

ESCC REVIEW OF LOCAL
TRANSPORT PLAN 3
2011-2026

DELIVERING
A BETTER
EASTBOURNE

ECO Action Network
Eastbourne

25/06/2020



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BACKGROUND

We are in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and have seen major changes taking place, at pace, for working, shopping, lifestyles and travel. We neither know the longer-term implications for planning forecasts for London and the South East, nor future travel to/from and within Eastbourne. It will probably be a period of years before the “new normal” will be established.

Eastbourne ECO Action Network (EEAN) believes there is an urgent need to progress development of transport schemes and plans which have a low risk of proving to be unwarranted. We have been guided by elements of the Department for Transport’s (DfT) Decarbonising Transport, DfT’s guidance on Active Travel, emphasising the importance of increasing cycling and walking, Transport for the South East’s recent draft Transport Strategy, ESCC’s LTP3 and Eastbourne Borough Council’s (EBC) consultation on developing a new Local Plan 2018-2038.

Once a post COVID-19 “new normal” has been established EEAN believes that a quality transport strategy for Eastbourne will need to be developed.

PURPOSE OF THE SUBMISSION

EEAN wants to help to develop a DfT compliant Decarbonising Transport Strategy and Plan which will result in a better Eastbourne.

We are presenting a number of actions which we wish ESCC to consider carefully and act upon.

We have presented this document to the Eastbourne Chamber of Commerce, and their unedited comments are set out below – [Comments: Eastbourne Chamber of Commerce](#).



We have also submitted our views, and those received from the Chamber of Commerce, to EBC's Planning Committee. See their feedback below – [Comments: Eastbourne Borough Council Planning Committee](#).

THE NEED FOR A TRANSPORT STRATEGY FOR EASTBOURNE

The record of the recent Eastbourne Modelling Workshop set out in AECOM's Technical Note 2 within EBC's published document *Multi-Modal Transport Model for Eastbourne Borough Council* makes clear that Eastbourne does not currently possess a transport strategy.

For a town with a population of over 100,000 people, set to grow further, wishing to achieve carbon neutrality and with serious issues of economic competitiveness this is unacceptable. Indeed, taken with Hailsham and Polegate, the greater Eastbourne area has a population of around 140,000 – the size of a small city.

The audit carried out by AECOM of ESCC's existing data and models shows little compliance with DfT Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG). There is no basis therefore for the reliable assessment of options or much needed target setting and monitoring. Quality models informed by reliable data are necessary for development of a strategy that will meet the challenges ahead.

Possession of a DfT compliant Decarbonising Transport Strategy for Eastbourne would far better serve the town by providing eligibility for important Government initiatives and greater access to funds. The current lack of a strategy must be rectified in the course of the next LTP period. See further comments on data collection and model construction in [The Failure to Deal with Local Congestion](#).



REVIEW OF THE LAST FIVE-YEAR PERIOD

As a start to the review process ahead EEAN considers that it would be helpful for ESCC to address the main successes and disappointments of the previous five years of LTP 3. We all need to better understand why elements have succeeded and why other projects have not been implemented over the currency of three consecutive Local Transport Plans. Only in this way can we all engage to help see transport improvements be brought forward efficiently and speedily and help create a better Eastbourne, supported by appropriate measures in its hinterland.

REVIEW OF THE KEY OBJECTIVES OF THE LTP

ESCC states the two key objectives of the current LTP are:

- improve economic competitiveness and growth;
- improve safety, health and security.

EEAN considers that to nest better within the new draft Transport Strategy for the South East, the objectives of the LTP should reflect a more sustainable route to growth. EEAN also considers that DfT's Decarbonising Transport requires an appropriate response from transport strategies, policies and plans.

EEAN believe the next LTP should have a key objective to **facilitate the earliest practical achievement of net zero carbon emissions.**



THE FAILURE TO DEAL WITH LOCAL CONGESTION

“We know we will need to make some tough decisions about how, not if, we manage demand on the busiest parts of our transport networks as we cannot continue to simply build our way to growth.”

Cllr Keith Glazier, Chair of Transport for the South East¹

Previous LTPs have all recognised the prospect of worsening road traffic congestion and its effect on bus services.

We are advised by bus industry experts that bus journey times are taking 40% longer on average than in the past decade. We are also advised that services to Eastbourne Pier and Winter Garden, important to the town’s tourism and leisure economy, have had to be withdrawn due to town centre traffic congestion.

If any further commentary is needed on congestion in and around Eastbourne, then the record of the Eastbourne Modelling Workshop, referred to above, provides it.

With forecasts of significant increases in population and of increased car ownership the prospect is of substantially increased congestion throughout the town. There appears to be no credible way forward other than to plan for and facilitate an increase in use of active travel, bus and rail alongside reduced parking requirements for new build, and implementation of a range of tried and tested demand management measures.

EEAN now looks to ESCC to work closely, efficiently and speedily with Eastbourne Borough Council and adjoining Wealden District Council to make these tough decisions.

¹ [Transport Strategy for the South East](#)



RE-VITALISING DELIVERY

In advance of the reaching of the “new normal” ESCC needs to:

- start prioritising the development and implementation of a range of active travel improvements throughout the town;
- work with partners to further develop and bring forward the delivery of bus priority, frequency improvements and other complementary measures along key routes in the town;
- work with EBC and partners to better understand the full potential of existing and future rail assets serving the town;
- facilitate the up-take of electric vehicles;
- develop and bring forward complementary parking policies;
- increase the effectiveness of Sustainable School Travel initiatives.

Following an agreed reaching of the “new normal” ESCC needs to:

- collect and utilise up-to-date post COVID-19 data, planning forecasts and appropriate models to develop the basis of a DfT TAG compliant transport strategy for Eastbourne;
- use the above models to analyse problems and opportunities, explore, refine and appraise options and guide an implementation programme;
- set targets for improved transport outcomes;
- develop a continuing programme of data collection to monitor progress.



DELIVERING MODAL SHIFT

Without the incentives to change travel behaviour, nothing much will happen. To achieve necessary change, required by National Policy, ESCC and EBC/WDC will need to collaborate much more than they have done in the past. With climate change imperatives ahead, there is a need to weigh up all potential incentives represented in good practice in the UK and elsewhere. This applies both in the fields of planning and transport, which should be closely integrated but currently are not.

To obtain the best outcome, the development of strategy should not just consider demand management options in isolation. They should be considered together to achieve maximum synergy and mutual benefit.

ACTIVE TRAVEL

“I will champion (...) safer cycling and walking.”

Caroline Ansell MP, My Great Green Pledge²

The Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

ESCC should commence implementing its Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

In accordance with the DfT’s emerging Transport Decarbonisation Plan (TDP), ESCC should also examine the extent to which the LCWIP can be enhanced. The LCWIP is trying to fit solutions onto the existing road network but to be more effective space needs to be re-allocated for both bus lanes and protected cycle zones. Special attention should be paid to opportunities for improved networks that could arise from new development sites, with

² “Eastbourne & Willingdon Life”, election brochure, 2019.



infrastructure in situ on occupation of the first dwelling. To achieve the significant shift in favour of cycling and walking then space, priority and design for active travel needs to be re-ordered ahead of the current approach.

Clear advice needs to be provided in terms of new housing to reflect the need for permeability and direct access routes. A strategy for re-allocating road space and restriction of speeds needs to be developed. There must be much greater focus on public health, congestion, carbon reduction and exercise. Recent innovations such as e-bikes and e-scooters all require a definite road map to support and deliver the benefits from these new modes.

[The Need for an Over-Archiving Walking Strategy](#)

It is good that a start has been made with the LCWIP. What now seems to be necessary is a root and branch review of the many different walking related initiatives. Consideration is needed of how they might be better joined to create an over-arching strategy to cover the DfT's ambitions for more walking in Eastbourne.

EBC's *Active Eastbourne Strategy 2017-2022* clearly has the potential to encourage more walking. There is still, however, a long way to go as we note the disappointing recognition in [The Failure to Deal with Local Congestion](#).

According to the Active Sussex, Eastbourne has the highest proportion of physically inactive people at 30%, the equivalent of 26,100 people.³

The Eastbourne International Walking Festival is an important event, which has positive benefits for health, tourism and the general economy of the town, but can it do more to play into DfT's ambitions for greater use of active travel? Beat the Street is, again, an excellent initiative, but how well does it link to the Sustainable School Travel agenda referred to in [Sustainable School Travel](#)? EEAN believes it would be profitable for ESCC and EBC to collaborate and review walking initiatives across Eastbourne to produce a strategy that helps meet DfT Active Travel ambitions.

³ [Active Lives Survey 2017/18](#) by Active England.



A new over-arching strategy for walking should also consider the issues involved in making it safe for pedestrians in town, including an environment that is conducive for walking, good street lighting, repaired pavements and visitor friendly signage. Active travel needs to be a better experience than at present.

Eastbourne is very well placed to increase the proportion of trips made by walking and it has the potential to be an exemplar town. However, it does need more thought given to how best to achieve this important aim and more drive in delivering it.

BUS PRIORITY AND COMPLEMENTARY MEASURES

ESCC should implement schemes identified for *The Hailsham-Polegate-Eastbourne Movement and Access Corridor*.

These include Polegate/Willingdon (A2270 Eastbourne Road); Eastbourne (Kings Drive) and Hailsham phases.

ESCC should develop a complementary East-West bus priority corridor along key elements of St Anthony's Avenue and Seaside towards the town centre.

This East-West corridor will need to consider bus lanes and new complementary signalisation (with bus priority features) of key junctions and crossing facilities. This would include the A259 Seaside/Lottbridge Drove roundabout and adjoining pedestrian crossing points, which would need to be coordinated.

The above bus priority measures on key North-South and East-West corridors will, of course, provide wider network benefits leading to an increase in bus service users across the county. Examples of such benefits include reduced bus journey times from Uckfield, Herstmonceux, Pevensey, Heathfield, Horam and Bexhill. In other words, the benefits migrate back, benefiting the wider community.



EEAN has been advised by bus industry experts that investment in zero emission buses should only take place when there is a strong partnership approach that enables them to speed those expensive new machines up to the point where they can deliver a much improved choice for motorists. Delivery of zero emission buses with quicker journey times would reduce all roadside emissions, improve the climate, change travel behaviour and generate the growth that will help fund further investment.

ESCC and key partners should investigate further bus-only additions to the network which could provide significant improvement to bus services. If required, compulsory purchase procedures should be considered to obtain any necessary land.

As for improvements related to active travel, complementary bus services serving new developments should be introduced on occupation of the first dwelling.

RAIL OPPORTUNITIES

Eastbourne's Railway Station Land and Adjoining Areas of Opportunity

In line with its approach set out in LTP3 (section 4.53) ESCC should work with EBC and Network Rail (NR) to develop a sub-set of the new Local Plan for Eastbourne to cover the above area. Land adjoining Eastbourne Railway Station has unrivalled proximity to rail and bus services and walking opportunities to business and commercial activities within the town centre – all ingredients which minimise car trips. This new plan, which should consider a higher rise strategy and policy for this section of town and would be compliant with TfSE's policy, for growth to be concentrated in large urban areas.

Redevelopment of Hampden Park Station

ESCC should take the initiative to request Network Rail to develop and appraise NR's identified potential for the provision of a new station incorporating an island platform, at Hampden Park. Such a new station, with services re-timetabled to offer quick interchange at Hampden Park would offer much faster East-West rail travel, significantly reduced level



crossing downtime, reduced vehicle queuing and improved air quality. Work is needed to identify the scale of benefits arising from reduced vehicle queuing, improved air quality and modal shift to rail arising from faster East-West journey times. Improved East-West rail journey opportunities would be compliant with TfSE's policy thrust for improved East-West rail connectivity.

Reexamine the Feasibility of a Reinstated Station at Stone Cross

EEAN do not have access to the Network Rail's most recent consideration of this possibility.

Provision of an island platform concept at Stone Cross would appear to mitigate previously expressed concerns by NR about impact on adjoining line-side property and construction difficulties. Given the scale of proposed development in the Stone Cross/North Langney area, and the problematic nature of other bus service and active travel options, it appears sensible for this rail possibility to be reexamined.

ESCC should take the initiative to work with Network Rail, EBC, Wealden DC to assess the feasibility and viability of a station at Stone Cross. ESCC should involve local MPs in this initiative as a future bid to DfT's Restoring Your Railway Fund could be a way forward.

ENCOURAGING ELECTRIC AND LOW CARBON VEHICLE UPTAKE

"I will champion the building of an electric charging network in the town".

Caroline Ansell MP, My Great Green Pledge

ESCC should take the initiative to work with EBC and other partners to develop a strategy for the provision of an electric charging network in the town to cover cars, taxis, delivery vehicles and buses.



In line with DfT's emerging Transport Decarbonising Plan, ESCC should also participate in investigations to consider the role of hydrogen as a potential solution to a non-carbon fuel future for larger road vehicles.

As noted in the section on bus priority above, we have been advised by bus industry experts that implementation of bus priority measures will influence positively the uptake of zero emissions buses, including hydrogen, serving Eastbourne and the surrounding area.

PARKING POLICIES

ESCC should undertake regular reviews of parking policies, standards and schemes for the town. This to make sure that difficult balances between the mobility needs of residents, the serving of the town's economy and not congesting key public transport routes with commuting traffic, are managed well.

ESCC should work with EBC to consider alternative uses for those town centre car parks shown no longer to be required. As highlighted above, the opportunity exists to provide greater residential and other accommodation within the environs of Eastbourne railway station, surrounding car parks and other sections of the town centre. Significantly reduced parking standards should apply to such locations.

SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL TRAVEL

ESCC should review the effectiveness of school travel plans for the Eastbourne area. The review should take into account initiatives such as Beat the Street, Living Streets, Eastbourne's Walking Festival, the emerging pilot scheme for Gildredge House Free School together with the Secretary of State's new thrust for active travel measures.



Best practice examples should be identified and circulated throughout Eastbourne's school communities, state and private sector. Development of better plans by schools should be encouraged appropriate means.

Both in relation to Sustainable School Travel and more widely, there should be serious consideration given to the much wider provision of 20 mph limits across residential streets in Eastbourne. Such limits are common in the US and would enhance safety and encourage a much-improved uptake of active travel.

COMMENTS: EASTBOURNE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Eastbourne Chamber of Commerce supports the EEAN request to include carbon neutrality before 2050 in the ESCC LTP and would ask for the following be included.

Cycling and Walking

The Chamber of Commerce is very keen to see more cycle and walking paths introduced within and between towns and we would like to see the publication of the ESCC Walking & Cycling Strategy as soon as possible.

We are very supportive of a dedicated cycle route all the way along the seafront and would like to see a temporary cycle route introduced as soon as possible. We understand that losing 80 parking spaces will cause problems for the Eastbourne Hospitality Association but this can be mitigated by allowing their guests extended parking permits in the Treasure Island and Fisherman's Green car parks, plus priority parking in the TA Centre.



Park & Cycle

We would like to see the introduction of park and cycle facilities at Polegate and Five Acre Field, opposite the Sovereign Centre, with facilities to hire electric bikes.

Bus Transport

We would like to be part of a Quality Bus Partnership (QBP) to develop emission-free buses as a matter of priority. Under the QBP we would like to see a bus lane on the route exiting the town along Seaside and a bus lane into Eastbourne from Hailsham. We would also like to open bus only access between the North and South Harbours in the Crumbles and a bus only route to avoid the queues at Hampden Park.

Opening these routes would double the frequency of buses and reduce journey times considerably. Businesspeople would be more likely to leave their cars at home and use buses if they are at least as quick getting to their destination as cars.

The Town as an Experience Centre

The Chamber would like to reduce the number of cars accessing the town to improve air quality and turn Eastbourne into an open-air experience centre, like the North Laines in Brighton. Giving pedestrians and cyclists more access to open spaces for al fresco cafés, bars, restaurants and street entertainment. Think Eastbourne meets Covent Garden

We would like to reduce the number of residential and business permits to free up short term parking for customers and visitors. From 2022 the only residential or business permits allowed should be for full electric or hydrogen vehicles – not hybrids.

We would also like to see a blanket speed limit of 5 mph introduced to make it clear to drivers that pedestrians take priority in our town.



Roads

As vehicle emissions have dropped by 95% since the early 90's it is likely that car manufacturers will develop affordable zero emission vehicles using electricity and hydrogen very soon.

As road transport by car offers people a private, personal, safe (from infection) space to get from A to B it is likely that car transport will become even more popular as we come out of lockdown and will congest our roads more than they already were, pre COVID-19.

We therefore reiterate our need for a better, offline solution to the A27 to take this trunk road away from the South Downs National Park (SDNP) and the villages of Selmeston, Wilmington and Firle.

The new A27 should run from the Cophall Roundabout in Polegate, North of the railway, to rejoin the existing A27 at Beddingham and should be laid with planting to mask the road from the SDNP and the villages to the south.

This will remove through traffic from Eastbourne and beyond while making the existing A27 a safer road for local pedestrians and cyclists.

COMMENTS: EASTBOURNE BOROUGH COUNCIL PLANNING COMMITTEE

EEAN's proposed submission was discussed on the 23rd June 2020 and the following statement has been released:

"Members of the Planning Committee have given initial consideration to a proposed submission by Eastbourne ECO Action Network to ESCC. The Chairman of the Planning Committee, Councillor James Murray, advised that he thought the submission was relevant to the forthcoming new Local Plan for Eastbourne and for the Decarbonising Transport strategy that needs to support it."



NEXT STEPS

This submission presents headline views on a range of possibilities for consideration in the LTP review. More detailed analysis and views are held, and it is hoped that meaningful follow up discussion could be held between the Council and EEAN.