



26/11/2020

## EAST SUSSEX LOCAL CYCLING & WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

### Re: EEAN CIC & Transport Group Submission to Public Consultation

Eastbourne ECO Action Network (EEAN) welcomes the opportunity, to be consulted, on the long-awaited East Sussex Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). As you will be aware, EEAN and Eastbourne Borough Council (EBC) are committed to a zero-carbon town by 2030. So EEAN's approach has been to compare the LCWIP to the equivalent document, *Eastbourne's Direction Of Travel: Issues And Options For The Eastbourne Local Plan November 2019*. Naturally, EEAN wish both these plans to be aligned.

On the basis of rough calculations, only 10% of the proposed cycling and walking routes in each 10-year plan, are completed. In conjunction with the population growth this will not be enough to make a significant difference. Plus, as a financial constraint on new routes, LTN 1/20 states that segregated and separated routes, which will be more expensive per kilometre, are now the preferred design.

EEAN would like to see adopted, the integration of transport with land use planning, suggested in National Planning Policy Framework. This guidance would certainly deliver better living spaces and hence more opportunities for walking and cycling. Furthermore, EEAN supports the AECOM transport report, that EBC published in 2019. The objectives for that work were to identify measures that would be required for a more local transport strategy.

EEAN would like a stated target for modal shift in all your transport plans. In line with the Government's Decarbonising Transport Strategy and Transport for the South East. Within the Eastbourne Local Plan is *A Vision for Eastbourne* which states, "*embracing modal shift, culminating in a predominantly car-free town centre with excellent connectivity by cycle, foot and public transport to all of our communities*". ESCC writes that "*it is believed that a modal shift of 10% could be achieved along the Hailsham to Eastbourne Corridor*".



What would be useful is to forecast what difference to modal share the LCWIP itself could make. Even better would be assuming a 10% modal shift within the town, 'backcast' from there and identify what would need to be done to achieve this. Without high quality bus, walking and cycle routes there is little hope of changing the car centric nature of Eastbourne. So, in the Eastbourne plan there is *"one of our objectives is delivering new cycleways and footways and enhanced public transport connectivity linking services, facilities and communities, and reducing reliance on the carbon-emitting private car."*

The Local Plan states *"less than 2% of all journeys to a workplace in Eastbourne are made by bicycle and the average amount of regular cycling activity in Eastbourne is some of the lowest in the county, with just 4.3% of adults cycling three or more times per week. Cyclists were involved in 17% of all recorded road casualties in Eastbourne in 2018 and safety issues and perceptions may discourage some people from cycling to work."* There is evidence from cyclists that 'painted lines on the road' are not enough and within the town centre it is discouraging the less confident.

The key deliverables in the Eastbourne Local Plan reflect much of LCWIP. To Increase walking and cycling, they are:

- Support cycling on the seafront
- Work with East Sussex County Council to increase number of designated cycle routes across the town
- Require cycle parking to be provided in all new development
- Require new development and public realm schemes to incorporate safety measures for pedestrians and cyclists
- Encourage implementation of Home Zones and 20mph zones within strategic development sites

In terms of these bullet points a route on the seafront, has been an aspiration, for at least 15 years. Stakeholders have now accepted that a safe traffic free route is important. EEAN are fully in support of the LCWIP proposal or any similar alternative, as long as it is traffic-free, safe, secure and segregated.

Maintenance of routes is an increasing concern. On high usage share-use paths the vegetation and earth has been allowed to significantly spill over. Not even with COVID-19 funding has this been addressed. This narrowing reduces passing space for disability



scooters and cycle trailers and adds to the risk of injury for pedestrians. So, there needs to be some standards within LCWIP.

EEAN are also pleased that the LCWIP intends to consider Low Traffic Neighbourhoods. This covers some of the ideas EEAN support including Home Zones, 20mph zones and modal filters. All of which would reduce traffic in residential areas and may be useful to encourage children to walk and cycle to school. EEAN supports dropped kerbs and separate safe walking space but is fully aware most walking takes place alongside or crossing roads. So, there needs to be work on junctions and roundabouts to provide higher priority and safer access for pedestrians.

One concern, from LCWIP and in earlier cycle plans, is although there is a national target of doubling cycling numbers by 2025, the County Council uses the metrics of money spent on Active Travel and kilometres built of infrastructure. This does not in itself convert into higher walking and cycling numbers.

So specifically, in terms of the Active Travel budget, Eastbourne Town Centre scheme will cost £8m but actually has a negative effect on cycling access. This is even though the LCWIP states, “these [town centre]roads and the ring road in particular provide a significant barrier to those cycling from one side of the town to the other, as the 1way streets & volume of traffic make cycling more challenging”. Furthermore, “kilometres of infrastructure” is a nebulous concept as it includes both ‘paint on the road’ as well as purpose-built schemes like Horsey Sewer.

One constraint is always funding for schemes, but even when provided with an extra £2.5m from the COVID-19 Active Travel funds and encouragement from the Government little of consequence was constructed. It was apparent from the Tranche 2 bid that there were no shovel-ready schemes that could be progressed before March 2021.

The LCWIP reports are very useful but EEAN remain unconvinced that when there is a potential conflict for road space there will be the commitment to deliver. As you will be aware this may have consequences, as the DfT's Active Travel England have stated they will fund new projects linked to past performance.



So, in summary, although there is much to recommend within LCWIP, there is no evidence that the current LCWIP and East Sussex Local Transport Plan, considered together, will increase walking and cycling numbers.

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