

Area Transport Strategy for Mid Sussex

Spatial Context

- 7.101 Mid Sussex is on the eastern boundary of West Sussex containing the towns of East Grinstead, Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill with rural areas in between them. It stretches from Copthorne in the north, through the High Weald to Fulking in the south. The District borders the Tandridge District of Surrey to the north, Wealden and Lewes districts in East Sussex to the east, Brighton and Hove to the south, Horsham District to the west and Crawley Borough to the northwest.
- 7.102 A large part of Mid Sussex District is also part of the High Weald AONB and to a lesser extent the SDNP. Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area is in the adjacent Wealden District in East Sussex. The District is made up of the three larger towns and numerous smaller villages across the largely rural area.
- 7.103 Mid Sussex's population is estimated to grow by 11.7% from 149,700 in 2018 to 167,200 by 2043. In 2018 Mid Sussex had the second highest population of districts in West Sussex at 17.4% of the county population. For the 65+ age group the forecast population is expected to increase from 30,500 in 2018 to 45,000 (47.6%) over the period 2018-2043²⁹. The District is fairly affluent with few areas of deprivation.
- 7.104 The Mid Sussex Local Plan allocates sites for 16,390 new homes and commercial development that is expected to come forward in the period up to 2031 alongside infrastructure improvements. The Local Plan has a number of strategic site allocations in Burgess Hill (north and north west), East Grinstead, Pease Pottage and Hassocks.
- 7.105 The emerging Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) proposes to allocate a number of sites for small to medium sized developments across the District and a Science and Technology Park, located to the west of Burgess Hill and the north of the A2300.

Transport Context

- 7.106 The A23 trunk road is the main north-south route that passes through the western edge of the District. The A23 is dual carriageway with a mix of 2 lane and 3 lane provision in each direction. There are a mix of junction types, but all are grade separated. Crossing facilities for pedestrians and cyclists on the A23 are grade separated. There are limited crossing facilities provided at the main junctions.
- 7.107 The A272 cuts through the centre of the District east to west. The A264 and the A22 are to the north of the District and link Crawley to East Grinstead.
- 7.108 The Brighton main line provides direct rail connections to the north (destinations such as London and Thameslink services to the north such as Bedford and Cambridge), and the south (destinations such as Brighton

²⁹ WSCC: [West Sussex Life](#) (accessed May 2021)

and Littlehampton via Hove). The connection to the East Coastway line just to the south of Wivelsfield station provides a connection via Lewes onto Eastbourne and Hastings. The Oxted line provides rail connections to the north to London from East Grinstead.

- 7.109 There are six national rail network stations in Mid Sussex District which have varying levels of service and usage. Stations like Hassocks, though small, provide a frequent level of service to London and Brighton and are well used by commuters with over a million passengers per annum. The three larger towns are all reasonably well served by local buses and Haywards Heath has a Cycle Hub.
- 7.110 The local bus network in the three main towns is fairly comprehensive but lacks higher frequency services or priority over general traffic and bus usage is currently low. The smaller towns in the District have limited bus services and some rural areas have no or a very limited bus service.
- 7.111 Longer bus routes are in the main north to south with fewer services running east to west. The main north to south routes connect Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath and onward to Brighton in the south (270, 271, 272) and Crawley (271, 272) and East Grinstead (270) to the north. The 273 provides an express service between Brighton and Crawley using the A23 and provides an alternative to rail.
- 7.112 The bus network is largely operated on a commercial basis by Metrobus. Some services, particularly those that connect the surrounding rural areas are operated under tender by the County Council. The 100 service is the most notable which provides services between Burgess Hill and Horsham via Henfield, Pulborough and Billingshurst and many villages in between.
- 7.113 The cycle network in Mid Sussex is comprised of a mix of off-carriageway, typically shared use routes and signed routes on quieter roads. National Cycle Network route 20 provides a connection between Pyecombe and Brighton. The section between Pyecombe and Crawley which mostly follows the route of A23 has recently been removed from the National Cycle Network as in places the infrastructure does not meet the required standards. Route 21 in the north along the Worth Way provides connections between Crawley, East Grinstead and East Sussex.

Key Issues

- 7.114 7.114 Travel behaviour in Mid Sussex is currently dominated by car travel. Public transport and active travel modes are not seen as viable options for many journeys although commuting by rail is relatively high in the towns. The current key transport issues in Mid Sussex are:
- Congestion on the A23 during peak periods;
 - Congestion on the A264 and the A22 during peak periods;
 - Congestion on the A272 during peak periods;
 - Rat-running on less suitable routes to avoid congestion;
 - Bus services in the towns are not frequent enough;
 - No bus services over large parts of the rural areas of the district
 - Bus journey times are slow at peak times due to congestion;

- Cycle network is primarily on highway and discontinuous and does not meet user needs;
- Traffic related air quality management area in Hassocks; and
- Congestion within Burgess Hill concentrated on the two bridges over the Brighton Main Line.

7.115 In the future, once the Mid Sussex Local Plan and the Site Allocations DPD development takes place, it is anticipated that some of the current transport issues will worsen if background traffic also grows as forecast. Therefore, interventions are needed in the District that will reduce car travel at peak times. If such interventions are not delivered or are not successful, then the following locations on the highway network are likely to require capacity improvement in the future to mitigate the impacts of development:

- A23 / A2300 Hickstead junction
- A2300 / Cuckfield Road junction - the Science & Technology Park traffic accesses via this junction
- A272 / B2036 at Ansty
- A2300 / Northern Arc Link Road junction
- A264 / A2220 Copthorne Hotel roundabout (Tandridge impacts)

7.116 A safety study that was carried out has also recommended interventions at:

- Burgess Hill: London Road / Victoria Way
- East Grinstead: B2110 Brooklands Way / Railway Approach
- Crawley Down: B2028 Turners Hill Road / Wallage Lane

7.117 At East Grinstead/Felbridge the A22/A264 Felbridge junction (on boundary, but mainly within Surrey) and the A22/Imberhorne Lane junction and the A22 Lingfield Road junction are severely congested. As development comes forward in the area, this is likely to exacerbate rat running on rural routes as traffic seeks to avoid congestion.

Transport Strategy

7.118 Our transport strategy for Mid Sussex area is to improve the performance of the A22, A23, A264 and A2300. We will do this by delivering major improvement to the A22 and A264 to improve efficiency, give greater priority where possible to shared transport services in addition to the A2300 corridor enhancement that is already under construction. In the medium term we will work with Highways England to deliver improvements to the A23 to ensure junction capacity is closer matched to demand once development takes place.

7.119 We will facilitate the shift to electric vehicles initially by facilitating provision of on-street charging infrastructure in the East Grinstead, Lindfield, Cuckfield Ardingly and Balcombe areas where communities rely on on-street parking.

7.120 We want to make active travel modes and shared transport services more attractive options, particularly in Burgess Hill, East Grinstead and

Haywards Heath so we will achieve this by prioritising active travel modes in the towns as development takes place and deliver priority cycle routes such as the Haywards Heath to Burgess Hill route (subject to identification of a deliverable route). Due to constraints on available land, we will deliver improvements within existing highway land to provide bus priority where possible including priority at signal-controlled junctions.

7.121 We will also improve access to the railway through planned improvements to interchange facilities at Burgess Hill and Wivelsfield stations and improve public realm in Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill town centres to improve their vitality.

7.122 Our approach to managing the network will use on-street parking and traffic management techniques to manage demand, particularly in Burgess Hill, East Grinstead and Haywards Heath. We will also use behavioural initiatives to tackle inappropriate traffic speeds and use of unsuitable rural routes.

7.123 In the long term, we will work with strategic partners to provide an improved service on the Brighton main line to improve connections to Brighton and London.

Short term (2022-27) priorities for the Mid Sussex area

- Bus Priority at signal-controlled junctions
- Bus and rail interchange improvements at Burgess Hill and Wivelsfield stations
- Flexible shared transport services / Rural Mobility
- On-street electric vehicle charging infrastructure in Lindfield, Ardingly, Cuckfield and Balcombe
- Active travel infrastructure 'quick wins'
- Small scale 'tactical' highway improvements
- Air Quality Action Plan measures in Hassocks

Medium term (2027-27) priorities for the Mid Sussex area

- Enhanced bus priority in towns
- A23 improvements
- A22 improvements, working with Surrey County Council - including sustainable transport provision between Felbridge junction and Lingfield Road
- North – south bus priority between towns
- A264 corridor enhancement (including shared transport and active travel infrastructure)
- Active travel schemes identified in the LCWIP
- On-street electric vehicle charging infrastructure in remaining areas

Long term (2032-36) priorities for the Mid Sussex area

- Brighton main line improvements
- Potentially local highway capacity enhancements (subject to need)

