

Regional Investment Programme
(South East)
Highways England
Bridge House
1 Walnut Tree Close
Guildford GU1 4LZ

10 January 2019

Dear [REDACTED]

A27 Arundel Bypass Scheme

Thank you for your request for information regarding our approach to the assessment of Option 3's Ancient Woodland area impact in the 2017 A27 Arundel Bypass Public Consultation, which I have dealt with under the terms of the Environmental Information Regulations Act 2004.

I can confirm that we do hold some relevant information on file and some has already been published and is available [here where you will find the 2017 Environmental Study Report and it's supporting appendices](#). The report and it's supporting appendices are located at the bottom of the webpage. This satisfies part of your request for documents and maps of the assessment of Ancient Woodland prior to our 2017 A27 Arundel Bypass Public Consultation.

The relevant text can be found in paragraphs 8.6.3 to 8.6.5 of the 2017 Environmental Study Report, and Figure 8.3. of Appendix Part 2 of the same document. Additionally, Section 6 of the witness statement (produced in response to the subsequent Judicial Review) describes the discovery of an overestimation of Ancient Woodland losses presented in the PCF Environmental Study Report. I've provided the relevant extract from the witness statement *below*.

6. ANCIENT WOODLAND

6.1 Introduction

This section of my statement describes the discovery of an overestimation of Ancient Woodland losses presented in the PCF Stage 1 ESR (Environmental Scoping Report). It outlines the causes and potential effects of the overestimation.

6.2 Historic Data

6.2.1 *There was a miscalculation of the area of Ancient Woodland loss provided in the Stage 1 ESR (published in June 2017). It was detected by WSP on 14 May 2018 and affected areas of potential Ancient Woodland loss calculated for both the PCF Stage 1 ESR and PCF Stage 1 Technical Appraisal Report (TAR).*

6.2.2 These areas of Ancient Woodland loss from PCF Stage 1 were used in the 2017 A27 Arundel Bypass Public Consultation Brochure to support the non-statutory public consultation undertaken between August and October 2017.

6.3 Current Data

6.3.1 Current calculations from on-going design work confirm that the original and revised areas of Ancient Woodland loss are as provided in Table 2. The table shows approximate area (hectares) of Ancient Woodland loss for each Project Option footprint, which includes a 15 metre buffer from earthworks extents of each Project Option.

Table 1 Areas of Ancient Woodland loss for Options 1, 3 and 5A (ha)

Option	PCF Stage 1 ESR June 2017	Current Calculations
1	5.29	2.96
3	24.31	12.15
5A	6.06	6.06

6.3.2 The discrepancy in Ancient Woodland calculations was initially identified by WSP on 14 May 2018 with quality checks conducted between 14 and 17 May 2018. WSP notified Highways England via e-mail on 21 May 2018. WSP continued investigations into the issue between 22 and 24 May 2018. The initial investigation was completed on 24 May 2018. Recalculated Ancient Woodland loss figures were issued to Highways England on 30 May 2018.

6.3.3 The calculation of Ancient Woodland loss was carried out in GIS (Geographic Information Systems). A software incompatibility created an overestimation of the affected areas of Ancient Woodland, for Option 1 and 3 respectively, which has now been corrected. Option 5A remains unaffected. The incompatibility between the software used resulted in miscalculations that appear to affect some but not all GIS files used in the calculations.

6.3.4 The cause of the overestimation is a technical GIS issue. A particular piece of software used to calculate the overlapping areas of an option footprint and Ancient Woodland did not function correctly when interfacing with the main GIS software.

6.4 Conclusions

6.4.1 With respect to areas of Ancient Woodland loss, the order of 'least area' to 'greatest area' of Ancient Woodland loss remains the same (Option 1 least, then Option 5A, then Option 3 greatest) under the PCF Stage 1 (2017) calculations and the revised (2018) calculations.

6.4.2 The biodiversity assessments in the 2017 A27 Arundel Bypass Public Consultation Brochure would remain the same. These are the summary assessments of biodiversity impacts, without mitigation.

6.4.3 It is noted that the PCF Stage 2 SAR assessments consider the revised Ancient Woodland calculations.

6.4.4 *Ancient Woodland loss is one of a number of biodiversity considerations that make up the overall biodiversity assessments. In my assessment, the overall outcome of this assessment would not have changed as a result of the error.*

6.4.5 *It is noted that the area of Ancient Woodland loss is not final and will change as the design refinement process continues through the PCF process. Ancient Woodland losses will continue to be assessed and refined through the design development process, and the areas are likely to change before the land take requirements for the Project are fixed by the end of PCF Stage 3.*

You also asked for any correspondence relating to the assessment of ancient woodland and I have attached the relevant emails to this email (attachment 1-4). These emails have been subject to redaction as some of the information is being withheld in reliance on Regulations [12 \(3\)](#) and [13](#) of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR), because it constitutes personal data of which you are not the data subject.

If you have any queries about this email, please contact me. Please remember to quote reference number 767,844 in any future communications.

If you are unhappy with the way we have handled your request you may ask for an internal review within 2 months of the date of this response for Freedom of Information requests and within 40 days for Environmental Information Regulations requests. Our internal review process is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/highways-england/about/complaints-procedure>. You should contact me if you wish to complain

If you require a print copy, please phone the Information Line on 0300 123 5000; or e-mail info@highwaysengland.co.uk.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely

A27 Arundel Bypass

Highways England | Bridge House | 1 Walnut Tree Close | Guildford | GU1 4LZ

Web: <https://highwaysengland.co.uk/projects/a27-arundel-improvement/>



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Via phone: Customer Contact Centre (CCC) on 0300 123 5000

Via email: info@highwaysengland.co.uk

Or find out more on our website: <https://highwaysengland.co.uk/projects/a27-arundel-improvement/>

