

Report to: Lead Member for Transport and Environment

Date of meeting: 28 April 2025

By: Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Title: 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.

Purpose: To consider the petition requesting that the County Council change the road layout in High Street, Bexhill by way of physical width restrictions to prevent vehicles over the 7.5t weight restriction from using the High Street and to consider smaller buses being used or buses being re-routed.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Lead Member is recommended to advise the 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 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.**

1 Background Information

1.1. At the County Council meeting on 11 February 2025, a petition was presented to the Chairman by Councillor Clark and Councillor Hollidge on behalf of concerned residents to enforce the 7.5t weight restriction on the High Street in Bexhill to preserve the historic listed buildings. The petitioners are requesting that the County Council change the road layout in the High Street by way of physical width restrictions to prevent vehicles over the 7.5t weight restriction from using the High Street and to consider smaller buses being used or buses being re-routed.

1.2. 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. The Chairman has referred this petition to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment. A copy of the petition is available in the Members' Room.

1.3. The B2182 High Street is within the preservation area of the Old Town of Bexhill and lies between Chantry Lane/Belle Hill at its western end and Upper Sea Road/ Church Street at its eastern end. A location plan can be found at Appendix 1.

1.4. The High Street is subject to a 7.5t weight restriction between its junctions with Chantry Lane/Belle Hill and Upper Sea Road/Church Street. It has an 'except for access' provision which means that any Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) which is legitimately accessing land or property within the restriction is legally permitted to do so. Enforcement of moving traffic restrictions such as weight limits is a matter for Sussex Police. East Sussex County Council has no power to enforce these restrictions.

1.5. Advanced advisory signing of the weight restriction on the High Street has been provided at the junction of the A269 London Road/B2182 Holliers Hill and on the B2182 Upper Sea Road, which provides drivers with the opportunity to use the A269 London Road or De La Warr Road as an alternative route. There are regulatory 7.5t weight restriction signs at the start of the prohibition at either end of the High Street. Appendix 2 shows photographs of the traffic signs in place. As with any restriction it relies on drivers taking note of the road signs which have been provided.

1.7 Bus services use the High Street in Bexhill with the primary reason to provide access for patients and visitors attending Bexhill Hospital on Hollier's Hill. These bus services (routes 53, 94/94A and 95) run from Bexhill, Sidley, Hastings and other areas. All of these buses are over 7.5t.

1.8. Bexhill Community Bus also provide bus route 12 along Bexhill High Street linking Bexhill Hospital with Bexhill Town Centre and Pebsham. This service runs with a minibus under 7.5t, however it only provides 4 return journeys a day.

1.9. Crash data supplied by Sussex Police for the most recent 3-year period up to 31 January 2025 shows that there have been no recorded personal injury crashes on the High Street.

2 Supporting Information

2.1. 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.

2.2. 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.

2.3 It is important to note that any physical width restriction must 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, can 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.

2.4. 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.

2.5 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.

3 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

3.1. It is therefore recommended that the Lead Member advises the petitioners that a scheme to construct a physical width restriction on the High Street be fully assessed for possible inclusion for funding within the Capital Programme.

3.2. Petitioners should also be informed that, whilst all options will be fully considered, due to the requirement to ensure the emergency services and legitimate 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.

3.3. Petitioners should also be informed that the concerns about enforcement of the 7.5t weight restriction in the High Street have been passed to Sussex Police as the enforcement authority.

3.4 Petitioners should also be informed that the re-routing of the scheduled bus service would have 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 the passenger demand on these routes. Therefore, no changes are recommended to the bus service along the High Street at this time.

RUPERT CLUBB

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LOCAL MEMBERS

Councillor Clark

Councillor Hollidge

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None