for Chichester South, said: "It was a pleasure to take part in this creative event to celebrate what our national park means for us all.

"We in Chichester value the countryside around us and can't take for granted that it will remain undamaged by exploitation and acidisation.

"We must ensure that our water supply is safe from dangerous chemicals and our children and grandchildren will be able to value bats and wildlife in their natural habitat for years to come."