

Full Council – 23 November 2023

Motion Proposed by Councillor Pashby

A1 Roundabout at Sandy

The A1 dual carriageway passes from Georgetown at the north of Sandy, through Girtford, both of which have been absorbed into Sandy, and then through the village of Beeston, which is dissected by the A1 to the south. The distance between Georgetown and Beeston is 2 miles.

Between Girtford and Beeston is “Sandy” roundabout. This intersects with the A603/Bedford Road, leading to Sandy Town Centre to the east, and Bedford to the west.

Many residents have properties that immediately front onto the A1, and others are less than 50metres away. These residents suffer from pollution, noise and vibrations caused by the traffic at all the times of the day, but particularly between 6am and 7pm.

At Sandy roundabout there are frequent queues of traffic especially southbound at rush hour. Apart from the pollution this causes, vehicles jump the queue on London Road or “rat run” through Sandy, adding to high volumes of traffic and pollution in residential streets and Sandy Town Centre. This is being exaggerated by modern GPS/SatNav Systems which automatically divert traffic around delays.

When traffic is flowing on the A1, the speed that it travels (limit of 50mph), and acceleration from the roundabout adds to the pollution, noise and vibration. The speed limit is only partially controlled by fixed speed cameras and these also result in deceleration and acceleration.

The “Sandy A1 Problem” is not new. Indeed, previous governments have talked about a bypass; questions have been raised about this junction in the Houses of Commons by the Right Honourable Gentlemen, Alistair Burt and Richard Fuller MPs; National Highways have spent years in procrastination.

Indeed, the Leader of the Council and MP Richard Fuller, recently wrote to the Secretary of State for Transport regarding removal of A1 roundabouts at Sandy and Biggleswade. However, this is long term.

In 2027 the Black Cat / A421 improvements will bring further traffic down the A1 through Sandy. Therefore, a medium-term solution needs to be found. This must be acceptable to the majority of residents that live in proximity to the A1 and should include to reduction of the speed limit; use of average speed cameras in both directions, north and south of Sandy; and changes to discourage egress of through traffic into Sandy on residential roads.

I propose that the Leader of the Council writes a further letter to the Secretary of State for Transport to pressurise National Highways to prioritise a solution for the “Sandy A1 Problem”, include funding for this in RIS3 if it is not available now, and complete this before the Black Cat/A421 improvements open in 2027.