

## REPORT OF THE LEAD MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

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The Lead Member for Transport and Environment met on 25 September 2017. Other Members in attendance:-

Councillors Enever, Osborne and Smith

Also in attendance and invited to speak: Mr Nigel Smith, the Lead Petitioner, Ms Cathy Gallagher, Chair of the Saltdean Residents' Association and Councillor Steve Bryant on behalf of Rottingdean Parish Council.

### 1. Petition regarding A259

1.1 At the County Council meeting on 23 May 2017, Councillor Enever presented a petition to the Chairman of the County Council relating to the unacceptable levels of delays and queueing on the A259 South Coast Road between Newhaven, Peacehaven, Rottingdean, Ovingdean and Brighton Marina. The petition highlights that these problems are caused by ever increasing levels of traffic which exceed the capacity of the local road infrastructure and that this degree of congestion has adverse safety, economic and health implications that need to be identified and quantified. The petition also indicates that with the further development planned in the local development plans this will impact on local infrastructure and exacerbate the current unacceptable situation.

1.2 Accordingly, the petition states:

1. "We call upon East Sussex County Council, Lewes District Council and Brighton & Hove City Council (keeping the Highway Authority informed) to carry out new and joint traffic evaluation studies on the A259 South Coast Road between Newhaven, Peacehaven, Rottingdean, Ovingdean and Brighton Marina.
2. We also call upon East Sussex County Council, B&HCC and LDC to carry out an economic impact study of the detrimental effects caused by traffic congestion on the A259 between Newhaven, Peacehaven, Rottingdean, Ovingdean and Brighton Marina (particularly at the now spreading peak times) on the local economy for these areas as well as the impact on the Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAS) in Newhaven and Rottingdean and the quality of life for residents in this whole area.
3. Once the results of these studies have been reviewed by officers and the public, we call upon East Sussex County Council, Lewes District Council and Brighton & Hove City Council (keeping the highway authority informed) to clearly identify what new physical road infrastructure improvements will be required to meeting any identified capacity shortfall, along with a schedule of works for when those improvements will need to be implemented prior to further development taking place.

1.3 The full text of the petition is at Appendix 1. Similar petitions have been considered by Brighton & Hove City Council and Lewes District Council. On 27 June 2017, Brighton and Hove City Council's Environment, Transport & Sustainability [ET&S] Committee considered the petition. The decision made at that meeting was for the committee to receive an officer report at a later date once the other partner authorities have also considered the petition and the information available, and arrived at their own conclusions and made any subsequent decisions. On 17 July 2017 Lewes District Council resolved:

- (1) To note the petition in accordance with the Council's petition scheme.
- (2) To continue to work in close partnership with East Sussex County Council, Brighton and Hove City Council and all relevant Town and Parish Councils, to fully address the current situation with regards to the Air Quality Management Areas at Newhaven and Rottingdean, taking into account peak flow circumstances and the impact of future housing development

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on the capacity and operation of the A259 between Newhaven and Brighton, these actions to include referral to Scrutiny.

1.4 Standing Orders provide that where the Chairman considers it appropriate, petitions are considered by the relevant Committee or Lead Member and a spokesperson for the petitioners is invited to address the Committee/Lead Member. The Chairman referred this petition to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment. The petition contained 7123 signatures. As the number of signatures exceeds 5000 the Council's Petition Scheme allows for the petition to be presented to, and debated by, the Full Council. The petition organiser will be given five minutes to speak in support of the petition at the meeting prior to the debate.

### Transport Studies – assessing the transport impacts of development on the A259

1.5 Lewes District Local Plan Part 1: Joint Core Strategy (JCS) was adopted in May 2016 and sets out the number and distribution of new homes within the district over the period to 2030.

1.6 A key influence on the amount of growth that could come forward in the District through its Local Plan was the ability of the local road network to accommodate the additional transport demands and the opportunities to mitigate this. Accordingly the County Council, in partnership with Lewes District Council and the South Downs National Park Authority, commissioned a series of transport studies to assess the transport impacts of the development proposed by the District Council for the south coast towns on the A259 corridor and then identify a robust, viable and deliverable package of mitigation measures that would be required to support the level of growth. In modelling the impact of the proposed level of development in Lewes, the studies incorporated forecast traffic growth external to Newhaven and Peacehaven using the government's standard 'Trip End Model Presentation Program' (TEMPO), to forecast and reflect traffic growth generated by development elsewhere in the District as well as in adjacent authorities. Brighton & Hove City Council were also consulted on the Joint Core Strategy and did not raise any concerns on the transport evidence base used to inform the development of the plan, nor on the development strategy itself.

1.7 The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) boundary hugs the edge of the built up areas of Seaford, Newhaven, Peacehaven and Telscombe Cliffs. As such, the introduction of any kind of relief road north of the A259 or a new link to the A27 to relieve congestion on the A259 between Peacehaven and Rottingdean, as well as accommodate housing and employment growth in the towns, would not be deliverable as both would cross the protected landscape of the SDNPA to the north of these towns and as a consequence have a significant adverse environmental impact relative to any benefits that might be accrued.

### Proposed package of transport measures for A259 corridor

1.8 Accordingly, in the context of the A259, officer advice recommended a strategy to manage and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the existing network as well as improving travel choices to meet existing and future travel needs arising from planned housing and employment growth in the area.

1.9 As such, the studies identified that the proposed level of development was contingent on improvements to the following being delivered to increase capacity of the network relieving traffic congestion and supporting the housing growth in the area:

- junction improvements and the co-ordination of the traffic signals on the Newhaven Ring Road;
- improvements to the junctions of the A259 with Sutton Avenue and Telscombe Cliffs Way;
- a robust and co-ordinated package of enhanced bus services along the A259 utilising the existing A259 bus lanes and serving the residential areas in Telscombe, Peacehaven and Newhaven; and
- improvements for pedestrians and cyclists along the A259 corridor.

1.10 This advice was reflected in the Joint Core Strategy, and was examined extensively by the Planning Inspector at the examination hearings held in January and December 2015, ahead of the

Plan being found sound in 2016. These schemes are identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which accompanies the Joint Core Strategy.

1.11 We continually monitor traffic levels across the County, including along the A259 and at its key junctions through our routine base transport monitoring programme. We have analysed the annual average daily traffic flows on the A259 South Coast Road over the last 15 years and whilst there have been fluctuations over that period there has been an overall decrease in traffic flows, with the current traffic levels comparable to those seen in 2004 and 2005. The purpose of the traffic studies was to support the development of the Lewes District Joint Core Strategy and identify a package of mitigating transport interventions. Since the studies were undertaken in 2011/12, there has been a minor increase in traffic flows on the A259 comparable to those seen elsewhere on the road network and was factored into the transport modelling scenarios as background growth in traffic volumes as highlighted in paragraph 1.6. As the package of transport interventions has been identified, there are no current proposals to review the policies in the Joint Core Strategy and as we are already monitoring traffic flows on the A259, we have no plans to undertake further traffic surveys or update the transport studies, nor any economic impact studies.

### Air Quality issues

1.12 Under the Environment Act 1995, Lewes District Council is responsible for assessing and reporting on air quality and regularly monitors nitrogen dioxide levels at strategic locations along the A259 in accordance with its duties under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995. It has declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in Newhaven, where a number of locations exceed the annual mean nitrogen dioxide objective, and an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) for the AQMA was published in 2016, which includes the improvements identified in the mitigating transport intervention package for the Lewes Local Plan Part 1: Joint Core Strategy.

1.13 In addition, the Joint Core Strategy (Core Policy 9) seeks to address air quality issues and requires all planning applications for development that could impact on an existing AQMA to:

- Have regard to any relevant AQAP and to seek improvements in air quality through implementation of measures in the AQAP; and
- Provide mitigation measures where the development and/or associated traffic would adversely affect any declared AQMA (both within and outside of the district).

1.14 Core Policy 9 also requires all applications to provide mitigation measures where the proposed development and/or associated traffic could lead to the declaration of a new or extended AQMA, and to ensure that the development will not have a negative impact on the surrounding area in terms of its effect on health, taking into account the cumulative impacts. This policy approach was extensively debated at the Local Plan Examination in Public and found sound by the Inspector.

### Delivering local transport improvements on the A259 corridor

1.15 The bus lanes, introduced in 2008, between Peacehaven and Brighton are an integral part of the package of measures which support the strategy for the A259 of managing and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the existing network as well as improving travel choices to meet existing and future travel needs arising from planned housing and employment growth in the area. This has resulted in the number of peak hour buses along the Coast Road almost doubling, with a recent Brighton & Hove Buses survey identifying that 48% of the actual number of people travelling into the city along the Coast Road in the morning peak are travelling in just 2% of the vehicles (eg. buses).

1.16 In addition, over the last four years we have taken forward the outcomes of the strategic transport studies and funded a package of local transport measures which improve travel choices for journeys along the A259 to mitigate the impact of planned development in Newhaven and Peacehaven and help address the air quality issues in Newhaven. This has included:

- improvements for pedestrians and cyclists with a footway/cycleway along the A259 on the northern side of the road as well as providing improvements for cyclists at

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Bishopstone and along Seaford seafront which means there is a continuous route between Newhaven and Seaford;

- improved bus stop facilities including the upgrading and extending of the real time passenger information system (RTPI) on the corridor; and
- improving the interchange for buses and taxis at Newhaven Town Station;
- revenue based initiatives which encouraged travel behavioural change and promote sustainable transport funded using monies secured from the Government's Local Sustainable Transport Fund as well as the Active Access Fund; and
- incentives within travel plans for developments in the area which encourage public transport incentives (for example free bus tickets for new residents).

1.17 To further support the delivery of the package of transport interventions identified in the strategic transport studies, we have allocated funding within our County Council Capital Programme for Local Transport Improvements from 2017/18 towards:

- the design and delivery of the improvements to the Newhaven Ring Road;
- the design and delivery of the further improvements for pedestrian, cyclists and public transport users on the A259 west of Newhaven; and
- continuing the design process for cycle improvements in Newhaven.

1.18 We will continue to develop, design and deliver local transport improvements on the A259 in accordance with the outcomes of the strategic transport studies which will also support the delivery of the Newhaven Enterprise Zone which came into effect in April 2017 by improving travel choices into and out of the town. Subject to their availability, we will seek to fund these improvements either using development contributions (secured through Section 106 agreements and/or Community Infrastructure Levy monies), monies secured through external funding bids to Government or the Local Enterprise Partnerships, or the County Council's funding allocation for local transport improvements.

1.19 As highlighted in paragraphs 1.5 to 1.14 above, much work has already been undertaken by the County Council in partnership with Lewes District Council and the SDNPA to assess the impacts of the planned growth up to 2030 in the coastal towns in Lewes District, as set out in the Lewes District Local Plan Part 1: Joint Core Strategy, and the air quality impacts on the A259. A deliverable package of mitigating transport interventions has been identified.

1.20 As the package of mitigating transport interventions has been identified and there are no current proposals to review the Lewes District Joint Core Strategy the Lead Member therefore recommends that the County Council

☆ considers the petitioners' request to undertake a joint traffic evaluation study and economic impact study with Brighton & Hove City Council and Lewes District Council in the light of details of the mitigations and consequences designed to support planned growth in the relevant areas, and the package of mitigating transport interventions to support the planned growth in the coastal towns in Lewes District which has already been identified, with the County Council continuing to develop, design and deliver this package of interventions for the A259 corridors with partner authorities.

25 September 2017

NICK BENNETT  
(Lead Member for Transport  
And Environment)