

West Sussex Transport Plan 2022-2036

Strategic Environmental Assessment Adoption Statement

November 2022

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The County Council has a statutory duty to prepare a Local Transport Plan. In West Sussex, the Local Transport Plan is known as the 'West Sussex Transport Plan' (WSTP – the 'Plan'). The WSTP Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Report has been produced by West Sussex County Council as part of the process of developing the Plan.
- 1.2 The WSTP is the County Council's main policy on transport and supports delivery of Our Council Plan and its priorities. The WSTP sets out how the County Council, working with its strategic partners, particularly in relation to funding, intends to address key challenges by improving, maintaining and managing the transport network in the period 2022 to 2036. The WSTP includes an Action Plan for the 2022-27 period, which will be reviewed annually. A fundamental review of the strategies and priorities will be conducted at five-yearly intervals.
- 1.3 The SA Report incorporates a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) that fulfils the requirements of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations). Sustainability appraisal is a systematic process that ensures that potential environmental effects are given consideration alongside social and economic effects. The SEA has been included as chapter 6 in the SA Report.
- 1.4 This is the SEA Adoption Statement which is the final output of the SEA process for the WSTP. According to article 9 of the SEA Regulations, the statement must include a description of the following which is set out in the subsequent sections of this statement:
 - How environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan;
 - How the SEA has been taken into account;
 - How opinions expressed in response to the consultation on the Draft Plan and SEA have been taken into account;
 - The reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternative options dealt with; and
 - The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the Plan.

2. How Environmental Considerations Have Been Integrated Into the Plan

- 2.1 Baseline data and the plans, programmes and policies considered in scoping the SA are set out in the SA Scoping Report and the draft and final versions of the SA which form part of the evidence base for the Plan. These were used to develop a set of sustainability objectives that were for the SEA and are set out in each SA document, most recently in the SA Report (Table 5-1). The SEA has taken place in parallel with the Plan and its recommendations have been taken into account at each key stage in the development of the vision, strategic objectives, thematic and area transport strategies.

3. How the SEA has been taken into account

3.1 Scoping

- 3.1.1 At the scoping stage the policies and baseline data included in the SA Scoping Report was used to inform the WSTP Evidence Base document. This ensured that the relevant environmental topics were identified and considered alongside other social and economic considerations.
- 3.1.2 The sustainability objectives were identified at the scoping stage and consultation was undertaken with statutory bodies to seek their feedback. The sustainability objectives were then amended and used to inform the development of the vision, strategic objectives, thematic and area transport strategies in the Draft Plan.

3.2 Draft SEA

- 3.2.1 The Draft SEA included an assessment of:
- The WSTP overarching strategy and alternatives;
 - The WSTP objectives;
 - The thematic strategies; and
 - The area transport strategies.
- 3.2.2 Three overarching strategies were identified that were called; 'Local Living', 'Connecting Economic Centres' and 'Protecting Places and Communities'. The overarching strategies were then assessed against the sustainability objectives.
- 3.2.3 Of the three overarching strategies, a version of the 'Local Living' strategy was amended to improve its performance for the economy and this was chosen for inclusion in the Draft Plan. This strategy was selected based on an initial appraisal against the economic, social, environmental objectives of the Plan and informed by the Draft SEA. The appraisal concluded that Local Living would perform best against the environmental objectives and joint best against the social objectives whilst being the worst performing option when assessed against the economic objectives. Therefore, a modified Local Living strategy was developed incorporating targeted measures to improve some strategic road and rail and urban bus infrastructure linked to planned strategic growth that improved performance of the strategy against the economic objectives without substantially changing the impacts on the environmental and social objectives.
- 3.2.4 As part of the SEA, the strategic objectives were assessed and the main changes or recommendations were:
- Undertake a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) in support of the WSTP;
 - Establish a carbon impact appraisal system for potential major highway interventions;
 - Carry out a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) in support of Thematic and Area Transport Strategies;

- Incorporate overarching Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) commitments into the WSTP;
- Incorporate Air Quality Action Plans and Noise Action Plans into Thematic and Area Transport Strategies;
- Incorporate clarity, commitments and targets in relation to climate change resilience, water quality and flood risk into the WSTP;
- A carbon emissions reduction target should be established as part of the LTP. This target should be decided upon after completing a baseline appraisal of carbon emissions for the West Sussex transport network; and
- WSCC will consult further with NE before the WSTP is finalised to explore potential targets and indicators that can be applied to interventions, when applicable, to ensure conformance with sustainability objectives 1, 3, 4, 5 and 10 is achieved.

3.3 The SEA assessment of the thematic strategies

3.3.1 The thematic transport strategies (strategies associated with themes of the WSTP, such as active travel, and interventions in line with these themes) were separately assessed against the sustainability objectives. A summary of the findings of the assessment are as follows:

- **Active Travel Strategy** – Mostly positive effects on the sustainability objectives related to biodiversity resource use and various types of pollution. Significant positive effects are anticipated on the connectivity and wellbeing sustainability objectives. There are negligible effects in relation to the effects on climate change resilience and flood risk.
- **Shared Transport Strategy** – Mostly positive effects on resource use and various types of pollution. Positive and negative effects are anticipated on biodiversity due to the nature of likely interventions. There are negligible effects on climate change resilience and flood risk.
- **Rail Strategy** – Mostly positive effects in relation to biodiversity, resource use, various types of pollution, connectivity and economic prosperity. There are negligible effects on climate change resilience and flood risk.
- **Access to Gatwick Airport Strategy** – Due to the spatially limited nature of the thematic strategy many of the effects are negligible (due to the lack of interaction with certain receptors such as biodiversity assets) while there are a combination of positive and negative effects on sustainability objectives in relation to human receptors. There are negligible effects on heritage assets and positive effects in relation to economic prosperity.
- **Road Network Strategy** – This is the only thematic strategy with entirely negative (and some significant negative) effects on some sustainability objectives. These negative effects in particular relate to biodiversity, greenhouse gases, flood risk and landscape due to the provision of new highway schemes and highway improvements as part of the strategy. The positive effects for this strategy are limited to

improving connectivity and economic prosperity. There are negligible effects on climate change resilience and water quality.

3.4 The SEA Assessment of the Area Transport Strategies

3.4.1 The Area Transport Strategies (place-based transport strategies for each of the eight local planning areas in West Sussex) were separately assessed against the Sustainability Objectives. A summary of the findings of the assessment are as follows. All Area Transport Strategies have uncertain effects in relation to climate change resilience, water quality and flood risk due to lack of information on interventions:

- **Adur Area Transport Strategy** – There is a negative effect on greenhouse gas emissions as a result of road-based interventions. Other effects are a combination of positive, positive and negative and negligible due to multiple intervention types. Overall the strategy can be said to have mixed effects.
- **Arun Area Transport Strategy** – This area strategy has a number of likely negative effects on sustainability objectives. These negative effects in particular relate to biodiversity, greenhouse gases and landscape due to large scale highway schemes in the strategy. However, multiple positive effects on sustainability objectives will be seen as a result of the active and shared transport provision and the associated benefits on connectivity, resource use, air quality and noise pollution.
- **Chichester Area Transport Strategy and Crawley Area Transport Strategy** – Both these area transport strategies have a negative effect on greenhouse gas emissions as a result of road-based interventions. Other effects are a combination of positive and negative effects in relation to biodiversity, land use and soils, air quality, noise pollution, landscape and heritage assets. There are positive effects associated with resource use, connectivity, health and wellbeing and economic prosperity.
- **Horsham Area Transport Strategy** – There is a negative effect on greenhouse gas emissions as a result of road-based interventions. The other effects are a combination of positive, positive and negative and negligible effects due to multiple intervention types.
- **Area Transport Strategy for Mid-Sussex** – A combination of positive, positive and negative and negligible effects due to multiple intervention types.
- **South Downs National Park Area Transport Strategy** – Mostly positive effects on sustainability objectives due to the lack of road-based interventions. There are negligible effects in relation to soils and land use and cultural heritage assets due to a lack of interaction with these receptors.
- **Worthing Area Transport Strategy** - There is a negative effect on greenhouse gas emissions as a result of road-based interventions. The other effects are a combination of positive, positive and negative and negligible effects due to multiple intervention types.

3.5 Final SEA

- 3.5.1 The issues highlighted in the SEA of the WSTP relate to the large amount of road-based interventions that form the Road Network Strategy and some Area Transport Strategies. In response to this assessment, the Road Network Strategy was changed to state that new road building would be avoided where possible and new roads would only be built where they are development-led or necessary to achieve our wider objectives.
- 3.5.2 The SEA concluded that the interventions identified in the WSTP are unlikely to deliver the level of change in transport behaviour required to allow West Sussex to meet the target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. In response to this conclusion, a carbon impact appraisal system and a commitment to setting a decarbonisation target in 2022 were included in the WSTP.
- 3.5.3 Mitigation measures were recommended in relation to the sustainability objectives to ensure that sustainability objectives are met, to reduce any anticipated negative impacts and to strengthen the environmental performance of the WSTP overall.
- 3.5.4 These mitigation measures (see table 6-5 in the final SA) mostly relate to the strategic level as well as recommend the adaptation of other environmental assessments and processes during implementation of the thematic and area transport strategies and interventions. Multiple measures are recommended to mitigate and monitor biodiversity, green infrastructure and landscape effects. Additionally, clarity and development of commitments to BNG and climate change mitigation is recommended to be detailed in the WSTP.
- 3.5.5 Monitoring measures were recommended to allow for any remedial actions taken. The purpose of monitoring measures is to provide an important measure of the environmental outcomes of the final WSTP and be able to measure the performance of plan related interventions against any arising objectives and targets. Monitoring is also used to manage uncertainty, improve knowledge and enhance transparency and accountability.
- 3.5.6 Within some of the thematic strategies (active travel, shared transport, rail and road network), the approaches were amended to additionally take account of flood risk and the number of incidences of road flooding was added to the monitoring plan.
- 3.5.7 As noise is a key issue on many roads in West Sussex, the Road Network Strategy was amended to include an additional criterion and short term priority to deliver actions identified in noise action plans. Noise action plans were also added to the 5-year Action Plan.
- 3.5.8 The negative effects on sustainability objectives 1 and 4 are associated with the multiple major schemes proposed and in response to this, objectives 8 and 9 were amended and an outcome indicator has been included within table 2 of the WSTP to monitor biodiversity on major schemes.
- 3.5.9 Further changes were made to objectives 4 and 8 to replace wording with 'avoidance' to reflect changes recommended within the SEA. 'Avoidance' was also added to the approach to managing negative environmental

effects of major improvements in thematic transport strategies (including active travel, shared transport, rail, road network).

4. How Opinions Have Been Taken Into Account

- 4.1 The Draft Plan and SEA were published for consultation for 12 weeks between 16 July and 8 October 2021. The consultation and a summary of feedback received is set out in the Consultation Report. A summary of the consultation feedback was included in the Key Decision Report that recommended the Plan for adoption. This was scrutinised by the County Council's Communities, Highways and Environment Scrutiny Committee on 21 January 2022 before the Plan was recommended to Full Council for adoption on 1 April 2022.
- 4.2 There were a small number of specific comments about the SA including concerns that the comments in the SA about the road network strategy, in particular in Arun District, were being ignored, and concerns that the SA had not been used effectively to consider alternatives to road-based interventions. Other largely individual comments highlighted concerns that the SA underplays the threat of climate change and does not quantify through modelling the scale of change required to address this and the implications in relation to the Plan interventions. A small number of comments also highlighted that they thought the SA was too weak in terms of analysis of biodiversity impacts.
- 4.3 To address the concerns, the road network approach was changed to clarify that the strategy is to avoid road building where possible and only build new roads where they are development-led or necessary to achieve our wider environmental, social and economic objectives.
- 4.4 The Plan was also changed to incorporate a commitment to setting a decarbonisation target and a target to achieve at least 10% biodiversity net gain on all major schemes.

5. The Reasons For Choosing the Plan as Adopted

- 5.1 The reasons for choosing the overarching strategy are set out in section 3, paragraph 3.2 above.
- 5.2 Table 6-7 in the final SA (SEA summary) provides a summary of the effects. For the effects which are mixed (i.e. positive and negative), the Plan has incorporated mitigation within the thematic strategies to ensure that as interventions are developed, effects are assessed, avoided and mitigated where they are negative.
- 5.3 The negative (including one significant negative) effects are on sustainability objective 7 which is to reduce greenhouse gases emissions and reliance on fossil fuels. The final plan includes a commitment to set a decarbonisation target in 2022 to assist in tackling this issue. It should also be recognised that most of the road network priorities in the Plan have been included because they are identified in other plans, notably Local Plans, which have been subject to their own SEAs. Therefore, part of the role of the WSTP (in relation to these schemes) is to deliver better outcomes in relation to the sustainability objectives than would otherwise be the case without the Plan. The exception to these are major improvements to some sections of the County Strategic Road Network

that are needed to achieve the wider environmental, social and economic objectives of the Plan.

6. The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects

- 6.1 Table 6-6 of the SEA includes the monitoring requirements to ensure that significant effects of implementation can be identified and, if necessary, remedial action taken. The requirements have been incorporated into the section 9 of the Plan which will be reported annually.
- 6.2 All documents, including the SA Report, HRA and documents relating to the WSTP and evidence base are available on the [West Sussex Transport Plan](#) page on the West Sussex County Council website.

Appendix A

The table below identifies the SEA requirements and the documents produced to meet these requirements with signposting to the relevant sections of the documents:

SEA Requirement	Documents Produced	Relevant Sections
The plan as adopted	WSTP	N/A.
How the environmental considerations have been integrated into the WSTP	WSTP Sustainability Appraisal Report WSTP Habitat Regulations Assessment	Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4 of the Sustainability Appraisal Report Chapter 7 section 7.4 of the Sustainability Appraisal (HRA Section)
How the environmental report has been considered	WSTP Sustainability Appraisal Report WSTP Habitat Regulation Assessment West Sussex Transport Plan	Chapter 6 of the Sustainability Appraisal (SEA section) Chapter 7 of the Sustainability Appraisal (Habitat Regulation Assessment)
How public and stakeholders expressed opinions and the results of the public consultation have been taken into account	WSTP Consultation Report	Draft West Sussex Transport Plan 2022-2036 Consultation, Summer 2021 Feedback Summary, February 2022
The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan	West Sussex Transport Plan WSTP Sustainability Appraisal Report	WSTP Chapter 9 'Monitoring' WSTP SA section 6.7

All documents, including the SA Report, HRA and documents relating to the WSTP and evidence base are available via the West Sussex County Council website via: www.westsussex.gov.uk/ltp