

Individual's name

Campaign name

Address

Phone / email

CONSULTATION NAME – Date

COMMENTS FROM CAMPAIGN XXXX

Date

Dear Sir/Madam

Campaign XXXX campaigns for sustainable transport and a less car dependent society to achieve gains in environmental quality, public health, land use planning and for local economies. Members **object** to the proposals outlined by the County Council in respect of the network of supported services for reasons given below.

General:

A comprehensive public transport network is the mark of a civilised, socially equitable and sustainable society. It is therefore of interest to all, not just service users, and not just now, but for future generations. Through its design, the consultation document is unlikely to capture views of those other than those who use the buses.

Travelling on the buses under threat, it is clear from comments and observation that significant numbers of users would be unable to understand, or would be afraid of, a document of this size and complexity. They would also be less likely to have access to online facilities.

A 'managed decline' of bus services against current constant pressure for and provision of new roads would clearly lead away from a low carbon alternative and towards a mode shift to private motorised transport, hastening decline still further. This constitutes 'negative marketing' because it creates a climate of diminishing expectations of what the bus service can - and will in future - offer. It also appears to contradict those many County Council policy objectives described in the Local Transport Plan aimed at reducing dependency on the car for multiple reasons.

For those without access to a car, or who choose not to own one, or who cannot drive or afford a car, a bus service is key to a decent quality of life: with fewer buses, or none whatsoever, journeys may not be made at all.

Specific points, including those made in the rationale as presented to East Sussex County Council Cabinet:

1. There has been no marketing strategy for the supported services. This suggests that a 'bare minimum' service is seen as desirable as a policy aim. There should have been such a strategy to raise awareness of and to promote available services.
2. **Potential** bus users are not considered: this is a policy of 'managed decline'. This is a sub-set of the point made about the need for marketing.
3. There are no previous years' figures to compare, so trends cannot be detected and analyses and judgements can't be made.
4. Parking revenue is theoretically available (now up to £800,000) so this should be used to offset costs.
5. Further parking revenue is possible from District/Borough councils who could then begin to make their fair contribution to supported services.
6. Other funds are possible from Districts/Boroughs for specific routes through so called 'de minimis' agreements with the bus operators.
7. An open and positive dialogue with the bus operators could lead to a better grasp of what a strategic bus network might look like, including examining new routes. This dialogue could also be opened to the public. The current dialogue is a negative one.
8. There is no map to aid understanding of the strategy described. Such a map could have stimulated creative thinking around the nature and future of our bus network.
9. If cuts go ahead, tourist 'honey pots' would be abandoned along with the tourists and day trippers (us!) on Sundays and Bank Holidays. This is not helpful to local economies, including those in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) – managed by East Sussex County Council (ESCC).
10. Education, employment, medical, shopping and social journey purposes are counted as 'relevant' but tourism is not taken into account, nor are the views of tourists captured in the survey process.
11. The AONB appears to have no position on the proposed cuts. This is odd to say the least. People need to get to the AONB in order for it to fulfill its objective of making high quality landscapes available for people to enjoy. What is the position taken by the AONB Board?

12. The South Downs National Park (SDNP) is set to lose services: along with the AONB, the SDNP is hugely important as a recreational resource for all, and arguably, even more for those vulnerable members of society highlighted in the Marmot Review of Health Inequalities (Fair Society. Healthy Lives; 2010).
13. Bank Holidays don't get mentioned at all: clarification is needed from ESCC. We *imagine* that they are included in the same category as Sundays.
14. More flexible part-time employment means journeys are made outside peaks so there is a need for off peak and Sunday/Bank Holiday services to be retained.
15. Further and Higher Education courses are also held at irregular times during the day/week.
16. Healthcare appointments are not given to coincide with bus times. Appointments given outside of times when buses are available could result in costly journeys for some current bus users, and delayed healthcare.
17. An integrated and healthy supported network contributes to the health of commercial services. Partnerships could include better connections from supported to commercial services tied in with 'bus corridor' improvements. This would improve the 'value for money' of these investments.
18. East Sussex – Kent cross border services require a regional perspective. Half of Sunday services from Hastings-Hawkhurst don't connect there with Cranbrook/Maidstone buses. There is obvious room for improvement in that situation and better use should have been made of public funds. There is also dialogue to be had with Kent County Council (KCC). ***(See comments from KCC Councillors for Hawkhurst area at foot of this page).**
19. ESCC is prepared to borrow very substantial funds for other (road) transport projects. Why not buses?
20. Urban and Rural services interact, as well as meeting discrete needs of each area. Your paper to cabinet suggests otherwise.
21. The service in general is described as a 'safety net', with needs met 'effectively and efficiently'. How about the need for the service to be '*an attractive alternative to the car*' rather than a '*safety net*' (for poor souls without a car?).
22. Upgrading bus facilities in East Sussex has been severely delayed over the last decade in Eastbourne and Hastings. This must have had some negative

effects around the image of the bus and may well have depressed user numbers overall.

23. DGH/Conquest hospital services could attract external funding – we wonder if this has been explored, especially in the light of reorganization of clinical services. The need for new public transport arrangements to cater for this new situation and access needs has been overlooked by ESCC's Economy, Transport and Environment committee who see it as a 'health issue'. Put simply, transport need following clinical reorganization is not currently met.
24. The South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) is interested in facilitating 'access to employment'. Given the 'cross border' nature of some threatened services, this regional body could be called upon to fund some of those services. It evidently has massive 'bidding power'.
25. Priority 3 (access to key services) pre-empts any consultation conclusions as it predicts passengers' and the wider community's acceptance of ESCC's described outcome of a lower quality service.
26. Education policy has created need for more mobility without funds to serve need. Access needs of students should be coordinated to avoid traffic mayhem at school gates. The bus network can help.
27. Etchingam: 21 new houses, new school, no bus stop. Supported service 318 would pass by. One way to gain value for money for the bus service: provide bus stops at new developments close to bus routes. In this case, the bus also potentially links to the Southeastern train service at Etchingam station.
28. The sums involved: £1.79m is being taken away from supported bus services, while £45m more is found for road repairs: £113m+ secured for Bexhill to Hastings Link Road – and rising, with a current request to borrow a further £10m for that scheme. These disparities sit very uncomfortably alongside ESCC's aspirations of social equity, environmental improvement, policies to address climate change, support for local economies and public health improvement goals.
29. The proposals appear potentially highly damaging to the county's weekend/evening/tourism economies which are of local and regional importance.
30. The fare increases of 30% proposed are insulting and punitive, and would deter passengers.
31. Clinical Commissioning Groups have expressed anxieties around patient access to facilities. It is not clear that this issue has been identified or that

the role of public transport in meeting those needs has been understood or investigated in this consultation process.

We would respectfully ask you to take the points made into account, and to suspend the proposed cuts until a positive analysis has been carried out into the transport and accessibility needs of East Sussex residents and which includes the needs of those who visit the county for whatever reason.

Yours Sincerely,

[Name]

(County Officer, XXX Campaign)

*Councillors' comments removed from sample.