

East Sussex Freight Strategy

Consultation summary report

December 2025

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Engagement approach

Early and preliminary engagement was undertaken with strategic freight partners and key local stakeholder groups during the development of the draft strategy. This helped ensure that proposals reflected both operational realities and local priorities before being shared more widely.

The Draft East Sussex Freight Strategy was consulted on as a modal strategy of Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4). It aimed to collect feedback on the vision, priorities, and proposals for freight in East Sussex, helping to shape a more sustainable, efficient, and inclusive freight system through to 2050.

The feedback from the formal public consultation ran from 6 May to 30 June 2025 and comprised both structured survey tools and open feedback mechanisms. A bespoke workshop was held with young people to discuss lived experiences of young people and freight and to provide input into the strategy.

Key outcomes

Responses were collected via an online questionnaire (paper copies were available on request), which included a mix of closed and open-ended questions, and via email submissions. In total, 38 responses were received — 31 through the online portal and 7 via email, with responses received from key stakeholders within the freight industry.

For those who provided responses to the ‘about you’ questions on the online survey, there is a good representation of responses across all ages (in 10-year bands) from 40-49 through to 60-69, with 4 or 6 responses per 10-year age band. There were fewer younger people (aged 39 or younger) and older people (aged 70 or over). In terms of gender, more females than males responded.

Closed question feedback

Most respondents showed broad agreement with the proposed freight roles, priorities, and schemes, particularly around decarbonisation and last-mile logistics, which received the highest levels of support. Strategic freight movements and planning policies were also well supported. A number of respondents provided feedback on the Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA), while others indicated they had no further comments. Comments suggested certain areas needing further clarification and improvement.

Open question feedback

- **Positive Feedback:** Strong support was noted for strategic hubs, rail investment, and modal shift. Respondents also welcomed collaboration, decarbonisation, and alignment with planning policy.
- **Concerns:** These focused on delivery risks, limited ambition, planning gaps, and lack of local impact consideration.
- **Suggestions for Improvement:** Feedback centred on stronger policy alignment, more detail on hubs and infrastructure, and inclusion of local priorities.

- **Environmental Concerns:** Respondents called for reducing emissions, promoting rail and maritime freight, and avoiding sensitive or rural areas for infrastructure.
- **Equity & Access Concerns:** There were calls for more inclusive planning, better local engagement, and accessible materials.
- **General Comments:** Some feedback called for clearer communication and plain language, while a few responses were general in nature.

Reflections

- High levels of support were noted for freight strategy elements across themes, especially decarbonisation, last-mile solutions, and planning integration.
- There was a clear call for rail freight expansion and modal shift to reduce emissions and congestion.
- Concerns remain about whether schemes can be delivered, their local impacts, and lack of consideration for how schemes could be funded.
- Stakeholders seek stronger planning clarity, inclusive governance, and visible follow-through.

Actions following feedback

The strategy was updated following feedback received during the consultation period. This section provides a summary of the feedback and actions undertaken, reported by coding category and sub-category.

Category: Positive feedback

You Said (sub category)	We did
Strategy and governance, infrastructure and modal shift, planning and land use, local and community engagement and specific scheme or operational support	Positive feedback is welcomed and noted. Positive feedback was received for a range of areas including stakeholder collaboration and governance, clear role definitions, multi-agency and cross-sector engagement, support for specific interventions and connections to spatial planning. This will be applied to future responses to draft district and borough local plan policies.

Category: Concerns

You Said (sub category)	We did
Strategy, delivery and Governance	Upcoming devolution and local government reorganisation is not fully known, and whilst we have updated these sections to reflect the current position, they will continue to evolve,

	<p>and the freight strategy will be reviewed to reflect the outcomes and the potential priorities for the County.</p> <p>As this is a new strategy, we have reviewed the framing, scope and ambition of the strategy following the consultation. As with LTP4 the strategy will remain live and will be regularly reviewed and updated as appropriate.</p>
Infrastructure and planning gaps	<p>Comments around infrastructure and planning gaps have been reviewed and the strategy amended as appropriate.</p> <p>The freight routing aspect of the strategy was again reviewed following the consultation, and due to the nature of the road network in the county, there will be no further amendments to that policy at this time.</p>
Equity and local representation	<p>This public consultation provided the opportunity for local communities to have their say on the strategy. All town, parish, district and borough councils were advised of the consultation.</p> <p>Local communities will also be able to have their say on many interventions as they are developed and consulted upon as part of the scheme development process, subject to the availability of funding.</p>
Role of ESCC	<p>We have reviewed and make it clear the role of East Sussex County Council by identifying whether we will lead, advocate or support various measures and interventions. This acknowledges that there will be partnership working with the freight industry and local planning authorities, amongst others, to successfully delivery the strategy.</p>
Equalities Impact Assessment	<p>Feedback on the Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been reviewed and will be included within a significant update to the LTP4 EqIA, which will be updated to incorporate other modal strategy EqIAs too. This includes looking at social-economic</p>

	disadvantage as a result of the feedback received.
Engagement town, parish, district and borough councils	This public consultation provided the opportunity for local communities to have their say on the strategy. All town, parish, district and borough councils were advised of the consultation.

Category: Suggestions for improvement

You Said (sub category)	We did
Policy and governance	<p>We have included more LTP4 content within the strategy, particularly focussed on the evidence base (key strategic data) that support the strategy.</p> <p>We have also reviewed the strategy in relation to other key policy and governance suggestions. This strategy already showed how it fits with other key local strategies but now also includes other local, regional and national strategies and policies to show how this freight strategy fits into wider policy contexts.</p>
Infrastructure and land use	<p>We will need to work with the freight industry, landowners and local planning authorities in relation to the hub suggestions to ensure those which are delivered are viable and have minimal impact on the customer (either in delivery time or cost).</p> <p>For rail-based suggestions we will need to work with Network Rail / Great British Railways and freight operating companies to enable more freight to be carried by rail, particularly where there is high demand.</p>
Operational improvements	We have identified an initiative to improve the awareness of freight, the different types of freight distribution, and will work with partners to explore last mile-solutions that support freight operations and cause no or minimal impacts for the customer (e.g. still delivered the same day).

Environmental concerns	We will continue to support the freight industry to decarbonise and minimise their impact on the environment. This is shown through the decarbonisation priority area.
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Category: Equity and access concerns

You Said	We did
Equity and access concerns	We have listened to the feedback about the consultation and will learn from this experience to inform future consultations and engagement events, either through the County Council or by partner organisations.

Category: General comments

You Said	We did
General comments	We have reviewed the consultation comments and have sought to manage delivery expectations and make the document more understandable, notably to people not in the freight industry. We will also include an executive summary in the East Sussex Freight Strategy.