

Report to: **Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment**

Date: **7 March 2005**

Report By: **Director of Transport and Environment**

Title of Report: **Introduction of a Quality Bus Corridor on Seaside in Eastbourne**

Purpose of Report: **To seek approval for the construction of a programme of bus priority measures along the Seaside Quality Bus Corridor in Eastbourne**

RECOMMENDATION

To approve the construction of a programme of Bus Priority Measures along the Seaside Quality Bus Corridor in Eastbourne.

1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 The total cost of construction for these measures is estimated to be £400,000 (including the bus lane). The estimate is based on the preliminary designs. More accurate costs will be available once the detailed design has been completed in 2005/6. A sum of £80,000 has been provisionally allocated from the 2005/6 capital programme. The remaining costs would come from the capital programme for 2006/7.

2. Supporting Information

2.1 The introduction of measures to improve bus services on key bus routes in Eastbourne, referred to as Quality Bus Corridors, is a key element of the Eastbourne Urban Area Local Transport Plan (EUALTP). The background to the development of the EUALTP and the Quality Bus Corridor Proposals is set out in the Appendix.

2.2 The development of the Quality Bus Corridors was divided into four phases and the first phase is along the A259 Seaside in Eastbourne between the town centre and Seaside Roundabout. A total of eight measures are being proposed along Seaside. More detail about each of these measures is set out in the Appendix, Section 3. A plan showing the location of each of the proposals is attached. Copies of drawings showing the layout of the proposed measures will be available at the meeting on the 7 March 2005.

2.3 In November 2004, the County Council consulted the public on the proposals at exhibitions held in Eastbourne. Approximately 300 people attended the exhibitions and a total of 188 questionnaires were completed by those attending. More detail about the format of the public consultation exercise is contained in the Appendix, Section 4.

3. Comments/Analysis

3.1 An analysis of the completed questionnaire is presented in the Appendix, Sections 5 and 6. This sets out the level of support for each of the eight measures that were included in the consultation together with recommendations of those elements which should be implemented. A petition objecting to the proposed bus lane along Seaside between Gilbert Road and Whitley Road, was received following the exhibitions. The petition was signed by 371 local residents and businesses and was presented by local member Councillor Beryl Healy at the meeting of County Council on 7 December 2004. A copy of the petition is available in the Members' Room.

3.2 Standing Orders provide that where the Chairman considers it appropriate, petitions are considered by the relevant Committee and that a spokesperson for the petitioners is invited to address the Committee. The Chairman has directed that this petition be referred to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment.

4. Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 The EUALTP, which sets out the Transport Strategy for Eastbourne, places a high priority on improving bus services and proposals including the setting up of an Eastbourne Area Quality Bus Partnership (QBP). The QBP will aim to make improvements across the whole network, but measures to improve bus reliability; bus frequencies, passenger facilities and information will be initially targeted on key bus routes. The measures proposed along the A259 Seaside in Eastbourne represent the first phase of the development of the Quality Bus Corridors.

4.2 I therefore recommend the construction of the programme of Bus Priority measures along the Seaside Quality Bus Corridor in Eastbourne as detailed in the Appendix.

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Local Member: Councillor Healy & Councillor Ellis

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

Background Information on the introduction of Quality Bus Corridors on Seaside in Eastbourne

1. The Local Transport Plan Package for Eastbourne

1.1 The Eastbourne Urban Area Local Transport Plan (EUALTP) sets out the transport strategy for Eastbourne. It was developed in consultation with the local community and covers the period 2001 – 2006. The EUALTP places high priority on improving bus services and proposals include the setting up of an Eastbourne area Quality Bus Partnership (QBP), comprising East Sussex County Council, Eastbourne Borough Council, Wealden District Council, Eastbourne Buses, Stagecoach and the business community to bring together a range of improvements to bus services.

2. The Quality Bus Corridor proposals in Eastbourne

2.1 The Quality Bus Partnership will aim to make improvements across the whole network, but measures to improve bus reliability; bus frequencies, passenger facilities and information will be initially targeted on key bus routes, referred to as Quality Bus Corridors.

2.2 Three QBCs have been identified in association with Eastbourne Buses:

- (i) Langney Shopping Centre to Eastbourne Town Centre
Route: Hide Hollow Roundabouts/B2104 Langney Rise/A259 St Anthony's Avenue/A259 Seaside – then routes to Terminus Road
- (ii) Polegate/Wannock Crossroads to Eastbourne Town Centre
Route: A2270 Eastbourne Road/Willingdon Road/Victoria Drive/Green Street/A259 Old Town High Street/A259 The Goffs/ A2270 Upperton Road/Station Street to Terminus Road
- (iii) Polegate/Wannock Crossroads to Eastbourne Town Centre
Route: A2270 Eastbourne Road/Willingdon Road/A2021 Kings Drive/Lewes Road/Enys Road/Carew Road/The Avenue/Station Street/Terminus Road

2.3 The County Council commissioned consultants Owen Williams to work with Eastbourne Borough Council and Eastbourne Buses to identify problem areas and pinch points, prioritise the order in which they should be tackled and to develop proposals to improve bus services on the Quality Bus Corridors.

2.4 The development of the three Quality Bus Corridors was divided into four phases. The first phase is along the A259 Seaside between the Town Centre and Seaside Roundabout.

3. Proposals for Phase 1 of the Quality Bus Corridor on the A259 Seaside

3.1 The proposals for Phase 1 of the Quality Bus Corridor along A259 Seaside extend from the town centre to Seaside Roundabout. A number of possible improvements were initially identified, but only the proposals between Firle Road and Seaside Roundabout were thought suitable for development to preliminary design stage and these were displayed at the Quality Bus Corridor exhibitions.

3.2 The measures that could be introduced on the section of Seaside between Firle Road and Seaside roundabout are:

- Introduction of a bus build-out outside Lloyds Bank (near Firle Road) to make it easier for buses to access the bus stop and passengers to board the buses.
- Introduction of an eastbound bus lane along A259 Seaside between Gilbert Road and Whitley Road to allow buses to bypass congestion at the junction.
- Moving the bus stop currently located alongside the Seaside Recreation Ground to near the Kings Arms pub to improve the bus stop visibility and passengers access to buses.
- Introduction of a signal controlled pedestrian crossing at the end of Whitley Road (junction with Seaside) to provide a safe crossing facility.
- Conversion of the existing Zebra crossing outside the Tsan Fish Bar (No. 263 Seaside) to a signal controlled Puffin Crossing to improve pedestrian safety.
- Conversion of the existing Zebra crossing outside Sea K Kitchen takeaway (No. 344 Seaside) to a signal controlled Puffin Crossing to improve pedestrian safety.
- Combine and relocate the two existing bus stops next to The Alexandra Arms pub and outside 421 Seaside into one bus stop outside Coventry Court to improve bus service punctuality.
- Conversion of the existing Pelican crossing outside 491 Seaside to a signal controlled staggered Puffin Crossing to improve pedestrian safety and bus service punctuality.

A plan showing the location of each of these measures on Seaside is attached.

4. The Public Consultation

4.1 A programme of public exhibitions took place between the 20 - 27 November 2004 at various venues along the proposed quality bus corridor and at Eastbourne Town Hall. Table 1 shows the full programme.

Table 1. The timetable for the public exhibitions

Day	Date	Time	Exhibition location
Saturday	20 November 2004	10am - 2pm	Town Hall, Grove Road
Monday	22 November 2004	2pm - 9.30pm	St Agnes Church, Whitley Road
Wednesday	24 November 2004	11am - 5pm	Town Hall, Grove Road
Friday	26 November 2004	10am - 4pm	Archery Youth Centre, Willoughby Crescent
Saturday	27 November 2004	1pm - 4pm	St Agnes Church, Whitley Road

4.2 The County Council distributed a leaflet advertising the exhibitions to 4,500 households along Seaside and the adjacent areas. A further 1,000 advertising leaflets were put on buses serving the Seaside bus routes and adverts giving details about the exhibitions were placed inside buses that use Seaside. The proposals were also posted on the County Council website and there was a link from the Eastbourne Borough Council website. In addition, a press release was issued by County Council, with the proposals receiving coverage in the local newspaper prior to the exhibitions.

4.3 Approximately 300 people attended the exhibitions. Those attending the exhibitions were asked to complete a questionnaire to give their views about the proposals. A copy of the questionnaire was also available on the website and could be printed off and sent back to the freepost address. A comments book was also available at the exhibition for people to make extended comments about the proposals.

4.4 A petition was received objecting to the bus lane along Seaside. It was signed by 371 local residents and businesses and was presented by local member Councillor Beryl Healy.

5. Analysis of the responses to the questionnaire

Socio economic characteristics

5.1 The majority of respondents to the questionnaire were over 65 years of age (44 percent, excluding non respondents) with 54 percent being male and 46 percent female. The majority of respondents were retired (38 percent, excluding non respondents).

Bus and car use

5.2 The majority of respondents did not have use of a car (48 percent). The frequency with which respondents used buses is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Frequency of bus use

Frequency of bus use	Number	Percent
Five days a week or more	28	19%
Between two and four days a week	42	28%
One day a week	10	7%
Once a month	9	6%
Less often	23	16%
Never	35	24%
Total	147	100%

The majority of respondents (47 percent) use buses more than two to four times per week, with only 24 percent of respondents never using buses.

5.3 Taking the analysis of the socio-economic characteristics and levels of car and bus use together it is clear that a significant of respondents were elderly, retired individuals who rely on buses for some of their transport needs.

6. Level of support for bus priority measures on Seaside

6.1 Respondents were asked to indicate their level of support for each of the eight bus priority measures along Seaside. The level of support recorded for each of the eight proposed measures is summarised in Table 3.

Introduction of a bus build-out outside Lloyds Bank (near Firle Road)

6.2 The first measure was a proposal to introduce a bus build out outside the Lloyds Bank on Seaside. In the existing situation vehicles stop illegally in the bus stop outside the bank to use the cash machine and to load and unload goods to adjacent premises. This causes problems for elderly and disabled passengers, plus parents with buggies who all find it difficult to walk in between parked vehicles and then to climb onto the bus with the large gap between the floor of the bus and the road.

6.3 The proposal to create a bus build-out outside Lloyds Bank was opposed by the majority of respondents with 49% (68 of 140 respondents) stating their opposition. A more detailed analysis of the responses did not demonstrate this proposal was supported by a majority of those respondents who use buses. A number of those who attended the exhibition, voiced their general opposition to the bus build-outs that had have already been

introduced along Seaside. They were opposed to them because the limited width of the road means it is not possible for traffic to pass a bus which is waiting at one of the bus stops where there is a build out. It would appear that this opposition to the existing build-outs has influenced the response to this proposal.

6.4 One of the main reasons for the introduction of the bus build-outs on Seaside was as a result of the lack of enforcement of the bus stop regulations by the police. It may be possible to ensure that the bus stop regulations are more effectively enforced if decriminalised parking is introduced in Eastbourne. **It is not recommended that the County Council proceed with the introduction of the bus build out outside Lloyds Bank.**

Table 3 – Analysis of responses to consultation questionnaire

Bus Priority Measure	Level of Support			
	Support	Neutral	Oppose	Total ^[1]
1. Create a bus buildout outside Lloyds Bank (near Firle Road)	44	28	68	140
<i>(Percent)</i>	<i>(31%)</i>	<i>(20%)</i>	<i>(49%)</i>	
2. Introduce an eastbound bus lane along Seaside between Gilbert Road & Whitley Road	40	14	84	138
<i>(Percent)</i>	<i>(29%)</i>	<i>(10%)</i>	<i>(61%)</i>	
3. Move the bus stop from outside the Seaside Recreation Ground to near the Kings Arms Pub	45	44	52	141
<i>(Percent)</i>	<i>(32%)</i>	<i>(31%)</i>	<i>(37%)</i>	
4. Introduce a signal controlled pedestrian crossing at the end of Whitley Road (junction with Seaside)	83	29	28	140
<i>(Percent)</i>	<i>(59%)</i>	<i>(21%)</i>	<i>(20%)</i>	
5. Convert existing Zebra crossing outside Tsan Fish Bar to a signal controlled Puffin Crossing	89	25	25	139
<i>(Percent)</i>	<i>(64%)</i>	<i>(18%)</i>	<i>(18%)</i>	
6. Convert existing Zebra crossing outside Sea K Kitchen takeaway to a signal controlled staggered Puffin Crossing	82	31	22	135
<i>(Percent)</i>	<i>(61%)</i>	<i>(23%)</i>	<i>(16%)</i>	
7. Combine and relocate the two existing bus stops next to the Alexandra Arms Pub and outside 421 Seaside into one bus stop outside Coventry Court	52	41	43	136
<i>(Percent)</i>	<i>(38%)</i>	<i>(30%)</i>	<i>(32%)</i>	
8. Convert existing Pelican crossing outside 491 Seaside to a signal controlled staggered Puffin Crossing	74	33	27	134
<i>(Percent)</i>	<i>(55%)</i>	<i>(25%)</i>	<i>(20%)</i>	

Introduction of a eastbound bus lane along A259 Seaside between Gilbert Road and Whitley Road

6.5 The second proposal was the introduction of a eastbound bus lane along A259 Seaside between Gilbert Road and Whitley Road to allow buses to bypass congestion at the junction. The introduction of the 115 metre long bus lane would require changes to the road layout to accommodate the bus lane. Space at the junction is extremely limited and the introduction of the bus lane would result in the loss of one lane to general traffic, the removal of two trees along side the road and the loss of on-street parking outside a number of the properties on Seaside. One way working would also have to be introduced in two of the side roads to prevent turning traffic from obstructing general traffic flow.

6.6 The proposal to introduce the bus lane along Seaside between Gilbert Road and Whitley Road, was opposed by 61 percent of respondents (84 of the 138 respondents). In addition, a petition signed by 371 local residents and businesses was received objecting to the bus lane proposal.

6.7 The reasons given for opposition to the bus lane included the view the loss of on-street parking, the increased in delays for non bus traffic, the potential increase in traffic running in adjacent streets, the loss of two trees, the reduction in the width of the footpath and the impact of traffic noise and vibration on adjacent properties. Without the section of bus lane and associated bus gate (separate traffic lights for buses), it is difficult to see how priority for buses could be achieved at the Whitley Road junction. Given the limitations on space at the junction it would not be possible to review the design of the bus lane to address the concerns that had been raised by objectors. **The County Council is recommended not to proceed with the introduction of the bus lane on Seaside between Gilbert Road and Whitley Road at this time.**

Relocation of the bus stop from outside the Seaside Recreation Ground to near the Kings Arms public house

6.8 The current bus stop is located adjacent to the recreation ground, halfway between Gilbert Road and Whitley Road. Its current location means it is remote from the residential and commercial properties along Seaside. The bus drivers' view of waiting passengers is partially obscured by the trees and similarly the passengers have difficulty seeing the approaching bus. Access to the bus is also hindered by the steps up to the roadside, which makes it difficult for the elderly, disabled and parents with buggies. Relocation of the bus stop would overcome the visibility and access problems, with a minimal impact on buses punctuality (quicker passenger boarding times could be offset by slightly longer waiting times for the bus to pull off into the stream of traffic).

6.9 The proposal to relocate the bus stop from outside the Seaside Recreation Ground to near the Kings Arms pub was opposed by 37 percent of respondents (52 of the 141 respondents), but this represented only a slight majority, as 32 percent (45 of the 141 respondents) supported the relocation of the bus stop. **Given the overall benefits to passengers of relocating the bus stop and the fact that the proposal received only marginal opposition it is recommended that the County Council proceeds with the relocation of the bus stop.**

Introduction of a pedestrian crossing at the junction of the Whitley Road and Seaside

6.10 The proposal to introduce a signal control crossing on Whitley Road received majority support, with 59% of respondents (83 of the 140 respondents) in favour of the proposed measure. Although the pedestrian crossing would improve safety and facilities for pedestrians, it would also add another signal phase to the traffic lights at the junction and increase the overall cycle time (the total time for the lights change on all arms of the junction). This would increase the length of time taken for traffic to pass through the junction

and without the bus lane to provide priority for buses, would increase delays to buses. **It is recommended that the County Council does not proceed with the introduction of the pedestrian crossing on Whitley Road in the absence of the bus lane. However if the bus lane proposal were to be proceed then the pedestrian crossing should be introduced.**

Conversion of the zebra crossing outside the Tsan fish bar to a signal controlled puffin crossing

6.11 The proposal to convert the existing Zebra crossing outside the Tsan Fish Bar (No. 263 Seaside) to a signal controlled Puffin crossing received support from 64 percent of respondents (89 of 139 respondents in support). Widening the pavement in front of the bus stop and at the Puffin crossing would minimise delays for buses by reducing the pedestrian crossing times and also making it easier for buses to manoeuvre into the bus stop (by avoiding the tree at the kerbside on the approach to the stop). In addition, the conversion of the Zebra crossing to Puffin crossings will make it safer for pedestrians. **It is recommended that the County Council proceed with the conversion of the zebra crossing outside the Tsan fish bar to a puffin crossing.**

Convert existing puffin crossing outside Sea K Kitchen takeaway to a signal controlled staggered puffin crossing

6.12 The proposal to convert the existing zebra crossing outside the Sea K Kitchen takeaway (No, 344 Seaside) to a signal controlled Puffin crossing was supported by 61 percent of respondents (82 of the 135 respondents in support). The introduction of a staggered Puffin crossing outside the Sea K Kitchen takeaway would minimise delays for buses and general traffic. In addition the conversion of the Zebra crossing to Puffin crossings will make it safer for pedestrians. **It is recommended that the County Council proceeds with the conversion of the existing zebra crossing outside Sea K Kitchen takeaway to a signal controlled staggered puffin crossing.**

Proposal to combine and relocate two existing bus stops next to the Alexandra Arms Pub and outside 421 Seaside into one bus stop outside Coventry Court

6.13 The proposal to combine and relocate the existing two bus stops next to the Alexandra Arms Pub and outside 421 Seaside into one bus stop outside Coventry Court was supported by 38 percent of respondents (52 of 136 respondents in support). A total of 32 percent of respondents opposed the introduction of this measure (43 of the 136 respondents). The rationalisation of the two stops into one should help the punctuality of bus services by reducing the number times the bus stops in a short stretch of road. **It is recommended that the County Council proceed with the proposal to combine and relocate two existing bus stops next to the Alexandra Arms Pub and outside 421 Seaside into one bus stop outside Coventry Court.**

Proposal to convert the existing Pelican crossing outside 491 Seaside to a signal controlled staggered Puffin crossing

6.14 The proposal to convert the existing Pelican crossing outside 491 Seaside to a signal controlled staggered Puffin crossing was supported by 55 percent of respondents (74 of the 134 respondents in support). The existing pelican crossing is heavily used and causes long delays to traffic. It is a relatively wide section of road and a staggered crossing could help reduce traffic delays, benefiting buses. It could increase crossing time for pedestrians but this has to be set against the reductions in delays to buses. **It is recommended that the County Council proceeds with the proposal to convert the existing Pelican crossing outside 491 Seaside to a signal controlled staggered Puffin crossing.**

☐ Total excluding non responses