

Hastings Draft Local Plan Preferred Options (Regulation 18) Consultation 2026 – Response form

Part B: Complete this part for each comment you make (continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

Which part of the Plan or evidence base are you commenting on (enter policy number, paragraph or section)?

Strategic Policy 10 Transport Infrastructure
Policy ID2: Access, Services and Parking

Do you support or object to the policy, paragraph or section?

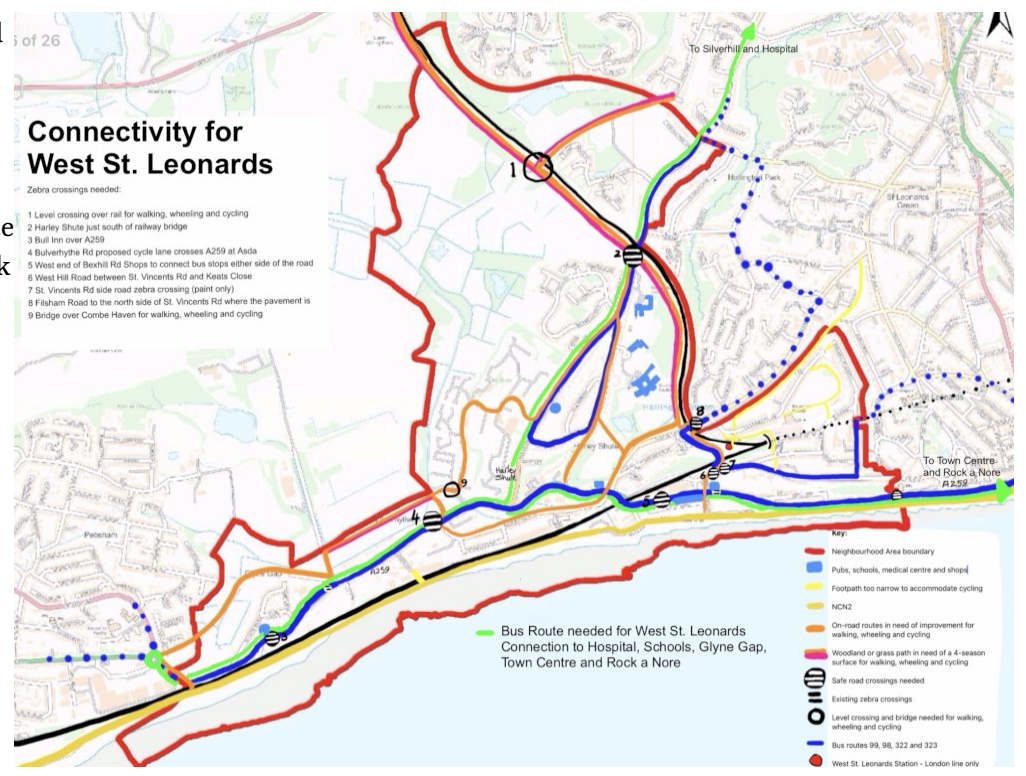
Support Object Comment

If your response is over 100 words, please enter an optional summary here (up to 100 words)

There is an urgent need to deal with the congestion on the roads of West St Leonards and plan for all users, not just car users.

Enter your comments here (provide evidence/ references where possible, and tell us what changes you suggest that would address your concerns)

1. Development growth and economic connectivity in West St. Leonards is severely held back by neglect of all modes of transport except the private car. WSL would like to work proactively with our transport providers and authority to enable active travel and public transport to be most residents' and visitors' first choice for mobility.



2. To reduce private car use, to increase mobility for all ages and incomes and to encourage visitors to WSL to come without their cars: West St Leonards would benefit from:

- *Reinstatement of West Marina Station (the platform is still there) on the Brighton line, linked to the surviving West St. Leonards Station on the London line – although it would probably be more practical to have a new platform further to the east, in line with the West St Leonard Station platforms so that the existing road bridge could be used to link the southern line/platform to the rest of the station

- *Reinstatement of the station/halt at Glyne Gap to alleviate the traffic congestion on Bexhill Road and provide mobility to a wider range of people

- *Creating a light rail service Glyne Gap to Ore or, even more useful, Eastbourne to Rye

3. Railway Station Improvements that support accessibility and integration with bus and active travel should not just be 'supported' but insisted upon because access to West St. Leonards Station is currently very difficult and dangerous. The following improvements are needed:

- *Make West St. Leonards Station, and any future stations, accessible (as quickly as possible - cheaply if funds are short)

- *Make the route from Edinburgh Road schools to the sea via WSL Station safe (see maps and diagrams) with:

- *an additional zebra crossing over Filsham Road to the Station-side pavement

- *pavement to walk on from station to bridge

- *reduced side road flare at the junction of St. Vincent's Road and West Hill Road

- *build outs with plants from alternate pavements along West Hill Road from Keats Close to Essenden Road to reduce speeding and narrow the crossing distance for walkers - possibly with a cycle lane gap between curb and buildout

- *controlled parking in Keats Close - diagonal on the west side of the road only

- *a walking and cycling route from West Hill Road to Bo Peep (continued to the sea) along the east side of Keats Close

- *signage at every turn (including a signpost for the station which has been missing for years!)

4. New developments have not been built with new bus services in recent times. Hastings Borough should not just wait to support the County Bus Services Improvement Plan - it must list and design what it needs and insist BSIP money is spent here.

Fast and frequent bus services need a joined up network of dedicated bus routes which can only be achieved with the removal of on-street parking where a bus lane is needed and provision of off-street parking to compensate. WSL residents need:

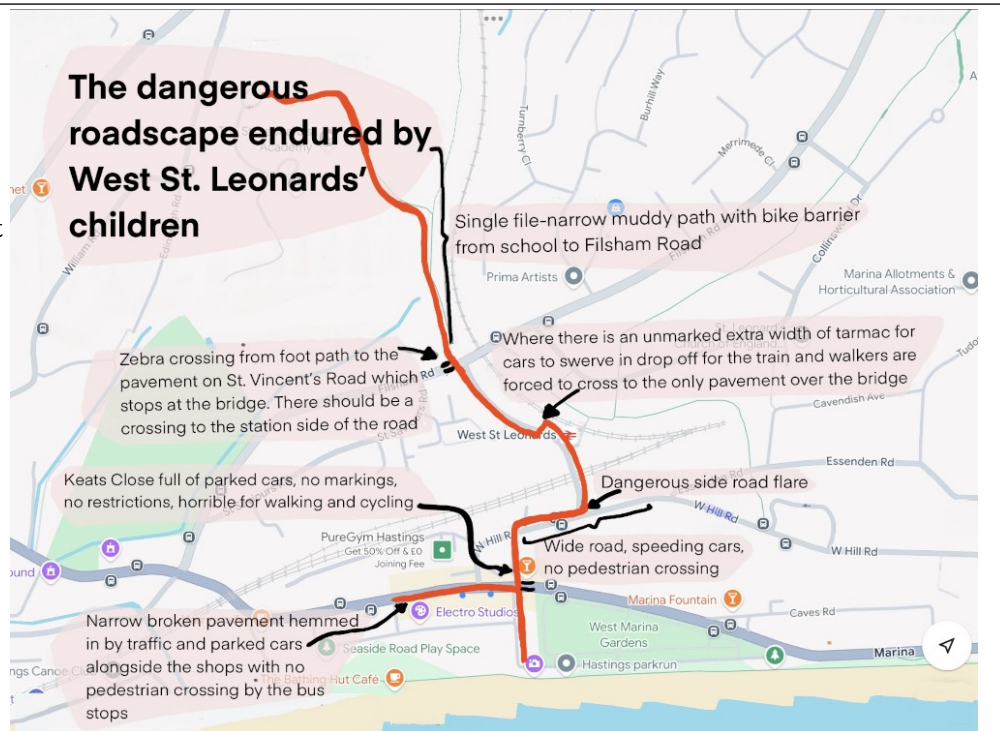
- *improved services to Darwell Close where more than 200 new (now car dependent) homes have built at Porters Grove

- *a bus service to connect Bexhill Road to Edinburgh Road schools and, ideally, Conquest Hospital

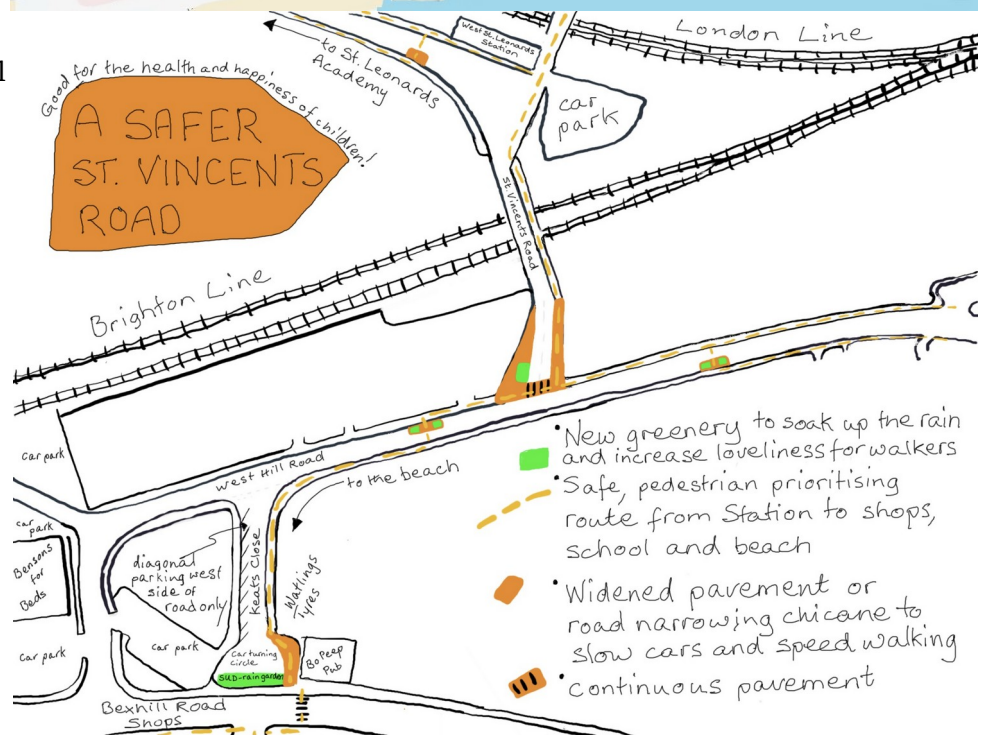
- *continuous bus lanes on both sides of Bexhill Road with off-street parking replacing on-street parking

- *a bus service from Glyne Gap to Rock a Nore entirely along the seafront

5. The Neighbourhood should be safe enough for a ten year old to navigate whether walking, wheeling or cycling. All are currently very difficult in WSL and ESCC's LTP4 is not ambitious or detailed enough. See WSL connectivity map above. For example see the routes to West St Leonards Station shown in this map.



Appropriate road layout for all modes of travel is needed: see the example in West St Leonards



6. It is not appropriate for transport funds to be spent on disproportionately expensive road schemes which perpetuate dependency on the private car. The private car model of transport provides the most unequal access to mobility, the most expense to the individual, the greatest obstacle to walking, wheeling and cycling, the greatest blight to childhood and biodiversity and causes 'traffic' - perceived as the Neighbourhood's biggest problem.

7. WSL has more than its fair share of free parking which degrades its seafront. WSL needs:

- *controlled parking (residents' permits) throughout the Neighbourhood
- *paid parking

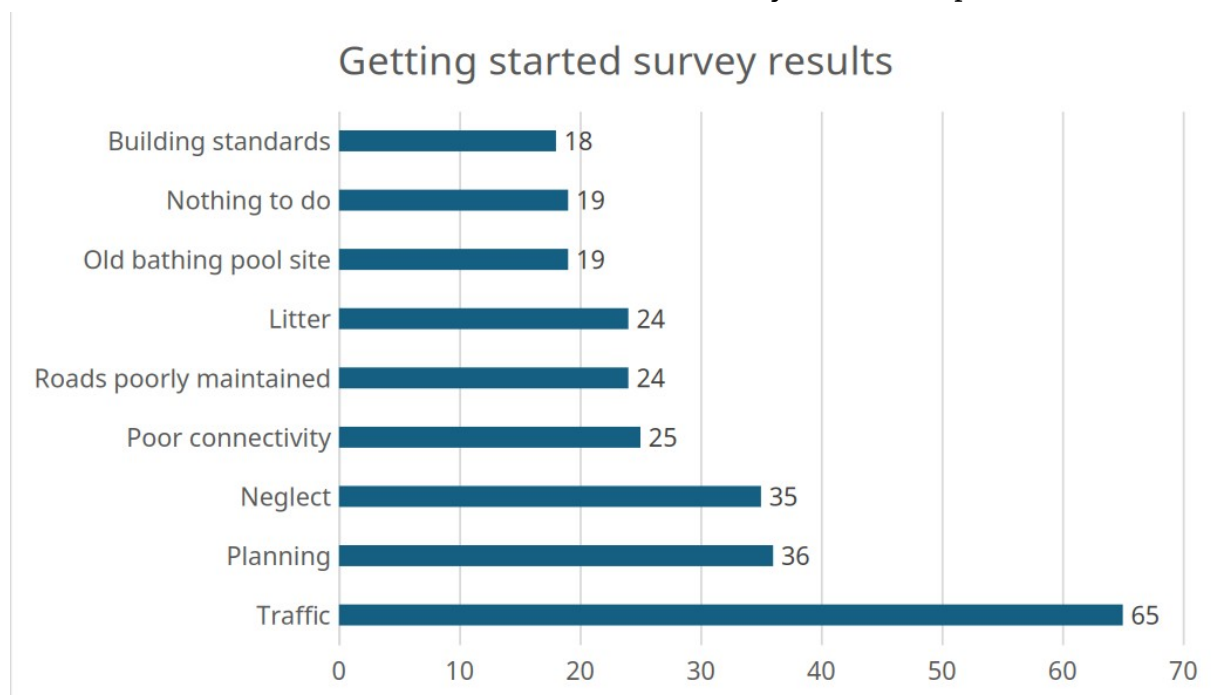
- *free short term parking near shops
- *no free parking other than for shopping
- *off-street parking to replace on-street where needed for bus/bike lanes
- *co-mobility hubs for bike and car hire and storage - could be near stations and bus stops and should be on the periphery of all housing estates

8. Disproportionately burdened with traffic and parked cars from outside the Neighbourhood - WSL welcomes visitors but would prefer them to have the facilities to leave their cars on the outskirts of town. There should be a Park and Ride/Stride with electric charging points alongside a new (electric) bus depot (Stagecoach needs one). Rapid Transit bus routes and direct, active travel routes to the seafront and further connections would make the service efficient and popular. Suggested location: Breadsell (which, if developed dependent on the private car for transport, will bring intolerable additional traffic and parking-blight to WSL)

9. The policy should include encouragement of the creation of community based and run transport services, drawing on the experience of the community bus service in Bexhill.

Policy ID2: Access, Services and Parking

This policy refers to carparking and safe access for people walking, wheeling and cycling. There is no reference to public transport: buses for access to all parts of the borough are vital, with the extra possibility of a light transport system using the existing railway lines along the front, linking Ore to Glyne Gap within the borough and Rye to Eastbourne for the whole service. This is the result of our initial survey, asking what people liked and disliked about WSL and this chart shows what they identified as problems for the area:



Better Connected A Strategy for Integrated Transport

On April 2nd the Government issued <Better Connected A Strategy for Integrated Transport>, <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69ce2f0bb5210036050bc6d7/dft-better-connected-strategy.pdf>, which supports all of the specific connectivity interventions listed in West St Leonards Neighbourhood Forum draft Neighbourhood Plan.

The following are examples of how the Government’s 2026 Better Connected Strategy for Integrated Transport relates to WSL’s Connectivity Plan:

- “People should be able to walk, wheel and cycle entire journeys, such as local trips to school or work, enabled by accessible infrastructure and supportive policies.” For example this could mean that WSLNF’s retrofit of St. Vincent’s Road and the route from schools to sea should be supported.
- “Spatial planning should consider proximity to public transport links and building to high and ambitious densities to support its use, creating developments where people do not need to rely on private cars to access shops, jobs and education.” Planning permission for new homes on the Old Bathing Pool site and 123-125 West Hill Road, both near bus routes and a train station, should only be given to designs which are car-free or car-light.
- The Strategy aims to make transport of all kinds more reliable which will include -
 - *Bus priority routes - WSLNA needs continuous bus lanes rather than intermittent lane segments as is now the case along Bexhill Road
 - *Park and Ride Schemes - important for WSLNA where there is an excess of traffic along the Bexhill Road
 - *Car clubs - which would help residents live without a privately owned car and its parking space
- “Mayors will be granted a Power of Direction over their Key Route Network, a collection of the most important local roads. This will enable them to direct local authorities to implement targeted measures (such as introducing dedicated bus lanes and bus gates) that support their Local Transport Plans and help improve the reliability of local bus services.” This will provide a mechanism for creating, for instance, more reliable buses along Bexhill Road as well as on routes going inland
- The Strategy supports Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plans “to enhance local routes and enhance local access to nature” which will help realise WSLNF’s plan to surface the Dogkennel Wood to sea path for walking, wheeling and cycling.
- The creation of Great British Railways will be an opportunity to make West Marina and Glyne Gap stations and part of a better transport mix. It will also be an opportunity to consider new housing at Three Oaks and Crowhurst, 10 minutes by train to Hastings Station.

Annex – Submission by Edward Humphrey written following his visit to the Exhibition on March 28 which is a long and very thoughtful post-it note.

Comments on Transport

Following the exhibition and consultation on 28 March 2026, I promised to comment on transport aspects and to submit these as early as practicable given the imminent deadline. I recommend that bus improvements should be completed within 5 years, other priorities within 10 years. I have listed recommended actions followed by supporting arguments.

The Transport priority should be to enhance the quality of bus services and to increase patronage. Actions in the medium term should be:

- The first priority should be improving bus reliability (Punctuality with no cancellations) to meet quantified objectives which should be developed as much more ambitious than the ESCC targets in the BSIP. This requires systematic action to cure delays to buses by other traffic mostly on the A259. Some road works and various bus lanes will be needed depending on monitoring of where and when delays occur.
- Speed-up bus services. Concerted action is needed to make bus services faster and more attractive. A wide range of measures could be needed in addition to bus lanes including: priority at traffic signals, off-vehicle ticketing and bus design.

- Improve bus accessibility along all relevant bus routes in the corridor. Raise the quality of bus stops and information and improve access to bus stops. Some of this can be done in the NPA but most is needed in other areas. For example - a key need is for buses to penetrate the Ravenside (Glyne Gap) Retail Park which is in Rother District but much used by Hastings and St Leonards residents. The bus stops on the A259 are several hundred metres from the shops. With 881 parking places, there is space to run buses through the retail park. However, the land is probably privately-owned and bus access may be opposed.
- Re-open West Marina railway station to be served by trains already running Hastings-Brighton. This would encourage a shift from car use in the coastal corridor and improve rail for the growing population in the NPA.
- Walking infrastructure improvements are needed for safer pedestrian routes and improved access to public transport.
- Improve cycling safety through selective infrastructure improvements, avoiding bus routes as far as possible. Cyclists already benefit from the coastal "Sustrans" cycleway, segregated from other traffic, which should be protected.

Buses

In various consultations there were calls for better public transport and for mitigation (at least) of the heavy through traffic pressure. The main road east-west through the NPA is Bexhill Road, A259. It links towns on the Sussex shore and runs from Folkstone to the Portsmouth area. It is a key route for HGVs to and from the continent via Dover Straits ferries and Eurotunnel and serving the south and west. Continental coach tours also use the road. Car traffic is heavy and comprises local and long distance travel. The road is also the route of the bus services linking Hastings with Bexhill and Eastbourne.

Given the heavy traffic on the A259 and the limited relief (if any) offered by the recent construction of the Bexhill-Hastings Link Road, the bus services are often delayed by congestion and the ESCC aspirations for adding bus lanes has been delayed and may have been frustrated. Although the bus services are commercially viable most of the day, south coast towns are areas of high car ownership which has been encouraged by car-based shopping and widespread free parking provision. In these circumstances, without constraints on car use, it is very difficult to see how bus services can attract car users unless measures can be taken to make buses as attractive as possible. However, many studies have shown that buses are not an attractive alternative for car users unless the latter have their choices restricted. Such restrictions could be feasible in the long term but could require legislation and national action.

Aspirations for higher frequency bus services are unrealistic unless the services can be given a strong competitive advantage. Stagecoach, the operator, is unlikely to increase the frequency of bus services without public subsidy. Some changes have been achieved, including the revision of route 98 to enable a more even-interval service between Hastings and Bexhill, by ESCC subsidy. ESCC is also investing in real time information provision of services but this is not fully integrated with Stagecoach information.

A Seafront Shuttle service has been proposed to boost the level and quality of bus services. Although well-intentioned, this would need to be operated by Stagecoach if the existing network is to be protected. Stagecoach have not made such proposals, which would require major investment, and they are likely to see the Shuttle as a competitor. The Neighbourhood Plan should concentrate on encouraging bus use as much as possible. As patronage builds so the operator will have incentives to improve services.

Railways

The NPA has only one station: West St. Leonards, served by trains on the Southeastern operated Charing Cross – Hastings line. The east-west railway through the NPA, linking Ashford – Hastings-Bexhill -Lewes – Brighton is operated by Southern. The only other station formerly in the NPA was on this line at West

Marina, closed in 1967. Residents of the area wishing to travel west by train must first go east to board at Warrior Square.

To encourage mode shift, West Marina station should be re-opened to be served by trains already operating Hastings-Brighton. A “business case” would need to be prepared and this should indicate the scope and value of the station and its cost.

As far as I know, no studies have been undertaken on this possible re-opening but studies of a proposed station at Glyne Gap were conducted By Rother DC (and ESCC) in 2013 but later rejected when patronage forecasts were made. (This seems counter-intuitive given the low patronage at Cooden Beach and Norman’s Bay – see ORR statistics.)

Walking

There is a need for enhancement of the walking infrastructure in the NPA particularly for better access and greater safety of pedestrians including school children.

The priorities for improvement should be safe routes to school, access to public transport and additional road crossings, particularly on the A259, Bexhill Road.

Cycling

Further encouragement of cycling is needed. The NPA already has an important “Sustrans” long distance cycle route along the Hastings and St Leonards promenade and the shore from the OBP to Bexhill, which should be protected. However, cycling should not be prioritised over public transport nor should cycling infrastructure impede buses. Mistakes in London have seen buses delayed with patronage falling as cycle ways have been introduced. Scope for mode shift from car to cycle appears small but buses and cycling do compete.

All comments will be taken into account ahead of the next stage, the Proposed Submission (Regulation 19) version of the Plan, due to be published later in 2026.