

When considering the Draft Resolution below, members are encouraged to read the Draft WSCC Transport Plan 2022-2036, which can be found at <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/about-the-council/policies-and-reports/roads-and-travel-policy-and-reports/west-sussex-transport-plan-review/>

Draft Resolution

Burgess Hill Town Council agrees the following comment on the WSCC Transport Plan 2022-2036 (Draft for consultation).

We applaud the aspirations of the plan, its visions to level up economic areas of the county and, in particular, the visions to be '*on a pathway to net zero carbon by 2050 through mass electrification, reduced use of fossil-fuels and local living*' [5.4].

The vision for 'local living' has been further described [5.6] with '*a focus on reducing the need to travel and prioritising interventions in areas of short distance trips such as larger settlements*' and [5.7] '*targeted measures to improve some strategic road and rail and urban bus infrastructure*' which we find commendable.

We note the incorporation of these visions into several positive environmental objectives [5.8 .. 5.26] for:

- *Enablement of local living and reduction of travel by car [Objectives 2 & 11]*
- *Improved rural access [6]*
- *Addressing pollution and impacts on health, well-being and lifestyle [4,5]*
- *Achieving net zero carbon by 2050, the protection of landscapes, the environment and monitoring[7..10]*
- *Improvements to public transport and active travel [13..17]*

We are concerned, however, that these environmentally positive objectives are not being given high enough priority in the plan, and that two other objectives, for Economic Prosperity [*Objective 1*] and Efficiency of the County Strategic Road Network [12] that compete with these objectives are being given undue weight in the plan.

Examples of this occur in the strategies outlined for Mid Sussex which are discussed below. We feel that applying the wrong priorities will undermine the vision to achieve net zero carbon by 2050, and do not follow from the County Council's recognition in 2019 of a Climate Emergency.

We ask that the plan fully assesses priorities for all its objectives and strategies in terms of the carbon emissions that will occur, in both construction and operation, as well as the economic impacts. We note the recent publication in July 2021 by the DFT of '*Decarbonising Transport A Better, Greener Britain*' (Ref 1), which sets out '*how local areas will deliver ambitious quantifiable carbon reductions in transport, taking into account the differing transport requirements of different areas. This will need to be in line with carbon budgets and net zero*'. Acknowledging that this was just prior to publication of the WSCC LTP, we look forward to an update to the plan, and how it will integrate with other Local Authority functions, such as Planning.

We note the plan's priorities do not reflect public opinion. West Sussex respondents to the Survey (Ref 2), published in March 2021, ranked Local Economy Interventions to support bus services, rail services, cycling & walking well above road schemes. (Ranking scores were of the order of 6 vs 4.)

Area Transport Strategy for Mid Sussex

Paragraph 7.115 under the heading Key Issues (for Mid Sussex area) provides an example of the above misplacement of priorities of the plan's objectives, where it states: '*...interventions are needed in the District that will reduce car travel at peak times. If such interventions are not delivered or are not successful, then the following locations on the highway network are likely to require capacity improvement...*'. There is no suggestion of what specific 'interventions' will be delivered, but the statement is followed by a list of road junction improvements. The plan is unlikely to allow time for experimentation or measurement and assessment of interventions before the imperative of road improvements takes over. There is a danger that this will default to a 'demand led' plan.

Doubts about priorities for the environmentally positive objectives are raised by paragraph 7.118. Shared transport [bus] priority seems only to apply specifically to the A22 and A264 around East Grinstead, and as part of a 'major improvement'. A more comprehensive plan for shared transport is needed for the Mid Sussex area, with more detail on what will be 'attractive options' [7.120] for the other towns.

We note that in Mid Sussex on-street EV charging is confined in the short term 2022-2027 period to semi-rural areas in Lindfield, Cuckfield and Ardingly [7.119], and we question why this is, when on-street EV charging is being planned for early installation in urban locations in all other areas. A more ambitious plan is needed. Mid-Sussex and West Sussex are underperforming councils according to this summer's official nationwide figures (Ref 3).

While provision of a cycle route from Haywards Heath to Burgess Hill is desirable [7.120], this is proving to be a costly project with no guarantees that it will yield the greatest modal change. Higher priority to bring forward other active travel routes within towns should be applied, such as direct routes between the centre of Burgess Hill and the Northern Arc, Victoria Business Park, and the new Science Park. This would encourage a much greater modal change at the earliest opportunity.

We welcome the intention [7.121] for making railway station improvements, with bus priority and interchanges in the short term. We would like to know about these in more specific detail, such as provision for bus connections and waiting areas. We suggest the plan should put greater value on Bus Priority schemes, service frequency, and connections at railway stations, and to consider *Dynamic Demand Response Transport* for urban as well as rural area bus services. The 100 service from Burgess Hill to Horsham is funded by WSCC, so could be adapted for such a scheme.

We welcome the advent of improved on-street parking and traffic management techniques in specific areas [7.122]. We feel that this council should be consulted on these in more detail.

We ask WSCC to include *Cycle Sharing* schemes in the plan, and work with Mid Sussex for these to be included in their LCWIPs. Better facilities for mobility and access are also needed.

We note there is no *Car Share or Community Car Pooling* scheme for Mid Sussex. We ask if WSCC have considered these and whether schemes should be planned and infrastructure provided for them more widely.

We note under *Monitoring - Valuation of GHG Emissions* [9.4] that outcomes will be appraised by reference to data from UK's Greenhouse Gas Inventory [footnote 37, BEIS].

We ask that the plan mandates appraisal for all capital road schemes for cost benefit analysis in terms of GHG's **before** schemes are implemented.

Summary of Recommendations

We urge WSCC to amend the plan as follows:

Spending Priorities for Environmentally Positive Objectives

This should include assessment of schemes in terms of carbon emissions during construction and operation as well as their economic impact;

EV Charging

Bring forward installation of on-street charging in towns in Mid Sussex without delay;

Buses

To put greater value on Bus Priority schemes, service frequency, and connections at railway stations; To consider *Dynamic Demand Response Transport* for urban as well as rural area bus services;

Cycling and Walking

We ask WSCC to include cycle sharing schemes, and work with Mid Sussex for these to be included in their LCWIPs;

Better facilities for mobility and access are also needed;

Parking & Traffic Management

We recommend that the plan is further developed in discussion with District and local councils (Town and Parish) of the techniques and initiatives that are envisaged for parking and speeding and the use of unsuitable routes ('rat-runs');

Carshares / Car Clubs

We ask if WSCC have considered these for Mid Sussex and whether schemes should be planned and infrastructure provided for them.

References

Ref 1: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transport-decarbonisation-plan>

Ref 2: https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/media/15484/wstp_review_summary_march2021.pdf

Ref 3: <https://maps.dft.gov.uk/ev-charging-map/index.html>