

## **Meeting of the Full Council**

**Monday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

### **Agenda Item 17.0**

#### **TO CONSIDER A PROPOSED RESPONSE TO THE EAST SUSSEX LOCAL CYCLING AND WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN**

##### **1.0 Summary**

- 1.1 The East Sussex Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) sets out proposed cycling and walking networks, and measures within specific areas of the County. The overall document framework has been prepared by East Sussex County Council but the documents and studies specific to towns in East Sussex were produced and prepared by Sustrans – a charity who aim to make it easier for people to walk and cycle.
- 1.2 It focuses on areas of the County where there are the greatest opportunities to increase levels of cycling and walking, with an emphasis on delivering infrastructure improvements which will support those people who currently do not cycle or walk.
- 1.3 By having a plan in place for the county, it is hoped that the position of key agencies will be stronger to secure future investment from a range of funding sources.
- 1.4 The deadline for comments is Friday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2020. Some members have already sent comments into the Town Clerk previously from an early draft which was circulated in the Spring/Summer. This feedback has been collated into a draft response for Uckfield Town Council and attached in appendix A.
- 1.5 They are keen to understand if they have connected the right places and if not to tell them and share our ideas. They are also keen to know about any current cycling or walking trips that residents may take, any barriers that we face cycling and walking and what measures we would like to see in the future.

##### **2.0 Recommendation**

- 2.1 Members are asked to consider the attached proposed response to the consultation and to advise the Town Clerk if they wish to make any additions or alterations.

Contact officer: Holly Goring

Appendices: Appendix A & B: Online survey questions and draft response

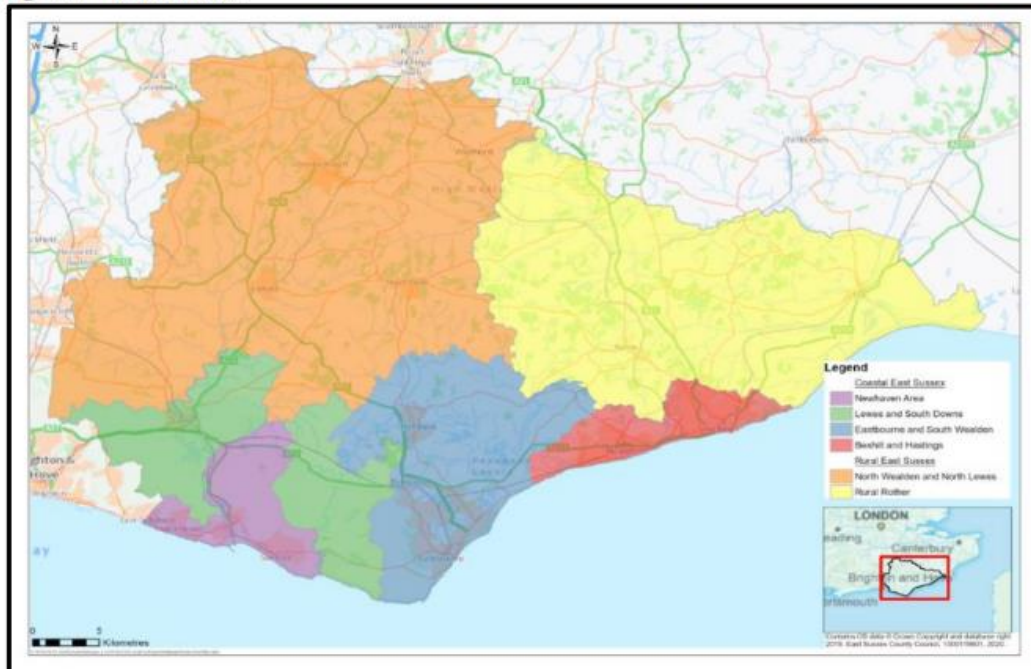
# AGENDA ITEM 17.0 - APPENDICES A & B - ONLINE SURVEY QUESTIONS

## A – About the cycling and walking networks

### 4. Section 4 of the LCWIP Summary

- outlines where in the county the plan is focussed on. Do you agree with the extent of the geographic areas which have been assessed as part of the East Sussex LCWIP:

Figure 3 – LCWIP Areas



**Uckfield falls into the area of 'North Wealden & North Lewes' which includes Uckfield, Heathfield and Crowborough. – YES**

5. Section 5 of the LCWIP Summary outlines the proposed network for CYCLING according to the specific geographic areas listed below. Does the proposed network connect with the places that local people may wish to travel for everyday journeys? Please provide a response according to a specified geographic area. You may select more than one area.

Figure 11 - Uckfield proposed cycle network



We are looking specifically at the area of Uckfield.

Although we can understand the reason for some of the proposed cycle networks and the links between North, South, East and West and to Uckfield College, Uckfield Leisure Centre, and the High Street, some of the proposed routes look particularly challenging for cyclists but also in terms of making the necessary facilities available. The reason for this is a number of the drawn routes in figure 11 look like they follow existing road networks such as U3 which follows the route of Bell Lane through Bellbrook Business Park. There are numerous parked cars along Bell Lane daily which already cause congestion for delivery lorries and visitors to the businesses located there. Bell Lane is unable to accommodate current levels of traffic flow let alone a cycle lane. The safety of cyclists or pedestrians would therefore be critical. U2 looks to follow Framfield Road out of Uckfield, which is a particularly narrow road due to the character and layout of the highway and the properties located along it, with short property frontages and very limited or no parking provision.

6. Section 5 of the LCWIP Summary outlines the proposed network for WALKING according to the specific geographic areas. Does the proposed network connect with the appropriate places that local people may wish to travel for everyday journeys? Please provide a response according to a specified geographic area. You may select more than one area.

**Not applicable – as no proposals put forward for Uckfield area**

7. For what types of trips would you usually cycle for all or part of a journey? Please tick all which are applicable.

Education  Employment  Shopping  Leisure  Other - please state

**All of the above.**

8. Do you experience any barriers which prevent you from cycling? Please select 'yes or 'no' using the drop down box. If no, please tick all that are appropriate.

Barriers to cycling

Quality of route  Busy roads  Feeling unsafe  Difficult junctions to cross  Not enough information on possible routes  Personal safety  Cost of owning a bike  Confidence  Other – please state **All of the above**

9. After the consultation on the LCWIP we will develop a long-term programme of improvements for cycling. To help inform the types of measures we should consider including, what would encourage you to cycle more? Please tick all which are applicable.

**Cycle routes separated from other modes of travel**  Traffic free neighbourhoods – including road closures  **Greater priority for cyclists at junctions and crossings**  Direct cycle routes  Attractive traffic free spaces in town centres  **More signing**  Cycle training, information and initiatives  Other - please state

10. For what types of trips would you usually walk for all or part of a journey? Please tick all which are applicable.

Education  Employment  Shopping  Leisure  Other - please state

**All of the above**

11. Do you experience any barriers which prevent you from walking? Please select 'yes' or 'no' using the drop down box. If no, please tick all which are applicable.

Barriers to walking

Quality of route or footway  Busy roads  Difficult junctions to cross  Not enough information on possible routes  Personal safety  Other – please state

**All of the above**

12. After the consultation on the LCWIP we will develop a long-term programme of improvements for walking. To help inform the types of measures we should consider including, what would encourage you to walk more? Please tick all which are applicable.

Walking routes separated from other modes of travel  Traffic free neighbourhoods (including road closures)  Greater priority for pedestrians at junctions and crossings  Direct routes  Dropped kerbs & tactile paving  Attractive traffic free spaces in town centres  Wayfinding  Walking Initiatives & Information  Other - please state

13. Please provide any further comments you wish to make in relation to the East Sussex Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

#### Overall feedback on Part One

Uckfield Town Council supports the intention for the plan to remain a live document as it will need to adapt to the proposed increases in residential and commercial development. Uckfield itself has seen numerous screening opinions and planning applications being submitted to the local planning authority by developers. If these go ahead, the town will change substantially.

The pandemic during 2020 has definitely seen an increase in people enjoying the green open spaces and walking in the fresh air. This is extremely positive for people's health and wellbeing.

However the lockdowns during the Covid-19 pandemic provided more time and opportunity for walking or cycling to destinations. In contrast, on a day of bad weather when people have to rush to work, school or home, their desire to reach their destination quickly, could reduce the current level of interest.

Town Councillors fully promote walking, cycling and greener forms of transport. However some of the proposals being suggested for Uckfield could add to existing levels of traffic congestion, thus increasing carbon emissions from idling engines and subsequently having a detrimental impact on the environment.

A number of our Town Councillors have walked or cycled in the area for many years, but the condition of the roads in East Sussex are particularly poor. Urban walking is made difficult by overhanging hedges, and uneven dangerous footpaths with many areas in town unadopted or deteriorating. Walking in the rural areas can be difficult with overgrown paths, broken stiles, lack of way markers and finger posts.

Plus it should be noted that the changes seen in town or village centres to change commercial retail spaces to residential, reduces the amount of local employment available, thus increasing commuter travel and subsequently increasing pollution and congestion. Changes are needed to planning policies maintain employment space locally, which would help to encourage people to walk or cycle to work.

Page 7 – it's quoted that '*most local journeys to work in East Sussex are at or below 5km*' Could the source of this evidence be provided please as in the rural areas of Wealden District, including Uckfield, residents have to travel further in the main.

Page 8 – first para (Better safety) doesn't read correctly – needs amending.

Page 14 – ESCC Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2007-2017 – more resources are required. Numerous rights of way across the county need more attention, and greater resource to keep them open and safe. At present, this is not possible with the limited resources available to manage and improve these.

#### Appendix 1 – ESCC LCWIP Policies

If proposals are to introduce cycle routes on the highway, consideration should be given to reducing speed limits to 20mph in the urban areas including in residential and industrial estates.

Furthermore would all of these routes be adopted by ESSC and would ESSC have the funds to maintain these?

Reference to enforcement is not applicable in Wealden District.

#### Sustrans Report – Uckfield LCWIP (June 2018)

If a new town was being built from scratch, the proposals would be fantastic and would be able to be implemented and supported from the outset, but the character of some of the residential areas, roads and typography of the landscape in Uckfield (steep gradients) does not assist with facilitating the proposals being set out by Sustrans with particular regard to cycleways.

Also, more importantly - the funds required to deliver the proposals in the Sustrans report could be £6million or more just for Uckfield. How would these schemes be funded?

It was noted that no suggestion was put forward for a river walk/cycle path in the Sustrans report.

Page iii - Land Use Planning – would be interested to know what developments Sustrans considered when reviewing Uckfield we are guessing this included Ridgewood Farm and Mallard Drive.

Page 1 – specific aims of the ESLTP – the investigation of sustainable transport measures that will mitigate additional traffic from new developments is welcomed but it should be noted that many of the proposed new developments are on the edge of town, so it may be difficult to encourage walking and cycling over those distances.

Page 1 – consider traffic management options to reduce through traffic passing through the town  
This is totally impractical and not supported. The Town Council would object to any proposals of this nature.

#### Page 1 – implementation of school zones outside each school

Would be interested in understanding more about this suggestion to provide safer crossing facilities and high quality routes, but consideration would need to be given to adjacent areas and neighbours, and most importantly enforcement of these school zones.

#### Page 1 – work with developers delivering Ridgewood Farm

Uckfield Town Council supports the need for any current or new developments on the outskirts of town, to have adequate linkages with the town centre.

#### Page 3 - Route 211 – Framfield Road

Framfield Road is a major thoroughfare through the town. Whilst Uckfield Town Council understands the rationale for making this road more cycle/walking friendly, the suggested works are wholly unsuitable for implementation in Framfield Road, which is predominantly residential with some business use. The proposal would:

- Create even greater parking problems in neighbouring streets and, potentially on hospital land (as the area is already heavily oversubscribed for on-street parking as a result of the age and character of the Victorian/early Edwardian properties along this road. No alternative parking facilities have been suggested by Sustrans in lieu of a cycle lane or provision of cycling facilities. In current times, most households have at least two vehicles if not more). It should also be noted that a Planning Inspector when reviewing an application for development at nearby Bird in Eye acknowledged that the layout and density of parking on Framfield Road actually formed a very efficient form of 'natural

*traffic calming' which maintained traffic speeds and pedestrian safety. To remove on-street parking for the benefit of cyclists would actually put cyclists in further danger due to the high likelihood of vehicles speeding along this road with no traffic calming;*

- Exacerbate traffic congestion further and affect traffic flows in and out of Uckfield.

Another issue is the road beyond Framfield Road (Bird in Eye Hill and onwards), which is very dangerous to pedestrians and cyclists, as it has no pavement for most of its length and is very windy. There would seem little purpose in creating a cycle friendly/ walker friendly path that terminated in this stretch of road.

If any further pedestrian crossing facilities were to be added to Framfield Road, the only location it would be viable would be between Harcourt Road and Alexandra Road as this is a natural pedestrian corridor.

Option 3 – High Street – see above under Page 1. Totally impractical and not supported.

#### Page 4 - 221 Bell Farm Road to Bell Lane

The safety of cyclists on any proposed new route through the industrial estate (Bellbrook Business Park) is of particular concern, due to the extent of parked vehicles, congestion and dangers from moving large delivery HGVs in this area. We already have numerous difficulties in this area with moving traffic, parking on pavements and vehicles blocking entrances. There is also the tight bend as you leave the Tesco roundabout and move west round into the industrial estate. Serious consideration would need to be given to this.

Bell Farm Road can be difficult to cross so the suggested crossing 221.1 would be worth considering further.

#### Page 6 – Church Street

Reference to it being a 30mph road is incorrect. There is a 20mph limit from the High Street to the Drive. Agree that if pavements were resurfaced it would improve pedestrian safety.

Church Street is very narrow, particularly in the middle section near to Holy Cross Church and Pudding Cake Lane. Church Street itself is at present not pedestrian nor cycle friendly. If proposals were put forward to implement traffic calming measures in this location, it would most certainly add to existing traffic flows and traffic congestion for traffic moving south down London Road, and into the High Street, but further detail would be welcome to understand these suggestions in more detail.

This is also a conservation area, so the addition of street furniture would need to be fully considered.

#### Page 9 – Ringles Cross to Church Street

Reducing the speed limit to 30mph outside residential properties is supported and the suggestion to review speed restrictions in Ringles Cross itself.

Correction – there is no 'Newell Road' The speed limit changes just north of Brown's Lane.

The junction with Church Street has been looked at on a number of occasions. In the current design of the junction, there is not enough space for vehicles heading south into the High Street to keep moving whilst vehicles are waiting to turn right into Church Street. A right filter arrow would help traffic flow here. The matter of there being no pedestrian crossing has also been a longstanding concern of local residents.

Page 10 – High Street – speed restrictions have already been put in place in Uckfield High Street to 20mph. With that and the junctions of Civic Approach, Grange Road, and Library Way, plus two pedestrian crossings, these already halt traffic flow and manage traffic speeds during the day. The difficulty is at night when there is less traffic movement. Further detail would be required to understand the inclusion of any cycle lane before commenting.

#### Page 11 – Bell Farm Road to Framfield Road

The suggestion to tighten the corner radii on the Waitrose junction would not be feasible. The junction was already tightened during previous roadworks. Larger vehicles now cross onto the opposite carriageway when exiting the road. Due to Waitrose and other businesses in River Walk, this would create issues for HGVs.

Mixed views with regards to a pedestrian crossing from the station to the station car park. This area is particularly congested with traffic and could result in traffic backing up at both the Framfield Road junction and Bell Lane junctions.

#### Page 13 – New Town to Ridgewood

Typos present within the report. - Victoria Park is Victoria Pleasure Ground and Fenerley Park is Fernley Park.

The suggestion to give cyclists advance signals before moving traffic makes sense for safety reasons particularly for those travelling south (up New Town) but not sure it's necessary for those travelling north (into town).

#### Page 15 – Ridgewood Farm development

The Town Council has not heard from the land owners regarding the proposed footway linking the new development, round New Barn and up the western side of Victoria Pleasure Ground and into Forge Rise for some time. There are mixed views regarding these proposals, in particular whether this should be walking access only or shared walking/cycling.

#### Page 15 - Eastbourne Road

There is mention of a suggestion to improve the pathway along Lewes Road for cycling and walking, but Eastbourne Road is in particular need of improvement for footway facilities.

Currently, despite requests to ESCC, the only path from Palehouse Common to Fernley Park roundabout is so narrow that pedestrians have to walk on the road to pass by. This road has vehicles travelling at the national speed limit before they enter Uckfield.

A zebra crossing in Eastbourne Road may be helpful but would again restrict traffic flow if vehicles are turning out of New Road onto Eastbourne Road. The location of the bus stop could also affect visibility.

#### Page 16 – Mallard Drive

Whilst residents living in the Harlands estate would welcome further traffic calming measures and the replacement of the current speed cushions with sinusoidal speed humps and associated signage near to the approach of the Primary School, the proposals being put forward to tighten corner radii and install speed table at the junction with the Highlands roundabout could further constrict traffic flow getting in and out of Mallard Drive. This combined with an increase in traffic from the nearby housing developments on this roundabout could substantially impact on traffic flow. Already on wet weekday mornings, the traffic is backed up to Highlands Road (Lewes Road and Eastbourne Road) with vehicles trying to get into and through town.

In general, serious consideration needs to be given to vehicle access from Eastbourne Road, Lewes Road, and Mallard Drive into town with the potential new developments being screened and explored for the south of the town. Detailed evidence needs to be collected at varying times in the year and week to understand traffic movements in these areas at peak and off peak times:

- Ridgewood Farm – 1,000 homes
- Lewes Road – up to 50 homes
- Horsted Pond Farm – up to 450 homes
- Eastbourne Road – 90 homes

#### Page 24 – Hempstead Lane

Some corrections required to the accuracy of the Church Street junction, in terms of which way traffic can travel. The suggestion to close access between Hempstead Road and London Road has been suggested before, but ES Highways previously raised concerns that this would place pressure on vehicles joining the High Street at Grange Road, and this is not an easy junction. It would also restrict delivery vehicles accessing the rear of businesses and care establishments in the Hempstead Lane/Hempstead Road area.

Page 27 – School/Leisure Centre crossing

Would wish to consider any suggestion for a crossing in Downsview Crescent to the schools and leisure centre in more detail to understand suggested location and implications for traffic flow and nearby residents.

Page 29 - Browns Lane Shops Crossing

There has been a campaign for this for many years so likely that the Town Council would support.