

WRITTEN QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 44

1. Question from Councillor Lambert to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

The situation with the A259 is now critical. Seaford, in particular is suffering. In recent weeks, the A259 through Peacehaven, Newhaven and Seaford has been regularly gridlocked and there has been a further serious accident at Denton.

There are only three entrances and exits to Seaford and two of these are the A259. Recent floods also made the road into and out of Seaford through Alfriston impassable, cutting off the town completely.

Despite repeated promises of action, there are no dates for workshops to feed back on the study the County Council is carrying out. The Lead Member has refused a request to carry out a safety audit of all the entrances onto the A259 throughout Seaford and there is not even a temporary plan to help residents in Bishopstone to safely use the A259.

Will the Lead Member now expedite both the study and any proposals to improve the A259 from Peacehaven through to Exceat?

Answer by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

As per the previous updates provided to all key stakeholders involved in the A259 MRN South Coast Corridor Study, (the last being in November 2022) the delivery programme for the study has had to be adjusted as a result of the announcement of the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding award in 2022 - which has a number of schemes on the A259 in the study area. Firstly, any BSIP proposals had to be decoupled from the A259 scheme list to ensure no duplication of funding takes place; and secondly, the BSIP proposed capital schemes had to be incorporated into the transport modelling for the study to ensure any schemes taken forward under the MRN are compatible with the BSIP schemes. This requirement has resulted in lengthening of the time between the second stakeholder workshops – where a long list of scheme options was reviewed and fed back on; and the third stakeholder workshops – where stakeholders will be presented with a package of schemes and be able to provide feedback once it has been able to be tested, modelled and appraised sufficiently.

Since the last update in November 2022, the team have been progressing the study including conducting further scheme appraisal, modelling development, testing and engagement with the Department for Transport on the project. In Q4 2022/23 further testing in the transport model, economic appraisal and business case development will take place. The third stakeholder workshop is anticipated in June 2023 to allow enough time for the scheme short list to be fully tested in the transport model ahead of presenting back to stakeholders.

Following this, the package will be put forward for Major Road Network funding to Government through the Strategic Outline Business Case; with the aim of providing funding for further detailed design and business case development for the improvements to the study area of the A259. As I have outlined above you can certainly see that ESCC is committed to this work and as you say we are expediting both the study and proposals to improve the A259 and we must work within the requirements set out by Government to provide robust business cases that seek to secure major external funds for this county.

Finally, all stakeholders will be receiving an update this week on the study and we will be in touch in due course to invite key stakeholders to the third key stakeholder workshops and will provide any necessary information prior to the workshops for reference.

2. Question from Councillor Hilton to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

With the increasing number of road works across Hastings in the last few months, I am getting emails from residents distressed by the fumes from idling cars waiting at traffic controls. Given that rule 123 of the Highway Code states that it is illegal to leave a vehicle engine running unnecessarily when stationary for more than a couple of minutes, will you consider asking the new Highways contractors Balfour Beattie and all utilities working on the highways to support an anti – idling campaign by committing to adding ‘Turn your engines off’ signs at their traffic controls? This would be an inexpensive way to reduce pollution from vehicle exhausts. It also reduces carbon emissions.

Answer by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

We recognise the problem described by Councillor Hilton. Where temporary traffic lights are utilised for more than three days duration we will explore the use of such signage where it is appropriate to do so. We will also encourage utility companies to similarly support this approach. It is important to note any signage asking drivers to turn off their engines is only advisory and cannot be enforced.