

## Appendix 3 – Communications plan

Regular updates are emailed to all relevant stakeholders and up to date information is available on the [Exceat Bridge Project webpage](#).

Stakeholders include:

- Local councillors
- Local MPs
- Local residents and businesses
- South Downs National Park Authority
- Eastbourne Borough Council, Wealden and Lewes District Council
- Local Parish and Town Councils
- Landowners
- Bus companies
- Secamb
- National Highways
- The Environment Agency
- The Marine Management Organisation
- Individuals and organisations who have been in touch
- Relevant teams at the County Council

Internal and external stakeholders were informed by email on 24 February that Cabinet were being asked to consider the affordability of the project and whether to agree to the online, single lane bridge. A copy of the information provided to stakeholders regarding the single lane bridge is [appended to the 4 March Cabinet report](#).

Stakeholders were informed on 7 March that the Council was investigating the possibility of using BSIP funding to meet the funding gap.

A further update on the proposals set out in this report was emailed on 10 April and the website was updated. A copy is included below.

We will continue to update all relevant stakeholders when key decisions are made or key milestones reached. Including:

- Cabinet's decision on 22 April
- In advance of any road closures or other major disruptions
- In advance of major construction work on site
- If there are any changes to published project timelines
- In advance of bridge opening
- Other progress updates that may be of interest.

### 10 April 2025: Update on Exceat Bridge Replacement Project:

Dear....

I am writing to give you an update on the Exceat Bridge Project. You will recall that we wrote to you in February to let you know that Cabinet would be considering the affordability of a new, two-lane bridge at Exceat. Due to a significant funding gap they were asked to consider replacing the bridge with a more affordable, single-lane structure instead.

However, the decision was deferred following a proposal from Brighton and Hove Bus and Coach Company to reallocate some of the funding from the Bus Service Improvement Plan to the Exceat Bridge Project. This would allow the Council to build the two-lane bridge as originally planned, with minimal road closures during construction.

The Department for Transport have approved our application for the bus funding to be reallocated. Cabinet will consider whether to approve the reallocation of funds and construction of a two-lane bridge at their meeting on 22 April.

If Cabinet agrees, work will continue to finalise designs, carry out pre-construction preparations, discharge the necessary conditions attached to the planning approval and progress with the public inquiry to secure the land necessary to construct the two-lane bridge. We would aim to start constructing the new bridge in spring 2026.

The proposed two-lane bridge would be built next to the existing bridge, meaning road closures would be for around 19 days in total. These closures would not need to be continuous, and some closures could be carried out on weekends or less busy times to reduce disruption.

We are grateful to the Brighton & Hove Bus and Coach Company for supporting the delivery of a two-lane bridge and for prioritising its delivery over other bus priority schemes. I have included further information below about the reason for the change.

The Cabinet meeting will be on 22 April and the report will be published on our website today: [Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 22nd April, 2025, 10.00 am | East Sussex County Council](#)

### **Information about reallocation of funding from the Bus Service Improvement Projects (BSIP):**

The scheme to provide a two-lane bridge at Exceat has always been a very high priority for both the County Council and Brighton & Hove Bus and Coach Company.

The Brighton & Hove Coaster service, which crosses the bridge, carries over 5 million passengers each year. The current bridge is a major bottleneck. It adds to journey times and causes delays at busy times that affect the whole route between Eastbourne and Brighton. This often results in significant delays, short running of services or whole route cancellations. Cuckmere Buses also use the bridge for local services. The proposed two-lane bridge would effectively remove the bottleneck.

The [East Sussex Bus Service Improvement Plan](#) identified the A259 from Brighton to Peacehaven as a key corridor, where changes could enable significant improvements to journey times and reliability for buses. A number of schemes were developed with funding from the Department for Transport's BSIP1 Grant. At the time of the BSIP1 funding application, the Exceat Bridge project was fully funded. Therefore the Council applied for funding for other schemes along the corridor. These included improvements to The Drove and Denton roundabout in Newhaven, and a bus priority scheme at Telscombe Cliffs in Peacehaven.

The Newhaven, Peacehaven and Exceat projects are very much a package of schemes. The two-lane bridge is a vital part of this package and the most time critical. Therefore, the bus company proposed that the Exceat bridge scheme is prioritised and funding that had been secured for the Newhaven and Peacehaven schemes be reallocated to the Exceat Bridge Project.

However, these schemes would not be forgotten. We are proposing to use our 2025/26 BSIP funding to deliver The Drove and Denton Roundabout bus priority scheme in Newhaven. We would also aim to deliver the Telscombe Cliffs to Peacehaven' bus priority scheme at the earliest opportunity with future BSIP funding.

I will update you with the outcome of the Cabinet meeting and next steps. This information will also be available on our website: [Exceat Bridge Replacement Project](#).