

WRITTEN QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 44

1. Question by Councillor Tutt to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

In December 2010 I asked your predecessor for dates when the un-adopted roads at Sovereign Harbour would be adopted. Please can you inform me whether any roads in this area remain un-adopted and if so, why it has taken so many years for their adoption to take place?

Answer by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

A number of the roads that were unadopted in 2010 have since been adopted as public highway in June 2014. These roads were Martinique Way, Grenada Close, St Kitt's Drive, Leeward Quay, Santa Cruz Drive (part), Jamaica Way (part), Windward Quay (part) and the Outer Harbour Walkway.

The streets that still remain to be adopted are Ocho Rios Mews, Key West, Bermuda Place, Santa Cruz Drive (part) and Windward Quay (part).

These roads are all still under the control of Persimmon Homes. Currently there is no formal adoption agreement in place to adopt these roads and the County Council therefore has no control over when adoption will take place. We are entirely reliant on Persimmon in terms of when the adoption will commence, and we do not have the power to demand that roads are offered for adoption.

We are in regular discussions with Persimmon Homes over the adoption of these streets and have agreed the areas to be adopted as well as the process for adoption via section 37 of the Highways Act, 1980. We are however still waiting for the developers to formally submit drawings and serve notice on us. As some land adjacent to some of these roads has been transferred to a third party, by the previous developer, an easement is required before adoption can take place so a right of access to inspect and maintain walls that support the highway is secured. Resolving this issue is adding to the length of time it is taking for the developers to offer the remaining roads for adoption.

I am therefore unable to provide you with a timescale as to confirm when adoption is likely to take place but we do not foresee any problems with this ultimately being completed.

2. Question by Councillor Lambert to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

Parking across the county is becoming more difficult as more houses and flats are built and residents frequently own more than one car.

Residents in Seaford have asked for a parking permit scheme but have been turned down on the grounds that not enough people in the road asked for such a scheme.

It would appear that the County Council does not have a policy framework for assessing and implementing residents' permit schemes. Does the Lead Member agree that the time has now come for such a policy framework to be developed so that demands for permit schemes can be assessed in a transparent and equitable manner?

Answer by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

Whilst there is no formal policy for the installation of new resident permit parking schemes, when assessing requests for residents permit parking schemes, County Council officers look

at the number of requests or complaints received and generally would expect at least 40% of local addresses to support the installation of a permit scheme. It is not usual to introduce a resident permit scheme in a single road and this needs the support of the wider area so that the perceived problem is not simply transferred to adjacent residential areas.

Resident permit parking schemes provide a reasonable chance for car-owning residents to park near to although not necessarily directly outside their houses.

In assessing applications for new resident schemes or extensions to existing schemes, officers need to be guided by the level of local support for such schemes and have to take into account local conditions such as proximity to railway stations, shopping areas, hospitals, schools and other mitigating factors which may affect the level of parking by non-residents. Each request needs to be considered in its own merit, and all requests for a permit parking scheme are processed in a fair and consistent way.

More and more households now own more than one vehicle, placing a greater strain on the available kerb-space, and often generating complaints from other residents.

The times of operation need to be considered as well as prospective enforcement. It may be that a request for a permit scheme is not the most appropriate for example if most residents have suitable off-road parking. Equally there may be other remedies to combating commuter parking and school drop-off problems.

It must also be noted that there is a cost to introduce permits. The cost of the permits pays for the introduction, installation, ongoing maintenance, and enforcement of the scheme.

For these reasons outlined above it is felt that the assessment of and potential introduction of resident permit parking schemes should not be policy driven, but instead remain managed on an operational basis, with due consideration to the circumstances surrounding each application.

3. Question by Councillor Lambert to the Lead Member for Strategic Management and Economic Development

Residents using Southern rail services have experienced unprecedented disruption and misery for months. People have lost jobs, students have missed critical exams and family life has been reduced to a shambles. The chaotic lack of a service is having a serious effect on the local economy as well as on individuals' health and wellbeing.

Southern have now issued a consultation document which appears to do away with the direct trains from Seaford to London, forcing people to change at Lewes. This is simply unacceptable. Seaford is the biggest town in Lewes District and we cannot allow it to be cut off in this way.

East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council and Surrey County Council are putting in a devolution bid to the government which argues that the south east has been a driver for the UK's return to economic growth. The partnership is also proposing to establish a Sub National Transport Body to provide a mechanism for the area to speak with one voice on transport infrastructure and to provide a single platform for strategic transport and infrastructure issues. How can this have any credibility with the current state of Southern?

Will the Leader write to the Secretary of State for Transport expressing serious concern about Southern's proposals and demand that the direct service from Seaford through

Newhaven to London is kept to the level it was at before the strikes began and before Southern withdrew the service?

Answer by the Lead Member for Strategic Management and Economic Development

Rail plays an important role in East Sussex in getting people of all ages to and from their daily work, education, shopping, leisure and visiting purposes, whilst enabling connections between businesses to ensure they sustain and grow.

The County Council remains greatly concerned that despite ongoing conciliatory negotiations between Govia Thameslink Railway and the RMT Union they still remain at an impasse in resolving the dispute about the new role of On Board Supervisors. We have written to the Secretary of State, Chris Grayling, highlighting the considerable adverse impact that the strike action has had on the daily lives of the residents and business of the county, including those in Newhaven and Seaford who were subjected to a sporadic rail service over the summer. We also asked that the Secretary of State directly intervene in brokering a deal to resolve the stalemate between the train operating company and the union so that the timetabled services can return to normal.

As you highlight, GTR has recently published their consultation on the proposed timetable changes which would come into effect in 2018. One of the proposals on the timetable is that the direct peak trains between Seaford and London Victoria are no longer provided meaning that passengers would be required to change trains at Lewes with a connection time of 5 minutes in the morning and 9 minutes in the evening. GTR's rationale is that this would assist in reducing journey times between Eastbourne and London Victoria.

Any loss of a direct peak train service from the Seaford and Newhaven area would be a retrograde step in supporting the significant investment in the economic growth of one of our key growth corridors. Therefore, our response which is currently being developed by officers will unequivocally ask that the direct Seaford and Newhaven peak trains to London Victoria are retained.

Turning to your comments on Devolution, as part of any 3SC deal one of the 'asks' of Government will be that we become involved in the drafting of specifications for future rail franchises affecting the 3SC area and also in their award. This will mean that we would have a greater say in setting the terms of the franchise.

The establishment of the Sub National Transport Board, covering the south east area, will be a mechanism for the local authorities, the LEPs as well as the likes of Highways England, Network Rail, the ports and airports, to speak with one voice to Government on the transport infrastructure priorities for the area. If established this Board will also be able to directly influence the future investment programmes of the major infrastructure providers such as Highways England and Network Rail, where currently there is no established route or mechanism for doing so.

In summary, whilst I can't say with 100% confidence that proposals through 3SC and the proposed Sub National Transport Board will stop what is happening with GTR Southern at the moment, they will both provide formal engagement routes to get involved directly to put us in a much stronger position to influence the future rail services and rail infrastructure improvements in the county.