

LEAD MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

DECISIONS made by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment, Councillor Claire Dowling, on 28 April 2025 at Committee Room, County Hall, Lewes

Councillors Clark and Hollidge spoke on item 4 (see minute 65)

61. DECISIONS MADE BY THE LEAD CABINET MEMBER ON 17 MARCH 2025

61.1 The Lead Member approved as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2025.

62. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

62.1 There were none.

63. URGENT ITEMS

63.1 There were none.

64. REPORTS

64.1 Reports referred to in the minutes below are contained in the minute book.

65. PETITION FOR THE ROAD LAYOUT TO BE CHANGED AND PHYSICAL WIDTH RESTRICTIONS INSTALLED TO ENFORCE THE 7.5T WEIGHT RESTRICTION IN THE HIGH STREET, BEXHILL

65.1 The Lead Member considered a report by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport.

65.2 Ms Helen Enock, a representative of the petition calling on the County Council to enforce 7.5 ton weight limit to preserve the historic listed building in Bexhill spoke to highlight concern around the increase of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) driving along Bexhill High Street, the effect of HGVs (including buses) on the large number of listed buildings and structures along Bexhill High Street and the lack of police enforcement of the 7.5 ton weight restriction.

DECISIONS

65.3 The Lead Member RESOLVED to advise petitioners that:

(1) A potential scheme to construct a physical width restriction on the High Street will be fully assessed for possible inclusion for funding within the Capital Programme;

(2) Whilst all options will be fully considered, due to the requirement to ensure the emergency services and legitimate Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) deliveries can still take place within the High Street, a physical width restriction is likely to have minimal effect on 'through' HGV traffic using the High Street;

(3) The concerns about enforcement of the 7.5t weight restriction on the High Street have been passed to Sussex Police as the correct enforcement authority; and

(4) The re-routing of the scheduled bus service would have a substantial impact on passengers gaining access to Bexhill Hospital and it is not possible to operate these routes with buses less than 7.5t as they would not have the seating capacity to cater for passenger demand on these routes. No changes are therefore recommended to the bus service along the High Street at this time.

REASONS

65.4 The County Council has a limited amount of funding to develop local transport improvements and needs to ensure that resources are allocated to those schemes which will be of the greatest benefit to local communities. The fourth East Sussex Local Transport Plan (LTP4) was adopted on 8 October 2024, resulting in the need to update the Council's scheme assessment process to reflect the priorities set out in LTP4. As a result, the Council is unable to undertake an assessment of the request for a physical width restriction on the High Street whilst a new approach is being developed and approved.

65.5 It is expected that the new assessment approach will be available by October 2025, at which time the assessment of the request to construct a physical width restriction on the High Street will be undertaken. The lead petitioner will be contacted directly should the request successfully progress beyond the first assessment stage. Whilst there is a wait in undertaking the assessment, it will not delay the timescales for the inclusion of potential schemes that are successful in being included in the capital programme of local transport improvements.

65.6 It is important to note that any physical width restriction would need to maintain adequate road widths to ensure the emergency services can gain access to the High Street at all times, and that any HGV legitimately delivering to land or property within the High Street, including household deliveries and refuse collection vehicles, could also still gain access. Whilst options will be fully explored, it is likely that any physical width restriction would have minimal effect on 'through' HGV traffic using the High Street.

65.7 The nearest alternative suitable route for buses to follow if they were re-routed from the High Street is along London Road. This would require patients and visitors attending Bexhill Hospital to walk a further 270 metres (measured from the nearest bus stops in London Road). The alternative bus route would have to be via Havelock Road and Springfield Road and would also lead to a longer walk at the hospital end of the journey which would be up hill. Re-routing buses would also reduce access to bus services for residents living in the High Street and Hollier's Hill area. These impacts are likely to be substantial on these residents. It is not possible to operate these scheduled bus routes with buses less than 7.5t as they would not have the seating capacity to cater for the passenger demand on these routes.