



Hastings and Rother Transport Action Group
Minutes of Meeting held on
Tuesday, 26 November 2019 at Bexhill Town Hall

Chair: Cllr Kathryn Field, Portfolio Holder for Environment & Transport, Rother District Council

Present:

Battle Town Council Transport Advisor	-	Bev Marks
East Sussex County Council (ESCC)	-	Andrew Keer
Hastings Borough Council (HBC)	-	Cllr Maya Evans
Hastings Borough Council (HBC)	-	Kevin Boorman
Hastings Sustainable Transport Forum	-	Ian Sier
Rother District Council (RDC)	-	Cllr Kathryn Field
Rother District Council (RDC)	-	Tim Hickling

In attendance:

Hastings Borough Council (HBC)	-	Catherine Denning-Johnson
Rother District Council (RDC)	-	Nichola Watters (part of)
Rother District Council (RDC)	-	Marie Kennedy (Notes)

Apologies for absence: Cllr Andy Batsford

SUMMARY OF NOTES AND ACTIONS

1. Declaration of interests

Kevin Boorman declared an interest in relation to his role as Chairman of the MarshLink Community Rail Partnership.

2. Notes and actions of last meeting held on 2 September 2019 at HBC

Agreed.

3. RDC Local Plan Review – Nichola Watters, Planning Policy Manager at RDC was invited to give an update on the timetable for the local plan review:

- the core strategy or strategic policy for the district was adopted in September 2014. This includes housing numbers and policies relating to transport matters.
- an inspectors report was recently received in respect of the development site allocations plan recommending that the plan be adopted with some main modifications. This would go before Cabinet on 2 December 2019 and then to Full Council on 18 December.
- some early pre-planning work is currently being undertaken for the review in terms of updating and reviewing the core strategy and policies within the document – these would include development targets for the district and the strategy for the district as a whole.
- a firm timetable would be set when the early stages of the evidence that support the plan update have been considered.

- once a detailed programme for the production of this document has been completed then this would be shared with HARTAG members at a future meeting.
- the current development targets are 335 for housing per year and 100,000 sq. metres of employment space, including various targets for retail floor space. Under the new standard methodology set up in the national framework this increases to 727 and so it would be necessary to look at how and what can be delivered. Infrastructure requirements relating to transport to support all levels of development will also be looked at but not at this early stage.
- in addition, confirmation was given that Rother is in the early stages of developing an Environment Strategy for the district.

4. HBC Local Plan update – Catherine Denning-Johnson, Senior Planner at HBC was invited to give an update on the Hastings local plan as follows:

- the Hastings strategic local plan and key policies were adopted in February 2014. This was followed by a development management plan in 2015 which is now due for review.
- currently, the local plan is at the evidence gathering stage and this will continue until June 2020.
- similarly to Rother, the housing targets have risen from 200 per year to 430. Transport infrastructure and broader connectivity links would also need to be factored into future plans.

Other discussion points included:

- local plans – these need to focus on the impact that future developments will have on the wider rail networks for the SE, including walking and cycling. HARTAG would wish to work alongside both authorities in order to deliver on all aspects of active travel needs.
- taskforce working – more could be done to bring forward a coherent strategic approach for basic connectivity for local projects – ESCC holds discussions about cycling and walking issues with members of HARTAG and others during the year through the ESCC Cycling and Walking Forum. Schemes are delivered on a capital programme through the ESCC Highways contract and input is taken from stakeholders both through the forum and consultation on individual schemes.
- TfSE consultation – **ACTION:** Andrew Keer offered to enquire if more information could be provided by TfSE about their objectives which would help in responding to its current public transport strategy consultation. Andrew also offered to ask for TfSE's views on how HARTAG members might relay their aspirations to these going forward. The TfSE's consultation closes on 10 January 2020 and HARTAG members were invited to respond at the following link: <https://transportforthesoutheast.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/TfSE-Draft-Transport-Strategy-v24.0.pdf>
- cycling champion – RDC would soon be confirming the role of a cycling champion for the district. **Note:** It was agreed that this type of information needs to be better communicated to the public by way of posters, maps and labelling at bus and rail stations. **ACTION:** This subject would be kept on the agenda for future HARTAG meetings.
- lobbying for rural links – there had been no rail service at Three Oaks and Winchelsea for a number of years. Following extensive lobbying by HBC and other colleagues, this service has since been reinstated. In addition, Winchelsea has benefited by having a car park provided by Network Rail.

5. Sustainability in relation to public transport and cycling – Cllr Maya Evans, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development at HBC was invited to present her views on how HARTAG might work more collaboratively with the local authorities to overcome some key challenges for a change in car culture. This could be achieved by taking a more joined-up approach to working towards encouraging drivers to be less reliant on their cars. It is hoped that this ambition can be explored further at a community conference planned for next January in Hastings. The conference will be an opportunity to consult with community groups and members of the public in terms of what they would like to see in their local plan and developing a strategy for Hastings to go carbon neutral.

Note: ESCC offers an active access road programme through its revenue funding from the DfT into infrastructure which is designed to help the transition from car usage to more active travel. This covers the provision of associated training alongside the physical infrastructure such as the bike-ability scheme for primary and secondary schools, independent bus and rail travel training, and training for people who access electric bikes in rural areas.

In addition, HARTAG members were reminded that consideration should also be given to the wide range of commuters who rely on the use of cars such as those with mobility issues, those living in areas with no public transport, shift workers, care sector workers who travel to different locations and times throughout the day, and families with children in different schools and locations.

6. Southeastern services running from/to Ore – Kevin Boorman, HBC Marketing and Major Projects Manager at HBC was invited to present an update on the proposals by Southeastern Rail to discontinue peak services between Ore and Charing Cross/Cannon Street from next year. Following discussion it was agreed that a letter would be sent to Southeastern from both Chairs of HARTAG urging them to reconsider this proposal. A copy of this letter would also be sent to TfSE. **ACTION:** Kevin Boorman kindly offered to prepare a draft of this letter for Cllr Field and Cllr Evans.

7. Any other business

a) ESCC updates

- o Hastings Silverhill to Queensway cycle route feasibility study consultation – two drop-in surgeries were held during November at the Four Courts Community Centre, St Leonards. Responses to the consultation had been positive and well received.
- o Pathway conversion in Alexander Park, Hastings – notices to convert the status of this pathway would be in place in the New Year. This follows approval from Historic England for ESCC to proceed with these works. This would then be followed by the Conquest Hospital to Alexander Park Cycle Route Feasibility Study which is currently in progress.
- o Bus stops on the Ridge – work to upgrade these will start in January.
- o Pedestrian crossings on the Ridge – approval was given to construct additional crossings on the Ridge starting in May 2020.
- o Improvements in Bexhill – consultations will start in the New Year for improvements to London Road, including pedestrian and traffic management improvements, potential changes to the junction at the Town Hall square and two cross-town sub routes.

b) Missing link for cycling and walking between the Hastings promenade and station
A request was tabled for this link to be included in a review of the Local Enterprise Partnership funding.

c) Co-Chair for HARTAG

Confirmation was given that Cllr Maya Evans would take over from Cllr Andy Batsford as Co-Chair of the HARTAG for HBC.

8. Dates and venues of 2020 meetings

Dates for meetings at Hastings Borough Council as follows:

- Thursday 26 March 2020 at 10-12pm in Committee Room 2. Agenda items to include 'Setting objectives for the year', and 'General communications for better signage and labelling at bus and rail stations'.
- Thursday, 3 September 2020 at 10-12pm in Committee Room 2.

Note: Dates for Bexhill meetings for June and December 2020 to be advised.