

Appendix B: Draft West Sussex Transport Plan Consultation Summary

This report details the feedback received as a result of consultation undertaken on the Draft West Sussex Transport Plan (WSTP) 2022-2036, which was published for consultation for 12-weeks from 16th July to 8th October 2021.

There were 633 separate responses received to the main consultation, 558 of which completed the online consultation survey while there were 75 additional email only responses. In addition, over 1500 responses were also received from school pupils in response to a shorter targeted consultation survey.

In responding to the draft key issues, vision and objectives, around or just over a third of main survey respondents expressed 'full support', while around half of respondents expressed 'partial support', and around a tenth of respondents expressed 'no support at all'. Across these three elements, the vision received the highest level of 'full support' (38%), but also the highest proportion of respondents that were 'not at all' supportive (12%).

In responding to the thematic strategies and priorities, the Rail Strategy received the highest levels of 'full support' (41%), followed by the Active Travel Strategy (38%) and the Shared Transport Strategy (35%). The Access to Gatwick Airport Strategy (28%) and Road Network Strategy (21%) received the lowest levels of 'full support'.

Across the eight area transport strategies, the level of 'full support' was relatively similar at between 19% and 24% of respondents. The Arun (23%) and Chichester (23%) area transport strategies received the highest levels of responses stating that they were 'not at all' supportive, compared to a range of 12%-17% across the other area transport strategies.

A large volume of comments were received on a wide range of issues. The recurring issues raised has been summarised as:

- Many comments highlighting concerns that the Draft Plan did not appear to place enough ambition or commitment to active travel interventions, in particular to generate more cycling but also that the Plan overlooks walking and future mobility solutions such as e-bikes and e-scooters.
- Many comments stating that the Plan should reference and implement active travel infrastructure in line with the Department for Transport's cycling and walking vision "Gear Change" and the accompanying cycle design guidance; Local Traffic Note 1/20.
- Many comments supportive of improvements in public transport including the reliability, frequency and coverage of services (both geographically and at off-peak times), better public transport hubs, timetable and ticketing integration between bus and rail services, bus priority measures, and reduced cost fares, with a number of comments of the view that the public transport plans should be more ambitious.
- Many comments of the view that the Draft Plan is too focused on road-based interventions, and funding should be redirected to support sustainable transport interventions.

- A number of comments questioning the practicalities of widespread active transport and public transport use, due to the cost of provision in a large rural county, the impacts of road space reallocation on traffic congestion with mixed views on economic impacts on high streets, and also the convenience and practicalities for users including journey times and luggage.
- A number of comments supportive of road capacity improvements and wanting these to go further, in particular expressing frustration at the lack of progress in bringing forward A27 improvements and the impacts of congestion on the West Sussex economy. However, these comments were outweighed by those opposed to building further road capacity.
- Many comments concerned about the Draft Plan objective to improve the efficiency of the County Strategic Road Network because of impacts in inducing additional road traffic and concerns about impacts on the local environment and net zero climate change targets. Many comments were also received opposing A27 improvements, including at Arundel.
- A number of contrasting comments of the view that they thought the Draft Plan was demonising car use, highlighting that the car was the only realistic option for many, particularly those in rural areas.
- Many comments concerned about the impacts of traffic volumes and 'rat running' in particular on communities along rural roads in West Sussex, including from lorries, and also many comments concerned about traffic speeds and road safety issues on communities and vulnerable road users.
- Many comments that the Plan should focus on road maintenance issues, and that this was important for drivers and also other road users including cyclists.
- Many comments supportive of greater investment in Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure, but other contrasting comments concerned about an over-reliance on EVs and whether this will reduce carbon emissions enough to meet net zero targets.
- Many comments concerned about the scale of new development that is planned due to impacts on the transport network, with many comments wanting to see much greater emphasis on sustainable transport infrastructure to mitigate the impacts of this development.
- Many comments supportive of the key issues and vision, but there was scepticism about the likelihood of measures being brought forward successfully to address these issues. Other comments were of the view that the vision did not go far enough and thought the objectives and action plan lacked specific actions on steps to bring interventions forward, including measurable milestones and targets to measure success.
- Many comments concerned that the wording of draft Objective 7 may mean that the transport system does not achieve net zero carbon by 2050.

- Many comments concerned that transport decarbonisation was not being taken seriously enough in the Draft Plan, including requests for more information on the balance between objectives in the Draft Plan and how these would help to achieve net zero carbon.
- Various other comments concerned about air and noise pollution and other transport impacts on the local environment and seeking prioritisation of objectives.
- A number of comments supportive of the concept of local living, but others concerned about what exactly this means and the practicalities, including for rural areas.
- A number of comments about transport accessibility challenges and the design and provision of infrastructure and services for different people including, people with disabilities, young people travelling to school or college, older people, the unemployed and people or families on low incomes.

A shorter targeted consultation survey was also conducted in a small number of schools and focused on the draft vision and objectives. The most important objectives were; reducing pollution from the transport system (1st), protecting transport infrastructure from the impacts of climate change (2nd), improving active travel infrastructure (3rd), and improving main road routes (4th).

The least important objectives were; managing impacts of transport to Gatwick (17th), accommodating the needs of an aging population (16th), and reducing the need to travel by car (15th).

The key themes in the written comments were:

- Young people thought bus services needed the most investment, followed by train services.
- Bus and cycling were most frequently highlighted as the best alternatives to car use.
- There were frequently mentioned comments about the need to build/upgrade cycling and walking routes.
- Pollution from transport was most frequently highlighted as the most important transport issue, followed by the quality of bus and train services, with specific concerns about fare prices, reliability and cleanliness.
- Other comments were concerned about congestion and road safety, supportive of electric vehicles, and specifically concerned about climate change.