

COUNTY COUNCIL – 15 OCTOBER 2019

QUESTION FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

1. Question from Nina Ovenden, Easons Green, East Sussex

What is East Sussex County Council going to do about traffic and road safety in the coming years when people become more and more aware about car use and want to cycle, but there are no cycle lanes and the speed limit is 60 on most country roads?

Response by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

The national speed limit is set by central government and covers all roads where a specific lower speed limit has not been imposed by legal order. It varies depending on the road type - 70mph on motorways and dual carriageways whilst 60mph on all other roads - and is specific to the class of vehicle being driven (for example HGV's are restricted to 50 mph on a single carriageway road). The Highway Code highlighted the need for drivers to adapt their driving to the appropriate type and condition of road you are on, taking into account the road and traffic conditions, anticipating what pedestrians and cyclists might do and being prepared for road users emerging from junctions

I acknowledge that people are becoming increasingly aware of the impact that petrol or diesel vehicles can have as a contributor to climate change, air quality issues and the impacts to health from limited physical activity. However, for some people the use of a vehicle, especially within rural areas, provides their only realistic means of travel - for getting to work, taking children to school or for shopping.

That said, we have invested significantly in cycling infrastructure across the County in recent years, including the Horsey Way in Eastbourne, which is a shared cycling and walking route connecting residential areas to key local town centre services, together with a shared cycling and walking route connecting Lewes – Ringmer, which is a proving a popular route and is used for essential journeys to employment and education and as part leisure activities.

Whilst I note your point that this growing awareness of the impact of car travel may influence peoples travel choices, including towards cycling, I think it is important to note that transport or mobility as we know it now, is currently going through some significant change. We are gradually moving towards the use of zero emission vehicles and using data to improve the way that our road network and transport services are devised, planned and managed. We will have to take account of these changes when we review and update our next Local Transport Plan.

Many of these concepts for future mobility provision are still very much focused towards the urban areas, but the County Council will need to consider how these translate to serve the rural areas of the county, and this may include the need to review current speed limits. The Department for Transport is proposing to publish a strategy in relation to this and how these concepts can be applied to rural areas, and as such the County Council will refer to this when we update our Local Transport Plan. In support of this the County Council is also developing a county wide Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan in response to the Department for Transport

national Cycling & Walking Investment Plan. We will use this to lobby for future investment in cycling and walking infrastructure and initiatives.

2. Question from Isaiah Keal, Easons Green, East Sussex

How has East Sussex County Council planned to educate the local people on the climate issue and how to prevent it?

Response by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

The County Council already carries out some educational work on climate change with local schools, as part of its programme to reduce its own carbon footprint. More widely, the Council is currently working with a range of partners to update the Environment Strategy for East Sussex. One of the key themes in the Strategy will be on climate change and it will include measures on how to mitigate against the impacts of climate change, as well as how individuals and organisations can contribute to reducing their carbon emissions. The Environment Strategy is due to be published in 2020.

3. Question from Anou Rothschild, Easons Green, East Sussex

How are East Sussex County Council planning to reinvest the pension fund to benefit the environment and the community when the petition to stop investing the pension fund into fossil fuels comes through?

Response by the Chair of the Pension Committee

The petition relating to fossil fuels will be debated by the Full Council on 15 October. Any decisions or actions arising from the debate will be considered by the Pension Committee at its next meeting on 25 November 2019.

4. Question from Ingrid Burniston, Easons Green, East Sussex

As the number of people in East Sussex grows, and the amount of waste too, how is East Sussex County Council going to deal with the waste problem knowing that many of its residents will want to ensure they are disposing of their waste in a way that won't harm the environment?

Response by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

We are not predicting a waste problem in East Sussex. We keep track of how much waste our residents create on an ongoing basis. Waste levels are currently relatively low and we predict they will continue to be at this level for some years yet. Black bag waste created by residents has been declining. We also keep track of how many extra houses are being built now and in the future and this helps us to predict where extra waste might be created and whether we need to change how we manage it as

a result. We are satisfied that we have the capacity at our waste facilities to manage future waste levels.

We and the districts and boroughs in East Sussex communicate with our residents on an ongoing basis on how to use our waste services. This helps residents understand what they should put out for recycling and what they can take along to their local recycling centre.

We are fortunate to have our own facilities and we manage most of our waste locally.

- Our black bags/bins go to the Newhaven Energy from Waste facility where electricity is created from the waste they can't recycle
- Our kerbside recycling in the green bins end up at Viridor's Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) in Crayford, Kent. Brighton's kerbside recycling ends up at our MRF in Hollingdean, Brighton
- Our garden waste goes to our composting facility in Whitesmiths

All of our waste and recycling is managed responsibly by our partners Veolia and Viridor.