

Transport

Introduction

9.1 The Local Plan has been prepared against a national background of rising car ownership and increasing car use, growing levels of road freight, both in terms of volume carried and size of heavy goods vehicles, and a declining public transport facility, both in terms of level of service and number of passengers carried. At the same time, there is increasing public concern over the environmental impact of road traffic, particularly traffic congestion, pollution, road safety, energy conservation and the impact of new roadbuilding on the countryside.

9.2 Within Wealden, transport matters are primarily the responsibility of the County Council, the Highway Authority, in terms of maintenance and improvement of the highway network (excluding trunk roads), the provision of support for public transport, and the management and control of traffic. The Department of Transport is responsible for maintenance and improvement of the A27/A259 South Coast trunk road. Wealden District Council is responsible for the provision of off-street public car parks and, as Local Planning Authority, for controlling the scale and location of new development.

STRATEGY

9.3 The Government clearly has a major role to play in influencing the balance of transport demand away from the private car and lorry towards public transport, with more freight on railways. However, as PPG13 advises, development plans should aim to reduce the need to travel, especially by car, and the policies in this Plan have been framed accordingly.

9.4 As set out in Chapter 2, the Council aims to provide a strategy for transport seeking to reduce the need to travel, especially by car, whilst encouraging a safe efficient and environmentally conscious system for the movement of goods and people. Furthermore, it will place increased value on environmental considerations in transport planning, particularly on amenity and the landscape, traffic calming and public transport.

9.5 As part of this strategy, the objectives of the Plan with regard to transport are:-

(1) to promote a transport system to complement the settlement pattern in the District, which seeks to reduce the need to travel, especially by car, and encourages the conservation of energy and natural resources;

(2) to promote modern and efficient transport links for people and goods to and from the District as a fundamental necessity for a healthy local economy;

(3) to support and encourage planned highway improvements which would reduce the impact of through traffic on communities, help the economy and improve safety;

(4) to minimise the landscape, environmental and ecological impact of new road proposals and other highway schemes, and wherever possible seek environmental improvements;

(5) to promote and actively support the safe and convenient movement of cyclists and pedestrians, including provision for the needs of the disabled and others with special access requirements;

(6) to encourage a comprehensive and co-ordinated system of public transport;

(7) to provide an appropriate level of off-street public car parking in towns and villages;

(8) to protect and, where possible, enhance the character and amenity of towns and villages by reducing congestion and pollution, and improving road safety;

(9) to ensure that access, car parking and local highway conditions are satisfactory when determining the scale and location of new development;

(10) to make appropriate provision for roadside facilities on primary routes whilst minimising the environmental impact.

9.6 The County Structure Plan supports improvements to the 'trunk road box' in East Sussex and adjoining counties (M25, M23, A23, A27, A259 and A21) in order to cater for longer distance traffic, providing connections between the County's main coastal towns and major centres outside the County such as Crawley/Gatwick and Greater London. The improvement of the A27/A259 South Coast trunk road is seen as vital for the economic well-being of the County. Some limited improvements to the cross country A26 and A22 primary routes may be appropriate to deal with localised problems of safety and to achieve economic or environmental improvements. The maintenance and enhancement of public transport services is supported and increased use of the rail network encouraged.

Transport Policies and Programme

9.7 The County Council's Transport Policies and Programme (TPP) is the annual statement of plans and programme for implementing the County Structure Plan policies on transportation. It is also the bid to the Government for Transport Supplementary Grant and approval to borrow for capital expenditure purposes.

Transport and Environment Strategy for the Eastbourne Area

9.8 In June 1995, a Transport and Environment Strategy for the Eastbourne area was approved by the County Council. The District Council was involved in the preparation of the Strategy which, whilst concentrating on Eastbourne, also works to maximise opportunities presented by the proposed A27 and A22 highway improvements for Polegate, Willington, Stone Cross, Westham, Pevensey and Pevensey Bay. This will include traffic calming schemes and environmental improvements. The Strategy will enable joint bids for future funding to be made for transport infrastructure as part of the "package" approach through the TPP.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

9.9 Although many of the policies in this chapter are environmentally based, there are a number of issues that are specifically environmental in their nature. These include considerations of the environment and landscape impact of new road proposals and the traffic impact of new development. Energy conservation issues associated with transport and the settlement pattern are considered in Chapter 4.

Road Proposals : Environment and Landscape Impact

9.10 As outlined in Chapter 4, the District has a high quality landscape, large parts of which are covered by Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, together with a rich heritage of historic buildings, traditional settlement patterns and areas of designated nature conservation and woodland importance. In the light of this, the Council attaches great importance to making a careful assessment of the environmental and landscape effects when considering new road proposals. In appropriate cases, the Council will seek the submission of an Environmental Statement. Furthermore, the Council will encourage the relevant highway authorities to actively seek and consider local views.

TR1 All new road schemes should have regard to the constraints of the environment both natural and built to minimise their environmental impact.

In assessing the potential impact of such schemes, the Council will pay particular attention to:

- (1) the amenities and character of the countryside, towns and villages;**
- (2) the effects on local communities;**
- (3) Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and other areas of important landscape value;**
- (4) areas of designated nature conservation, woodland and historic importance;**
- (5) the character and setting of listed buildings and Conservation Areas.**

9.11 At a more detailed stage, such as following the selection of a preferred route, the Council is anxious to ensure that any potential noise and visual intrusion is minimised. To this end, significant landscaping will normally be required to provide sensitive and effective screening, and where overhead lighting is necessary every effort will be made to minimise its visual impact, particularly in countryside areas, subject to achieving the necessary safety standards.

TR2 In considering detailed road proposals, the Council will seek to ensure that the relevant highway authority undertakes measures to minimise the degree of visual and noise intrusion through sensitive overhead lighting where this is required, and appropriate landscaping, including earth mounding, contouring and planting.

Traffic Impact of New Development

9.12 The Council is concerned to ensure that when considering planning applications, the proposed development should not create nor perpetuate unacceptable traffic conditions. Proper provision should be made for access for vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians. Developers will be expected to make adequate provision for car parking and, where appropriate, cycle parking in all new developments. The Council's parking requirements are set out in Policies TR11 and 16. In addition, in appropriate cases, developers will be expected to make provision for public transport which may include laybys, bus shelters and adequate turning areas.

TR3 Planning applications for new development will be permitted where the following criteria are met:

- (1) the proposed development does not create or perpetuate unacceptable traffic conditions;**

(2) a satisfactory means of access (vehicular, cycle and pedestrian) is provided to meet Local Planning and Highway Authority standards;

(3) where appropriate, the provision of suitable public transport facilities.

TRUNK ROAD PROGRAMME

9.13 Within Wealden the A27/A259 route is part of the 'trunk road box' formed by the M25, M23/A23, A27/A259 and A21 motorways and trunk roads, which longer distance traffic in this part of the South East is encouraged to use. The A27/A259 forms part of the Folkestone to Honiton South Coast Trunk Road.

9.14 A number of improvement schemes were to have been completed or under construction in time for the opening of the Channel Tunnel. However, parts of the Department of Transport's programme have continued to slip, and for a number of years both the County Council and District Council have consistently expressed their concern over the slow progress being made.

9.15 Of particular importance to the District are the four proposed schemes in the Department of Transport's trunk road programme. These are the A27 Wilmington and Selveston bypasses, Polegate Bypass, A259 Pevensey - Bexhill improvement and the Bexhill-Hastings Western Bypass. All these schemes are illustrated on Figure 6 and are discussed in detail below.

9.16 The Government has completed its comprehensive national review of trunk road schemes, to determine the role which roads should play in an integrated transport policy and to establish a forward investment programme for the trunk road network. All of the trunk road schemes in Wealden have been subject to this review. The outcome of the review has resulted in the A27 Polegate Bypass being included in the targeted programme of improvements. However the remaining trunk road schemes in Wealden are to be the subject of further studies.

9.17 It is vital to Wealden that these road proposals are implemented as early as possible to provide traffic relief to towns and villages along the existing roads as well as helping the local economy through improved access, as recognised in the Council's Economic Development Strategy.

9.18 On this basis the Council will continue to support the earliest implementation of these road proposals but will wish to further consider details of the preferred routes (other than the Polegate Bypass where all the statutory procedures are complete). The Department of

Transport's proposed and published routes for these schemes, as indicated on the Proposals Map will be safeguarded from prejudicial development.

TR4 The Department of Transport's route of the A27 Polegate Bypass and published routes of the A27 Wilmington and Selveston Bypasses, A259 Pevensey-Bexhill Improvement and Bexhill-Hastings Western Bypass, as shown on the Proposals Map, will be safeguarded from prejudicial development.

A27 Lewes-Polegate Improvement

9.19 In 1993, the Department of Transport published a preferred option for improvements to the A27 between Lewes and Polegate to dual carriageway standard. This scheme was subsequently included in a review as a potential candidate for smaller scale improvements. The outcome of this review was announced in November 1996 and put forward three locations for road improvements between Lewes and Polegate, comprising bypasses for the villages of Wilmington, Selveston and Alciston, and a new alignment between Southerham and Beddingham.

9.20 The Council has advised the Department of Transport that it welcomes the principle of upgrading the A27 between Polegate and Lewes, subject to a full assessment of the detailed proposals.

A27 Polegate Bypass

9.21 The Department of Transport's proposed route for a dual carriageway bypass to the north of Polegate extends from a grade separated roundabout junction on the A22 north-west of Sayerland Road to a double roundabout junction near Dittons Farm in the east where it will join the Pevensey Bypass as shown on Inset Map 47. A wide variety of landscaping, planting and contouring is proposed along the length of the new road and in association with the proposed roundabouts, in order to help minimise the visual and noise impact. The proposals include a new pedestrian and bridleway bridge over the bypass to enable continuation of the Cuckoo Trail from Polegate to Heathfield, and a new footbridge at Sayerland Road which the Council supports subject to minimising its environmental impact through careful design and the use of materials. All necessary statutory procedures for the bypass are complete.

Pevensey Bypass

9.22 This single lane carriageway route, running from Dittons in the west and bypassing Stone Cross, Westham and Pevensey and coming out at the start of the A259, was opened in December 1990. Its completion has helped relieve the historic cores of

these villages of through traffic and resulted in a significant environmental improvement.

A259 Pevensey-Bexhill Improvement

9.23 The Department of Transport has published its preferred option for an improvement to the A259 between the Pevensey Bypass and the proposed Bexhill-Hastings Western Bypass. The scheme proposes the construction of a new dual carriageway. The existing carriageway would then be used solely for westbound traffic and a new carriageway to the north of the existing road would be used for eastbound traffic. The draft Orders were published in the latter part of 1994 and a public inquiry was subsequently held. The Secretary of State proposes that further studies be carried out prior to making a decision on the draft Orders.

9.24 Although the Council fully supports the need for an improvement to this part of the A259, it remains concerned over the environmental impact on the Pevensey Levels Site of Special Scientific Interest, which is proposed for additional designation as a Ramsar site, i.e. a Wetland of International Importance, under the provisions of the Ramsar Convention.

A259 Bexhill-Hastings Western Bypass

9.25 Whilst the greater part of the bypass will be located within Rother District and Hastings Borough, its most western part will fall within the rural south-east of Wealden. A preferred route for the dual carriageway bypass which leaves the existing A259 south of New Lodge Farm was announced in December 1990 and the draft Orders were published in the latter part of 1994. A public inquiry has been held, concurrent with the A259 Pevensey – Bexhill Improvement proposals. The Secretary of State proposes that further studies be carried out prior to making a decision on the draft Orders.

COUNTY ROAD PROGRAMME

9.26 The three County primary routes which pass through the District are the A22 London to Eastbourne road, the A26 Newhaven to Maidstone (North Kent) road and the A272 west of Maresfield. These all serve to link the towns and villages of the District to the main motorway and trunk road network. A number of important schemes have been completed including the A22 Maresfield and East Hoathly bypasses and the A26 Boars Head to Eridge improvement.

9.27 The County Council is proposing a number of further improvements to the A22 and A26 in the District, principally on grounds of road safety, traffic volume and environmental improvement. New schemes are proposed for an A22 New Route into Eastbourne, dualling of the existing A22 between Nightingale Farm and the planned Polegate Bypass, and a programme of gap closures in the central reservation

on the A22 between Boship Roundabout and the proposed Polegate Bypass. The District Council will encourage the County Council to implement these proposals at the earliest opportunity.

A22 New Route

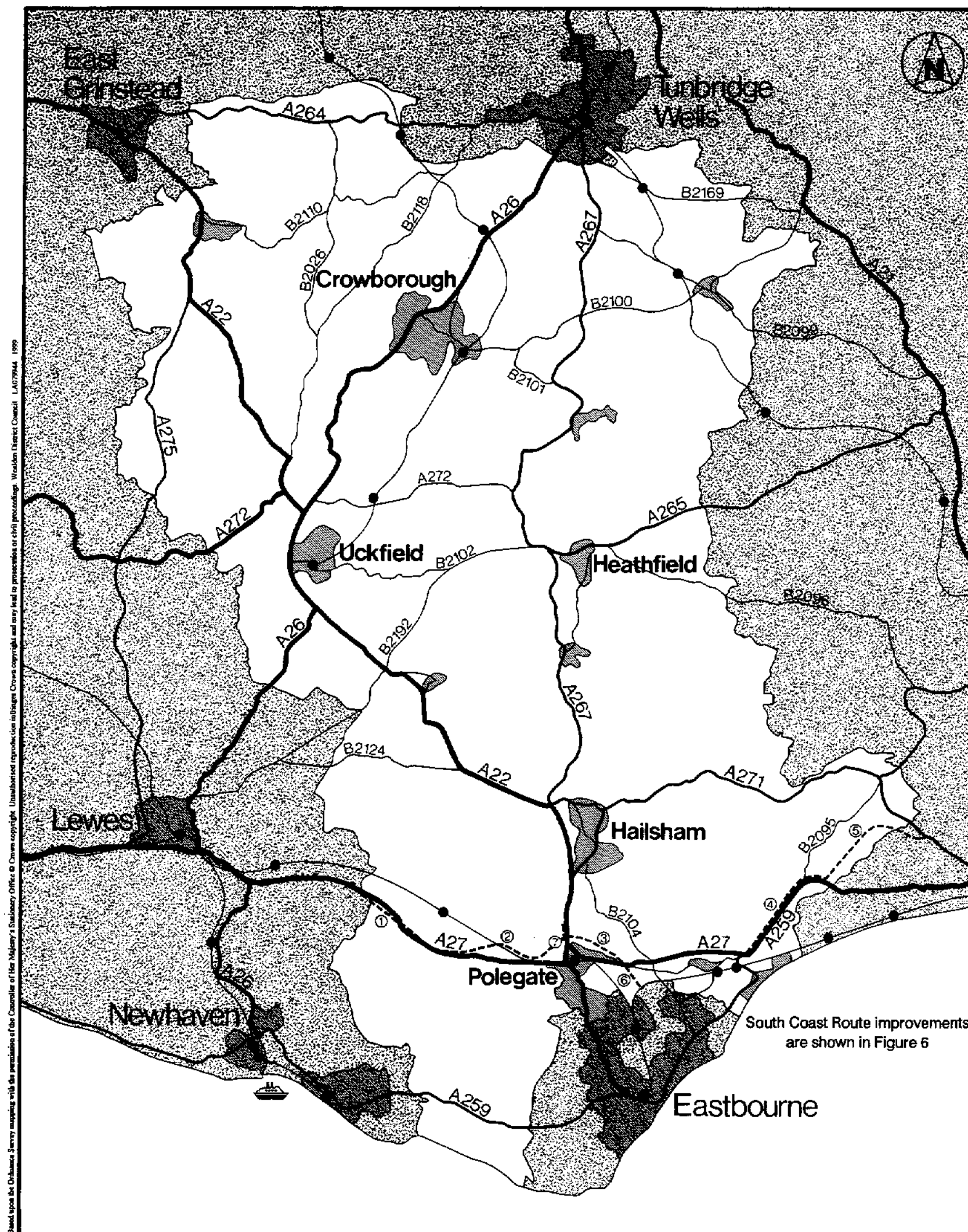
9.28 The A22 is the main route into Eastbourne town centre. The County Council's proposal for an A22 New Route into Eastbourne bypasses Willingdon, where severe traffic congestion occurs at peak times, and provides improved access to the expanding eastern parts of Eastbourne. The first section of the road, between Willingdon Drove and Seaside, opened to traffic in 1995 and it is anticipated that the remaining section, between Willingdon Drove and Dittons, will be completed in 1998/99. It is intended that the new road will connect with the existing A27 Pevensey Bypass and the proposed A27 Polegate Bypass. The route, which is indicated on the Proposals Map, will be safeguarded from prejudicial development.

TR5 The area of land for the A22 New Route into Eastbourne Borough, as defined on the Proposals Map, will be safeguarded from prejudicial development.

A22 Dualling - Nightingale Farm to A27 Polegate Bypass

9.29 The dualling of the short, heavily trafficked section of A22 from Nightingale Farm to the proposed A27 Polegate Bypass has not been implemented as it is dependent upon a start being made on the Polegate Bypass. Its implementation will result in a complete section of dual carriageway

Transport Network



KEY

- Primary routes
- Major distributors
- Railways
- ① A27 Selmeiston Bypass preferred route
- ② A27 Wilmington Bypass preferred route
- ③ A27 Polegate Bypass, proposed route
- ④ A259 Pevensey - Bexhill improvement, preferred route
- ⑤ A259 Bexhill - Hastings Western Bypass, preferred route
- ⑥ A22 New Route, proposed
- ⑦ A22 proposed dualling

This plan is for illustrative purposes only, and does not form part of the Proposals Map

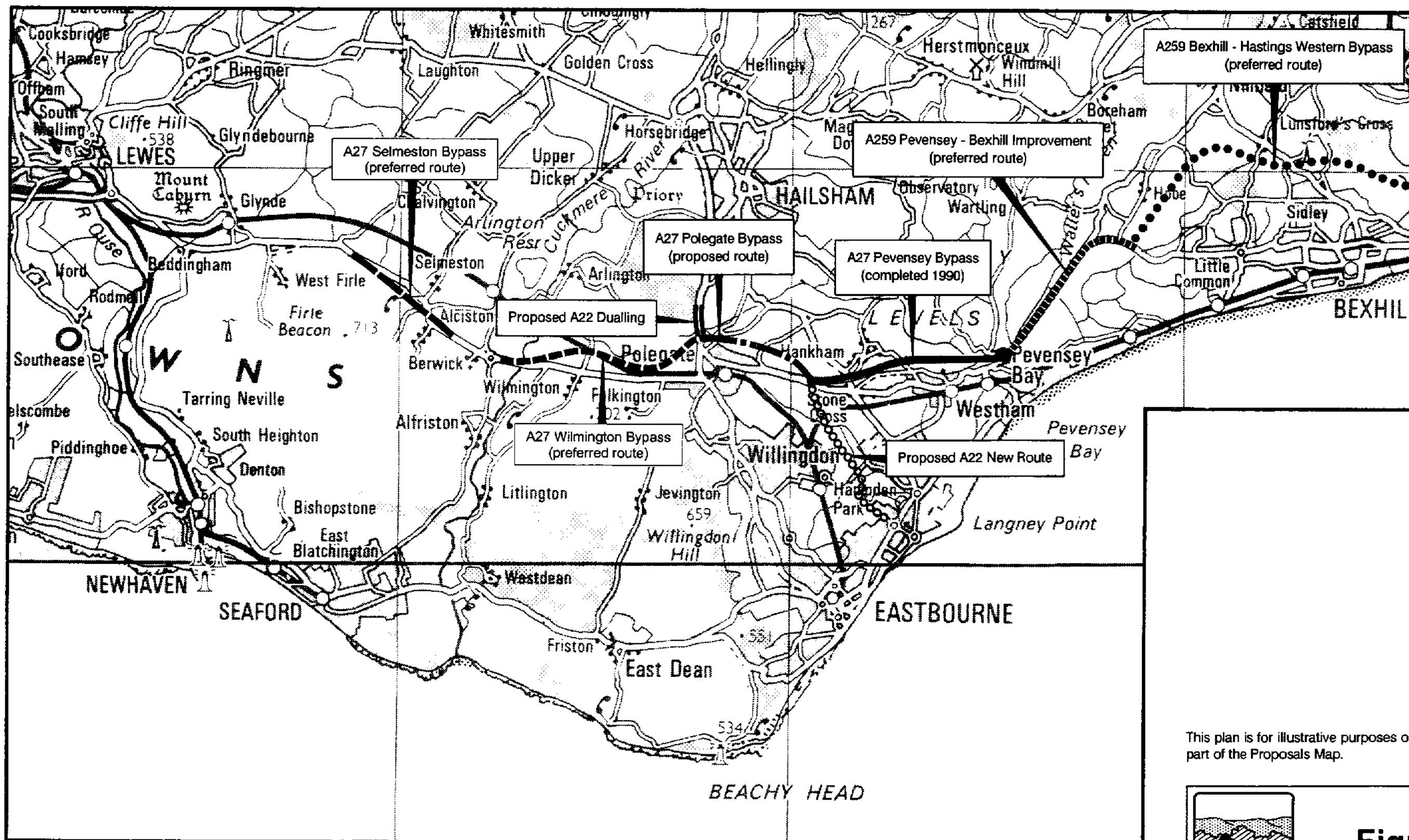


Figure 5

0 1 3 5 7 kilometres

Not to scale

A27 and A259 South Coast Route Improvements



This plan is for illustrative purposes only, and does not form part of the Proposals Map.



Figure 6

0 2 4 kilometres

1:100,000

between the junction with the proposed Polegate Bypass and Boship Roundabout. The affected land will be safeguarded from prejudicial development.

TR6 The area of land reserved for the dualling of the A22 south of Nightingale Farm, as defined on the Proposals Map, will be safeguarded from prejudicial development.

A22 Boship Roundabout to Polegate Bypass gap closures

9.30 In conjunction with the dualling scheme referred to at Paragraph 9.29 above, it is proposed to close a number of gaps in the central reservation of the existing dual carriageway section of the A22. This section of road has a very high accident rate, principally due to these gaps which allow traffic to either cross the dual carriageway or join it without the provision of proper slip roads. An additional roundabout was completed in 1994 to cater for turning traffic once the gaps are closed. As with the dualling scheme, implementation of the gap closures is dependent upon a start being made on the Polegate Bypass.

A22/A26 Future Improvements

9.31 The County Council, as Highway Authority, considers that some limited improvements to the A26 and A22 primary routes may be appropriate, but only where there are clear local safety, economic or environmental benefits. It is acknowledged that the very sensitive nature of the environment, particularly in the area of Ashdown Forest, will place severe constraints on any schemes which may be acceptable. The identification of a need with respect to accident studies and traffic forecasts does not therefore automatically mean that proposals will be acceptable. Each will have to be given very careful consideration.

9.32 Whilst the Council fully supports the early consideration of any such schemes, it will wish to ensure that a full assessment of the landscape and environmental impact is undertaken, particularly where schemes are proposed within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Ashdown Forest.

High Weald Transport and Environment Strategy

9.33 The County Council has started to introduce traffic calming and management measures in the High Weald area as part of the High Weald Transport and Environment Strategy. It will oppose schemes for East Grinstead in West Sussex, which would lead to a significant increase in traffic in East Sussex, and it will not support bypasses for Forest Row and Nutley. The County Council will investigate, in conjunction with West Sussex County Council, the upgrading of the A272 west of Maresfield, together with traffic management measures in the area between the A22 and

A23/M23, north of the A272. However, the District Council supports further investigation of improvements to the A22, including bypasses to Forest Row and Nutley.

ROADSIDE FACILITIES

Primary Routes

9.34 Motorists travelling along major routes have come to expect a wide range of roadside services, including commercial facilities such as a petrol filling station, restaurant and overnight accommodation as well as non-commercial facilities for public use such as toilets, telephones, picnic and children's play areas, and tourist information. Government guidance suggests that the precise number, location and frequency of filling stations and related facilities will depend in the first instance upon private sector responses to market demands as well as upon normal planning and safety considerations. The Government is keen to encourage the development of individual key sites to become the focus for a range of facilities for all motorists, including lorry drivers.

9.35 Of local relevance is the County Council's strategy "Roadside Facilities on the Primary Routes in East Sussex", published in July 1988. This suggests criteria for the frequency of provision of roadside facilities on primary routes, together with suggestions for provision of lorry parks and overnight accommodation.

9.36 Facilities including a new petrol filling station and restaurant have been provided on the A259 at the junction of the A27 Pevensey Bypass, at the Boship Roundabout at the junction of the A22, A267 and A271 and at the junction of the Uckfield and Maresfield Bypasses. In the light of the Structure Plan policy requirement for the provision of roadside facilities in association with planned improvements to the A27 and A22 routes, land has been allocated under Policy PW3, to the west of the proposed A27/A22 roundabout at Polegate for this purpose. Further details are given in Chapter 16.

New Facilities

9.37 The provision of commercial roadside facilities on primary routes in Wealden is now considered adequate having regard to Government guidance, County Structure Plan policy and the County Council's roadside facilities strategy.

9.38 In line with District-wide policy set out in Chapter 4, it is not considered that new roadside facilities will be appropriate within the environmentally sensitive character areas of the High Weald and Sussex Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Coastal Levels. Outside these

areas, where the need for the facilities and the site in question can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Council, particular attention should be given to ensure that the visual intrusion arising from the new built form, lighting and signage is minimised by careful design, including the use of traditional building forms and materials, wherever practical, and appropriate landscape screening. A comprehensive range of facilities will normally be required in order to prevent further proliferation of facilities on separate sites.

TR7 Proposals for new commercial roadside facilities along primary routes outside the development boundaries, as defined on the Proposals Map, will not be permitted within the High Weald and Sussex Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty or the Coastal Levels.

Elsewhere such proposals will only be permitted on primary routes outside the development boundaries, as defined on the Proposals Map, if the following criteria are met:

- (1) a need can be demonstrated for both the proposed facilities and the particular location that cannot be met by either existing or planned facilities;**
- (2) where appropriate, the Council will encourage a comprehensive range of both commercial and non-commercial facilities to be provided;**
- (3) the layout and form of development and use of materials should respect the character and appearance of the locality and ensure an appropriate standard of amenity within the site;**
- (4) substantial landscape planting, including buffer strips and mounding, shall be provided along the site boundaries prior to the completion of development, wherever practicable.**

Non-Primary Routes

9.39 There are many other roadside facilities throughout the District on non-primary routes, mainly providing petrol filling stations. Along these routes, traffic flows are considerably lighter than on the primary routes and are normally more local in their nature. On this basis it is unlikely that any proposals for new commercial roadside facilities or the large scale expansion of existing ones along the non-primary routes will be justified as an exception to normal policies of countryside restraint.

9.40 However, in certain cases there may be opportunities for the small scale expansion or

redevelopment of existing facilities to serve the needs of the non-primary routes which would have an acceptable environmental impact. For example, reference is made in Chapter 15 to the possible development of local roadside facilities within the Burwash Road Commercial Area, at the junction of the A265 with the B2096 Battle Road, Heathfield. As in the case of new roadside facilities, the Council will seek to ensure that the visual intrusion resulting from any redevelopment or small scale extension proposals will be minimised.

TR8 Proposals for new commercial roadside facilities and the large scale expansion of existing facilities along non-primary routes outside the development boundaries, as defined on the Proposals Map, will be resisted. Proposals for small scale extensions and the redevelopment of existing facilities may be permitted where the criteria set out in Policy TR7(3) and (4) are met.

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

Road Safety and Traffic Calming

9.41 Whilst the planned road improvements will assist the efficient movement of through traffic, the Council wishes to see these increasingly supported by measures to manage and control the movement of local traffic in order to provide safer conditions for road users, a more efficient use of the road system and overall environmental improvements for residents and visitors. In particular, measures are needed to reduce the speed and volume of traffic which is often detrimental to the safety and amenity of villages, town centres and residential areas.

9.42 The Council will encourage the County Council to increase the necessary funding and introduce road safety and traffic management schemes in the District, where appropriate, including traffic calming measures. Particular care should be taken in any traffic management scheme to ensure that suitable provision is made for people with disabilities. In addition, consideration should be given to the need for servicing properties and other essential access requirements. The Local Plan identifies various locations where there is considered to be a need for measures to mitigate the effect of traffic, as set out in the relevant town and village chapters.

9.43 In recent years, the wider use of 'traffic calming' measures to physically restrain traffic for safety and amenity reasons in both urban and rural situations has received much attention. Such measures can include the provision of road humps, chicanes, road closures, planting areas and street furniture as a means of reducing vehicle speeds and discouraging unnecessary

through traffic. Traffic calming measures can often be part of a wider traffic restraint policy for a town or village which could also include speed limits, cycle provision, on-street parking controls, lorry management and pedestrianisation.

9.44 In considering proposals for new housing development, the Council is concerned that the associated traffic generation on local roads does not have a detrimental effect on road safety or residential amenity. Traffic calming measures may be preferable to other highway improvements made necessary by development such as road widening, which in some cases may not be possible. Following consultation with the Highway Authority, the Council will seek the provision of appropriate traffic calming measures by the developer, both within the proposed development and on the relevant parts of the wider road network. These will normally be secured by the completion of an appropriate legal agreement.

TR9 In considering proposals for new housing development, where necessary and appropriate, the Council will seek the provision of suitable traffic calming measures.

Heavy Goods Vehicles

9.45 The Council is concerned that heavy goods vehicles using narrow country lanes and travelling through villages on roads not designed for that purpose have a detrimental effect in terms of safety and amenity. However, in many cases, such vehicles need to gain access to farms and businesses located within the rural areas. Also, it is the policy of the County Council to allow heavy lorries to disperse over the available road network rather than to concentrate on selected roads, themselves perhaps little more suitable than the rest. Restrictions are, however, placed on particularly unsuitable roads. The aim is to improve the environment for residents and other road users.

9.46 As part of the Local Plan strategy to encourage through traffic to use the trunk and primary road network, the Council will seek to control the movement of heavy goods vehicles within the District. This could be achieved by resisting development proposals where the effects of lorry generation and attraction would be environmentally unacceptable, by encouraging the County Council to introduce Traffic Regulation Orders to control the movement of heavy lorries, and by making representations to the Licensing Authority with regard to applications for goods vehicle operating licences.

TR10 The Council will seek to control the movement of heavy goods vehicles within the District by resisting development proposals which would have a detrimental impact on the environment by reason of a material increase in

the generation and attraction of heavy goods vehicles within villages and along unsuitable country roads.

Cycling

9.47 The Council recognises that cycling has important health and fitness benefits and can play a significant role in achieving a more efficient and sustainable transport system. The County Council's Cycling Strategy, which was adopted in 1994, sets out to 'promote cycling as a safe, convenient, attractive, low-cost, healthy and environmentally friendly mode of transport for both utility and recreational journeys, and thereby to increase the proportion of journeys made by bicycle'. It is an objective of this strategy that 'cycle audits' of roads, rights of way and development proposals be carried out to ensure that the needs of cyclists are taken into account as far as possible. An integrated network of cycle routes is also being developed to cater for both utility and recreational journeys.

9.48 The Council recognises the vulnerability of cyclists and will ensure the relevant Highway Authority takes the needs of cyclists into account when designing new road schemes or alterations to the existing road network, and in preparing traffic management schemes. Furthermore, in carrying out its development control function, the Council will take into consideration the needs of cyclists to ensure opportunities are taken to provide facilities such as cycle parking areas, where appropriate, and promote safety in general. Cycle parking standards are to be drawn up for use in considering proposals for new development as part of the implementation of the Cycling Strategy.

TR11 In major development schemes, particularly in town centres, developers should provide covered and secure cycle parking areas.

TR12 In dealing with development proposals the Council will take into account the Cycling Strategy for East Sussex.

A Healthy Cycling Plan for the Eastbourne Area

9.49 A 'Healthy Cycling Plan for Eastbourne' has been produced by consultants on behalf of the Council, Eastbourne Borough Council, the County Council and East Sussex Health Authority. It follows from and builds upon the County Council's Cycling Strategy and puts forward policies and measures to encourage cycling in Eastbourne and the surrounding area, including Pevensey, Polegate, Westham and

Willingdon. Proposals for Polegate and Willingdon are set out in Chapter 16.

Footpaths and Bridleways

9.50 Within the towns and villages, the provision of a comprehensive footpath network is vital for safe and convenient pedestrian access within housing areas and to places of work, schools, shops and other community facilities. The County Council, as Highway Authority, is responsible for providing new footpaths alongside public highways. The District Council, as Local Planning Authority, secures the provision of footpaths within new developments and, where appropriate, links with the existing network.

TR13 The Council will seek to secure the provision of safe and convenient pedestrian routes in new developments, which should link to the existing footpath network where appropriate.

CAR PARKING

9.51 Car ownership in East Sussex increased from 247 vehicles per 1000 population in 1980 to 361 vehicles per 1000 population in 1990, an increase of 46%. Within East Sussex, Wealden had the highest level of car ownership in any District in 1991, with 38% of households having two or more cars compared to 23% of households for East Sussex as a whole. In the light of continuing growth in car ownership and the likely traffic generation from the high level of housebuilding and industrial commitments in the District, the provision of adequate car parking is an important issue for the Local Plan.

9.52 Recent Government advice in PPG13 says that local authorities should adopt planning policies to limit parking provision for developments and other on or off-street parking provision to discourage reliance on the car for work and other journeys where there are effective alternatives. In the Council's view, reducing, or not meeting the demand for car parking without these effective alternatives would affect the vitality and viability of town centres. Moreover, Wealden residents have to travel to towns and villages for many services and, since the District is largely rural, may never be able to make these journeys easily, if at all, by public transport.

9.53 For these reasons, it is not realistic at present to reduce parking provision, particularly in town centres, as the alternative means of transport do not exist. Future opportunities to reduce existing levels, or not to meet demand, may also be limited by the dispersed nature of the District. Nevertheless, the Council has adopted the advice in PPG13 on reducing the need to travel, and it lies at the heart of the objectives of the

Plan, both towards sustainable development generally and transport in particular. Indeed, the improvement of public transport is likely to rely on a co-ordinated approach with parking provision.

9.54 The Council will therefore keep the provision of parking under review during the lifetime of the Plan as part of its overall policy towards travel, and particularly in the light of the effect on public transport of the actions described in Chapter 9. This review will also consider the relevant level of parking standards to be applied under policy TR16.

Off-Street Car Parking

9.55 The District Council is responsible for and active in providing and maintaining public car parking spaces. The Council operates a system of long and short stay parking spaces on all its car parks throughout the District. The Council has limited financial resources available for the provision of new car parks or extending existing ones, and through necessity, priority is normally given to towns and larger villages where demand is greatest. In some cases the availability of suitable sites can be a problem.

TR14 Throughout the Plan period the Council will review the need for off-street parking spaces, and the level of parking to be provided as part of development proposals, in the light of the objectives of reducing the need to travel, especially by car, and of improving public transport. New car parks will only be provided when the review shows a need for them, and where resources and sites are available.

9.56 The Council operates a commuted payment car parking policy in Crowborough, Hailsham, Heathfield, Polegate and Uckfield, and other settlements, where appropriate. The policy enables payments from developers to be accepted in certain cases towards the provision of public car parking spaces where the necessary provision cannot be met on individual sites, and the alternative would be normally to refuse planning permission.

TR15 In Crowborough, Hailsham, Heathfield, Polegate and Uckfield, and other settlements where deemed appropriate, the Council may accept commuted payments for vehicle parking spaces by agreement with intending developers where:-

(1) there is a need to provide a reasonable number of parking spaces which cannot be met on individual sites but which can be met in a reasonable time in proposed public car parks nearby;

(2) the settlement in which the development is proposed appears in the Council's approved car parking capital programme.

Car Parking Standards in New Development

9.57 The Council, as Local Planning Authority, operates a set of standards in order to ensure that adequate off-street parking and servicing provision is made to accommodate the traffic generated by new development. These standards have been produced by the County Council and adopted by the District Council. It is the policy of the Council that all developments should normally provide for the parking and servicing demand that they create on site, unless provision can be secured elsewhere, e.g. garage courtyards, or public car parks through commuted payments.

9.58 A summary of the Council's parking standards, including provision to be made for the disabled, is set out in Appendix 6. These provide guidance to developers, forming a consistent basis for development control purposes, and are therefore included as part of the Local Plan.

TR16 In considering all development proposals, the Council will require the on-site provision of vehicle parking and servicing in accordance with the standards set out in Appendix 6.

Park and Ride

9.59 Tunbridge Wells Borough Council proposes a Park and Ride scheme to serve Tunbridge Wells. This is a scheme where large surface car parks are provided at the peripheries of the town with regular bus services into the town centre and back. Whilst this Council supports the principle of a park and ride scheme for environmental and traffic reasons, it does not accept that sites should necessarily be provided within the Wealden area, where clear environmental objections exist.

9.60 To date, no suitable site has been found where a park and ride car park would not harm the rural character of its surroundings or the landscape of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and where these concerns would be outweighed by the benefits of park and ride. It is proposed that the two Councils continue to work together through a methodical approach of landscape analysis to explore whether alternative sites would be more acceptable in terms of their landscape and environmental impact.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

9.61 Although there has been a significant increase in car ownership over the last ten years, there are still a large number of households without the use of a car who are dependant on bus and rail services for access to shopping, employment, recreation and other community facilities. In view of the rural nature of the District, in many cases people are reliant on more than one form of public transport for their needs. Furthermore the provision of a comfortable, economic and convenient public transport system is essential if, in the longer term, there is to be a reduction in the reliance on the private motor car, a reduction in overall vehicle trips and the conservation of energy which could only be achieved by providing a real choice between different modes of travel.

9.62 Land-use policies in the Local Plan, such as Policy EN2, seek to reduce the need to travel by influencing the location of development. Whilst the maintenance and improvement of public transport services are not strictly land-use matters, except for the protection of former rail lines, the Council has wider corporate aims relating to public transport which are outlined below.

9.63 The Council will continue to encourage and support the County Council, as public transport authority, and the relevant railway organisations to maintain and enhance the quality and reliability of public transport services, and wherever possible, co-ordinate the provision of bus and rail services. In addition, the railway service has a role to play in reducing the need for freight to travel by road and the Council would wish to encourage the switch of road freight onto the railways wherever possible.

9.64 Since deregulation in October 1986, bus operators are able to schedule routes and the frequency of services that they believe to be commercially viable. The County Council, in order to retain the levels of service that existed prior to deregulation, is providing "Local Rider" services on less popular routes. This is particularly important in a rural district like Wealden where the dispersed nature of the population makes the guarantee of passenger numbers more difficult.

9.65 There are three railway lines which run through the District, each of which terminates in London. The Hastings to Charing Cross line has stations at Wadhurst and Frant, the Uckfield to Victoria line has further stations at Buxted, Crowborough and Eridge, and finally the Hastings and Eastbourne to Victoria line has stations at Pevensey Bay, Pevensey and Westham, Polegate and Berwick.

9.66 In recent years, the withdrawal of a number of peak hour trains on the Uckfield to London line has served to undermine the quality of the service and has given rise to concern over the whole future of the line. The Council feels strongly that an improved service and an increased level of investment on the line is needed for the social and economic well-being of

Uckfield residents, particularly in view of the growing population. The Council will continue to urge the relevant railway organisations to maintain and improve the quality and reliability of this rail service, particularly the electrification of the Uckfield – Hurst Green section of the line.

Uckfield-Lewes Reinstatement

9.67 Although the Uckfield-Lewes line was closed in 1969, Policy CA/T8 of the County Structure Plan seeks to restrict development which would significantly prejudice the possible reinstatement of a railway along the route of the former line north of the junction of the Hamsey Loop at Hamsey. Possible routes to connect with the Lewes to Haywards Heath line would need to be investigated.

9.68 In the past, British Rail consistently maintained that the scale of investment needed to reinstate the line was not justified in relation to the likely passenger demand and that a significant financial commitment from an outside body would be necessary. For this reason, British Rail made no financial provision for re-opening the line and, furthermore, stated that it would be in competition with funds for electrification of the Uckfield-Hurst Green line.

9.69 The prospects for reinstatement of the line are uncertain in view of rail privatisation. It is possible that in the medium to long term a franchisee will express interest in running the Uckfield-Hurst Green section of the line and wish to re-open the section to Lewes to connect in the longer term with the main Eastbourne-London line at Lewes now that the Railways Act 1993 encourages such possibilities. Indeed the Lavender Line Preservation Society has expressed interest in a longer term proposal to open up the Lewes to Uckfield line. The Society currently operates a limited service as a leisure attraction along part of the former line from Isfield station to the north. The Society's proposals are the subject of an ongoing examination by the County Council together with this Council, Uckfield Town Council and other interested parties.

9.70 Despite this uncertainty, the Council recognises that there would be benefits to local residents of a reinstated rail service providing a direct link between North Wealden, Lewes, and the coastal towns as an alternative to road transport. On this basis, and in line with Structure Plan policy, the Council will not permit development on the former railway line that would significantly prejudice its reinstatement.

TR17 Development which would significantly prejudice the reinstatement of the former Uckfield to Lewes railway line shown on the Proposals Map will not be permitted.

9.71 A study is being undertaken by East Sussex County Council, Wealden District Council and other local authorities on the potential for introduction of a regional rail service between the South Coast and north and east Kent using existing and disused railway lines between Lewes, Tunbridge Wells and Ebbsfleet. The possible future reinstatement of an Uckfield to Lewes rail service is being included as part of this study.

Polegate-Pevensey Link

9.72 The Structure Plan includes a policy that development which would significantly prejudice the reinstatement of a Polegate to Pevensey rail link will be restricted (CA/T9). The County Council considers that a short link just north of Hampden Park junction would be practical if it is needed and can be justified. The County Council's objective is to provide an improved train service on the South Coast route between Ashford and Brighton with the option of not stopping at Eastbourne, although the relevant railway organisations do not consider this to be supportable.

TR18 Development which would significantly prejudice the reinstatement of a Polegate to Pevensey rail link via a short link north of the Hampden Park Junction shown on the Proposals Map will not be permitted.

Spa Valley Line

9.73 The closure of the Eridge to Tunbridge Wells branch line effectively removed the rail link between the Uckfield line and the Tunbridge Wells line. However, the Tunbridge Wells and Eridge Railway Preservation Society has established a private railway between the Tunbridge Wells West and Eridge stations to be known as the Spa Valley Line. This is hoped to comprise the reinstatement of a limited public transport service as well as a steam and diesel tourist service which would then connect with the regular Connex South Central services at Eridge. The Society has successfully obtained financial backing for the project and has purchased the section of the former line between Birchden Junction to the south of Groombridge and Tunbridge Wells West Station. The laying of this section of the line is complete. The remainder of the line between Birchden Junction and Eridge will stay in the ownership of Railtrack.

9.74 The Council supports the Preservation Society in its efforts to reinstate the use of the line and views it as a potential recreational and tourist attraction connecting the Pantiles area of Tunbridge Wells with the attractive countryside of the north Wealden area.

9.75 In the light of the Preservation Society's commitment to the re-opening of the railway service, a policy to protect the route from prejudicial development is appropriate.

TR19 Development which would significantly prejudice the reinstatement of the former Eridge to Tunbridge Wells West railway line shown on the Proposals Map will not be permitted.

Stone Cross Railway Station

9.76 Policy CA/T7 of the County Structure Plan proposes the investigation of a new railway station to serve Stone Cross, North Langney and Eastbourne Park. At present, there is no commitment to a particular site. However the County Council, Eastbourne Borough Council and this Council have commissioned a study to evaluate the need for and the impact of a new station in the Stone Cross area. The Consultant's report concluded that the investment case for a Stone Cross station is not made purely in financial terms but that once externalities are included, then the broader case for the investment can be made. The appraisal results are however sensitive to key assumptions. Whilst the Council has given its support in principle for a new station, it is considered that at the present time there is insufficient justification for the provision of a specific site for this purpose.

Implementation

9.77 Policies TR1-TR4 inclusive, TR6-TR13 inclusive and TR15-TR19 inclusive in the Transport Chapter will be implemented by the Council primarily through its development control function.

9.78 Policies TR5 and TR14 will also be implemented by the Council through discussions and negotiations with the East Sussex County Council and other agencies.

Monitoring

9.79 The key areas to be monitored will include:-

- (1) the progress on the A27/A259 Trunk Road Schemes;*
- (2) the progress on Primary Road Schemes;*
- (3) traffic management/calming schemes;*
- (4) new or improved pedestrian/cyclist routes;*
- (5) car parking provision and usage in the towns and villages;*
- (6) public transport services - routes and timetabling.*