

WRITTEN QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 44

1. Question by Councillor Lambert to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

Traffic congestion issues at Exceat Bridge have been a major concern in Seaford and the surrounding area for a number of years. Whilst I welcome the funding that appears to be in place now to help ease this congestion and understand the complexity and need to consult with numerous partners, I am nevertheless concerned about the timescale and the lack of information that is being made available to the public and indeed local councillors about progress on this important project. The latest information I have been able to find is a press release dated 12 October 2018.

Could the Lead Member please inform me:

1. What progress has been made on drawing up a proposal for Exceat Bridge?
2. What is a realistic timescale for completion of the project?
3. What plans are there to consult the public on designs?
4. Will the design take into account impact on the surrounding area, in particular, the need for a safe crossing between the bus stops and the internationally renowned meanders and a cycle route to link up with the popular routes in Friston Forest?
5. Will local councillors be kept in regular touch with progress so that we can, in turn, inform our residents who consistently raise concerns?

Answer by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

Thank you Councillor Lambert for your question. I am aware that there is much public interest this scheme to replace the Exceat bridge. In response to your specific questions I am happy to provide the following responses:

1. As with every large civil engineering project like this, there is considerable feasibility study and pre-planning work that needs to take place. To that end the design consultant has completed the initial scoping work and preliminary design, including an options appraisal report and environmental screening. A topographical survey has been carried out and the necessary site investigation boreholes will begin shortly so that engineers can better understand the underlying geology and design the foundations accordingly. Because a new bridge will require planning consent our design team has met with the South Downs National Park Authority to understand their perspective and expectations and there will be further design review meetings with SDNPA along the way.
2. The current programme envisages a planning application being submitted to the SDNPA at the end of November and, subject to receiving planning consent, construction could start in July 2020. Construction is expected to take 12 -18 months to complete and therefore a new bridge might be open by the spring of 2021. However, Cuckmere valley is an extremely

environmentally sensitive location and there are significant planning and environmental considerations to overcome / mitigate.

3. The bridge will require planning consent from the SDNPA and therefore the design is being progressed in consultation with officers from the National Park. The planning application and the design of the bridge will be subject to a planning consultation, which will be the opportunity for the public to comment on the design.
4. The scheme is for the replacement of the existing life-expired bridge, and a replacement bridge is being designed to modern design and transportation standards. As such consideration is being given to the safety and needs of all road users, including cyclists and pedestrians.
5. Local Councillors are being kept informed and press releases prepared at key milestones. As the project progresses a dedicated page of the East Sussex Highways website will be created to provide key project updates.