

BEXHILL AND HASTINGS FUTURE TRAVEL OPTIONS

YOUR
4-PAGE
GUIDE TO
TRANSPORT
CHOICES

TRAVEL OPTIONS NEWS UPDATE

FEBRUARY 2004

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Transport links around Bexhill and Hastings need improvement.

The local economy desperately wants investment, more jobs and training opportunities. The A259 Bexhill Road is congested, polluted and unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists. DOING NOTHING IS NOT AN OPTION.

Since last summer, East Sussex County Council and their partners have been working on a scheme to develop a local link road between Bexhill and Hastings – you may have read about this in the local press over recent months.

Progress has now reached the stage of proposing six route options and asking local people for views on what the preferred route should be.

To develop the options, the County Council has

worked closely with English Nature, the Environment Agency, English Heritage and the Countryside Agency to find ways of reducing the environmental impact of the road.

The new Countryside Park, a major recreational area being developed for the enjoyment of local people to protect and enhance wildlife habitats, will be influential when selecting the preferred route



Each of the routes differs in a number of ways and these are described in detail in this newspaper. They all offer some common benefits:

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

A new link road will enable housing and other development in the Bexhill and Hastings area, bringing much-needed investment and economic activity. New jobs will be created and training opportunities increased. Improved transport links will allow the local road network to operate more efficiently.

REDUCING PROBLEMS ON THE A259

A new link road could remove around a third of traffic from the A259 Bexhill Road, bringing the air quality in this area within acceptable limits. Congestion on the A259 would be cut and road safety improved. This will allow priority to be given to buses and cyclists and will make life easier for those living on the A259 and in local villages currently used as shortcuts.

ALTERNATIVE TRAVEL CHOICES

The link road will be complemented by improvements to other ways of travelling locally:

- Buses** - new and more frequent services, bus lanes, improved bus stops
- Cycling** – cycle lanes, priority over other traffic
- Pedestrians** – safer routes for walking, new road crossings, better street lighting
- Trains** – new trains and stations, more services and better information

HOW THE LINK ROAD WOULD BE FUNDED

Central government funds will be sought to pay for development and construction of the new link road.

LINK TO A21

Access from Queensway to the A21 trunk road is a key element of the package. Initial ideas to improve traffic flow in the Baldslow area have been considered and these will be presented by the Highways Agency at the exhibition.

"Careful design and sensitivity in picking the route are absolutely vital to minimise the impact on both local communities and our precious natural environment. However if we can get it right, the benefits from the new link will be immense. This project is long overdue. We must not fail."

Gregory Barker MP, Member of Parliament for Bexhill & Battle.

"The link road will achieve most of what the bypass could have done in terms of economic expansion and regeneration, but without cost to the surrounding countryside."

Michael Foster DL MP, Member of Parliament for Hastings & Rye

Some of the background to where we are now:

Following the Access to Hastings Study, the Secretary of State rejected the A259 Bexhill and Hastings bypasses in July 2001.

In making that decision, however, he asked the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) to establish a Task Force to develop a joined-up package of regeneration proposals for the Bexhill and Hastings area.

A partnership was quickly established between SEEDA, the local authorities (ESCC, Hastings BC and Rother DC), the Government Office for the South East and key local education, social, housing and business organisations.

The Task Force developed a Five Point Plan for Hastings and Bexhill focusing on:

- Urban renewal
- Education
- Business Support
- Broadband
- Transport - including the principle of a new link road

Early in 2002, the government announced financial backing for the £400 million package. These Five Point Plan proposals were then further developed and consulted upon, receiving strong public support.

While this was progressing, the government initiated the South Coast Multi-Modal Study

(SoCoMMS) to look at transport along the south coast from Southampton to Ramsgate with the aim of developing a strategy for the next 30 years. The Task Force's transport priorities influenced part of this Study and resulted in the Link Road being included as part of the overall study recommendations.

In summer 2003, the Secretary of State for Transport as part of his decision on the Study recommendations, asked East Sussex County Council to develop a preferred route for the Link Road working closely with the statutory environmental organisations; English Nature, the Environment Agency, English Heritage and the Countryside Agency to minimise the environmental impact.

VISIT OUR EXHIBITION ...FIND OUT MORE!

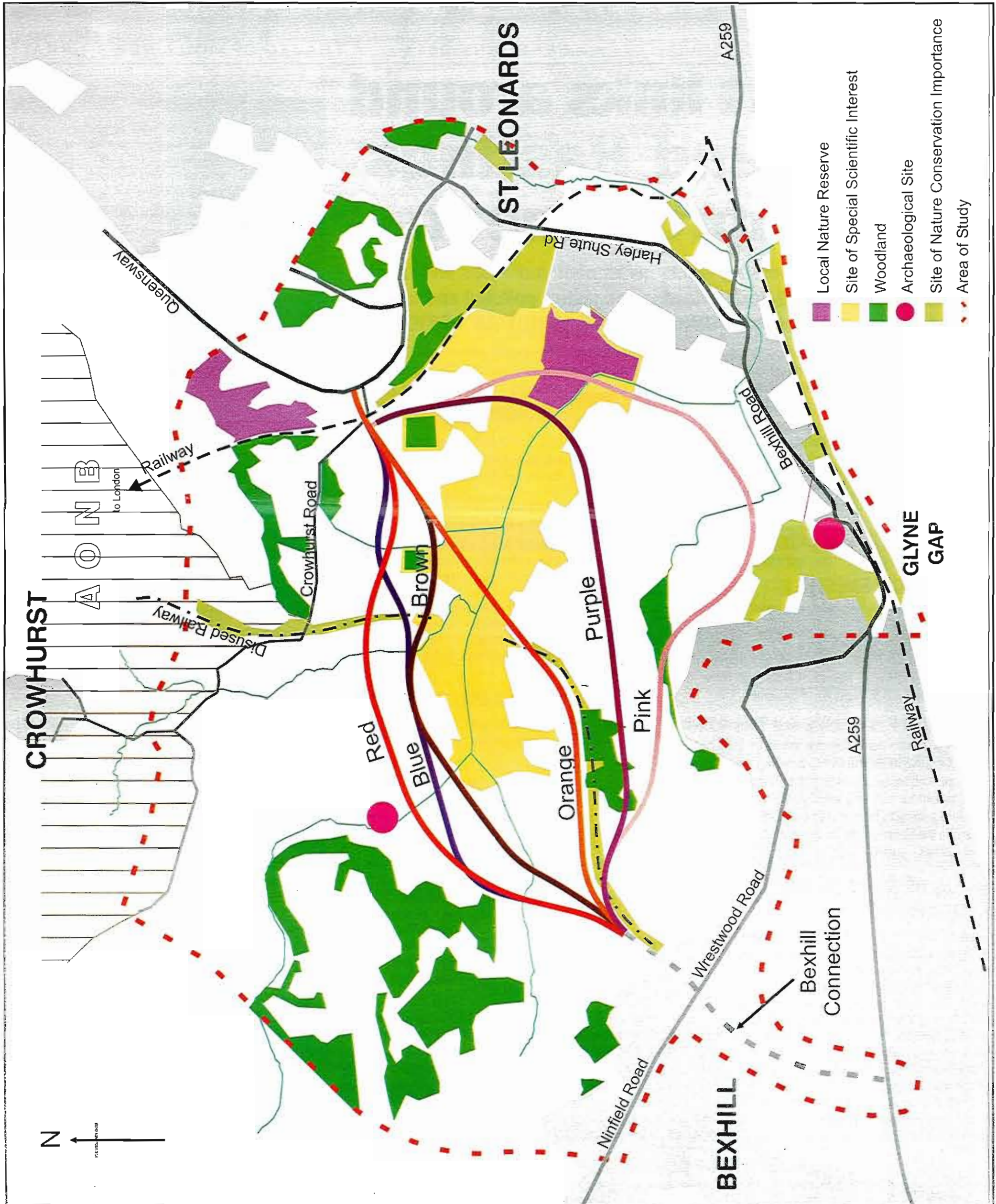
All six routes are being exhibited in the "Future Travel Options" exhibition.

Please see the back page of this newspaper for the timetable telling you where the exhibition will be.



Bexhill & Hastings - Future Travel Options

Route Options for Link Road



Key Route Features

The route descriptions read as though travelling from Bexhill to Hastings. The Bexhill Connection is the first part of all the routes.

BEXHILL CONNECTION

- Common to all six route options
- Based on a long-standing and approved highway scheme
- Joins the A259 trunk road at the Belle Hill/London Road junction
- Runs along the disused railway track
- Incorporates flood management
- Requires rebuilding bridges at Woodsgate Park Road, Ninfield Road and Glover's Farm

Length: 1.7 kilometres (1.1 miles) – included in the route length of all six options

Cost: included in the six route option costs

Route description: Traffic leaves the A259 east-bound by a re-modelled junction that may include a slip road to allow easy access onto the Bexhill Connection. The single carriageway follows the route of the old railway line and runs under three bridges as it passes through the built-up area. There is potential to include a junction where the route crosses Ninfield Road. Just beyond the end of the town there will be a junction which can provide access to the future planned development at north Bexhill, including Worsham Farm.

RED ROUTE

- Runs in deep cuttings and tunnels to avoid the main Combe Haven valley
- Low viaducts or embankments required at Upper Combe Haven, Watermill, and Powdermill streams
- Ridges at Hillcroft and Adam's Farms preserved by using tunnels
- Avoids crossing the Combe Haven Site of Special Scientific Interest and passes under the Site of Nature Conservation Importance
- Route length 5.5 kilometres (3.4 miles)

Estimated cost of Red route £145 million

Route description: The Red route runs downhill almost due north from Sidley and passes to the west of the main Combe Haven valley. The hill west of Acton's Farm contains the road in a deep cutting, from which it emerges on a low viaduct or embankment. The road swings east, and crosses under the two ridges at Hillcroft and Adam's Farms in short tunnels. The Watermill and Powdermill streams are crossed on viaducts or embankments. Decoy Pond Wood valley is crossed on an embankment and the road climbs steadily towards Upper Wilting Farm, to join Crowhurst Road and Queensway. The road crosses the railway line on a bridge.

BLUE ROUTE

- Road in deep cutting to preserve the head of the main Combe Haven valley
- Runs to the north of the Combe Haven valley avoiding the Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Low viaducts or embankments required at Upper Combe Haven, Watermill, and Powdermill streams
- Passes close to Adam's Farm (Listed Building)
- Route length 5.4 kilometres (3.4 miles)

Estimated cost of Blue route £60 million

Route description: The Blue route runs downhill almost due north from Sidley and passes to the west of the main Combe Haven valley. The hill west of Acton's Farm contains the road in a deep cutting, but then the route swings eastwards quite sharply to run near the ends of the Hillcroft and Adam's Farm ridges, which it crosses in shallow cuttings. The Watermill and Powdermill streams are crossed on viaducts or embankments. East of Adam's Farm the road turns northeast and climbs towards Upper Wilting Farm, to join Crowhurst Road and Queensway. The road crosses the railway line on a bridge.

BROWN ROUTE

- Hugs the northern edge of Combe Haven valley avoiding the main part of the Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Low viaducts or embankments required at Upper Combe Haven, Watermill, and Powdermill streams
- Crosses the Combe Haven Site of Special Scientific Interest at several locations
- Route length 5.3 kilometres (3.3 miles)

Estimated cost of Brown route £50 million

Route description: The Brown route heads north-east and downhill from Sidley, and south of Acton's Farm it curves gently to the east to cross the Combe Haven, Watermill and Powdermill streams on viaducts or embankments. It skirts the ends of the Hillcroft and Adam's Farm ridges and passes south of Decoy Pond Wood before climbing quite steeply in a cutting past Upper Wilting Farm to join Crowhurst Road and Queensway. The road crosses the railway line on a bridge.

ORANGE ROUTE

- Similar to bypass route rejected by government in 2001
- Runs north of the disused railway line and Combe Wood ancient woodland
- Crosses the Combe Haven Site of Special Scientific Interest on high viaduct
- Shortest of the six options - 5.1 kilometres (3.2 miles) and therefore likely to transfer most traffic from A259

Estimated cost of Orange route £50 million

Route description: The Orange route swings right soon after leaving Sidley and runs eastwards beside the former

railway line. A gentle left-hand curve leads the road onto a high and long viaduct across the Combe Haven valley towards Upper Wilting Farm. North of the valley, it joins Crowhurst Road and crosses the railway line on a bridge to meet Queensway.

PURPLE ROUTE

- Follows the ridge to the south of the disused railway line
- Runs through the southern edge of Combe Wood ancient woodland
- Could provide more direct access to future planned development at north Bexhill
- Crosses the Combe Haven Site of Special Scientific Interest on high viaduct
- Limits opportunities to create a railway station at Wilting Farm
- Route length 5.9 kilometres (3.7 miles)

Estimated cost of Purple route £55 million

Route description: The Purple route curves due east after leaving Sidley, passes through the southern edge of Combe Wood, and continues east along Worsham ridge. A left-hand curve on a high viaduct takes the road across the Combe Haven valley to climb east of Monkham Wood towards Upper Wilting Farm. The route turns right where it meets Crowhurst Road and it crosses the railway line on a bridge to join Queensway.

PINK ROUTE

- Closest route to built-up areas of Bexhill and St Leonards
- Could provide more direct access to future planned development at north Bexhill
- Crosses the Combe Haven Site of Special Scientific Interest and Filsham Reed Beds Local Nature Reserve
- Compromises the Bexhill-Hastings Strategic Gap
- Crosses Pebsham landfill site
- Limits opportunities to create a railway station at Wilting Farm
- Longest route of the six options - 6.9 kilometres (4.3 miles) and therefore likely to transfer least traffic from the A259

Estimated cost of Pink route £85 million

Route description: The Pink route turns southeast after leaving Sidley and runs downhill through part of Pebsham Wood towards Pebsham Farm. Near the waste-derived fuel plant, it swings north-east across the playing fields north of Bexhill Road. Another left curve takes the road on low viaducts or embankments west of Combe Haven Holiday Park and across the Combe Haven valley. Following a steady climb to the east of Monkham Wood, there is a junction with Crowhurst Road. The route turns right to cross the railway line on a bridge, to join Queensway.

Find out more about Future Travel Options at our travelling exhibition - See back page for details

To make sure your views count, please take the opportunity to visit the exhibition and return this questionnaire. If you require more space, please use a separate sheet and attach it to the questionnaire.

Questionnaire

Date	Venue	Time
•Tuesday 10 Feb	Devonshire Square, Bexhill	3.00pm – 8.00pm
•Wednesday 11 Feb	Devonshire Square, Bexhill	10.00am – 6.00pm
•Thursday 12 Feb	Sainsbury's, Sedlescombe Rd Nth, St. Leonards	10.00am – 8.00pm
•Friday 13 Feb	Sainsbury's, Sedlescombe Rd Nth, St. Leonards	10.00am – 6.00pm
•Saturday 14 Feb	Ravenside Retail Park, Glyne Gap	10.00am – 6.00pm
•Monday 16 Feb	Sidley Town Centre car park (off Ninfield Rd)	10.00am – 6.00pm
•Tuesday 17 Feb	Tesco, Church Wood Drive, St. Leonards	10.00am – 8.00pm
•Wednesday 18 Feb	Tesco, Church Wood Drive, St. Leonards	10.00am – 6.00pm
•Thursday 19 Feb	Robertson Street Precinct, Hastings	10.00am – 6.00pm
•Saturday 21 Feb	Crowhurst Village Hall	10.00am – 6.00pm

Section 1 - About the possible routes for the link road

Q1 Please place the six route options in your order of preference (please number 1-6 with 1 being the most preferred and 6 being the least preferred)

- Red Route Brown Route Purple Route
 Blue Route Orange Route Pink Route

Q2 If you do NOT support the development of a new link road, please tick this box.

Q3 Please indicate in order of importance the factors that influenced your first choice in question 1 (please use numbers 1-5 with 1 being the most important and 5 being the least important)

- Greatest chance of reducing traffic on existing roads
 Least visual effect on the natural landscape
 Least effect on built up areas
 Least effect on the environment
 Cost
 Other (please describe below)

Q4 (a) Does one or more of the routes directly affect where you live?
 Yes No

Q4 (b) If so, which?
 (please tick all the routes that directly affect where you live)

- Red Route Brown Route Purple Route
 Blue Route Orange Route Pink Route

Q5 Do you have any general comments about the link road? If so please write them below.

Section 2 - About your travel patterns

Q6 What form of transport do you most commonly use? (tick one only)
 bicycle bus car motorbike train van walking

Q7 Do you currently travel between Bexhill and Hastings?
 Yes If YES go to question 8.
 No If NO please go to question 10.

- Q8** What is the main reason for your journey? (tick one only)
 work business education leisure
- Q9** What form of transport do you most commonly use for this journey? (tick one only)
 bicycle bus car motorbike train van walking
- Q10** Please rank in order from 1-5 where you would most like to see future investment in local transport. (please number 1-5 with 1 being the most important and 5 being the least important)
 Walking routes Cycle lanes Roads
 Trains Buses

Section 3 - Please tell us about you

The information you provide here will only be used to help us understand travel requirements in the Bexhill and Hastings area. Please tell us the name of the road where you live or your full postcode.

Q11 (a) Name of road:.....

Q11 (b) Postcode:

Q12 What is your age group?
 Under 25 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 over 65

Q13 Are you Male Female (please tick the appropriate box)

Q14 Do you currently own or have regular use of a car?
 Yes No

Do you plan to visit the exhibition? Yes No

Have you already visited the exhibition? Yes No

Thank you for completing the questionnaire.

Please put it in an envelope – **no stamp is required** - and post it to:

East Sussex County Council
 Transport & Environment Ref D3
 Freepost (LW43)
 Lewes
 East Sussex
 BN7 1BR



Please return your questionnaire by Friday 12 March 2004

What next?

Once local people have given us their views, we will select a preferred route which will be submitted to central government in the summer for approval to work up detailed proposals.