

Eastbourne Borough Council
Town Hall
Grove Road
Eastbourne
East Sussex
BN21 4UG

please reply to:
70 Dynevor Road
Stoke Newington
London
N16 0DX

LocalPlan@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk

roger.blake@railfuture.org.uk

2023-01-20

Dear Eastbourne Planning Policy,

Eastbourne Local Plan – Growth Strategy

Railfuture is Britain's leading, longest-established, independent voluntary national organisation campaigning exclusively for a better railway across a bigger network for passenger and freight users, to support economic (housing and productivity) growth, environmental improvement and better-connected communities. We seek to influence decision makers at local, regional and national levels to implement pro-rail policies in development and transport planning.

1. Do you agree with the 'Growth Strategy' outlined in this document? If not, which elements do you disagree with?

Yes

Please add your comments: Railfuture is committed to achieving optimal beneficial impacts from investment in better connectivity for economic growth, rising prosperity, social inclusion, and environmental enhancement.

Accordingly we will have a direct interest in the contents of the forthcoming Eastbourne Local Plan - and would welcome any invitation to provide views during the process of drafting the text ahead of Public Consultation.

Railfuture is centrally involved with Transport for the South East's work to identify priorities for future connectivity investment to deliver their strategic goals for economic, social and environmental advances.

2. Have we missed a spatial option to deliver new homes and employment space? If so, what is it, and what evidence would be needed to ensure its deliverability over the plan period?

Yes / No

Please add your comments: Nil response to question.

3. Is there any evidence to suggest that any of the key development sites should not be considered for allocation in the Local Plan?

Yes / No

Please add your comments: Nil response to question.

4. Are there any key development sites that have not been identified in this document?

Yes / No

Please add your comments: Nil response to question.

www.railfuture.org.uk www.railfuturescotland.org.uk www.railfuturewales.org.uk
www.railwatch.org.uk

5. Do you have any other comments / suggestions about what the Local Plan should contain?

We refer to our response in January 2020 to the 'Direction of Travel' consultation on 'Issues and Options' in which we said "*secure further suitable land for housing development by identifying in collaboration with the neighbouring authorities of Lewes and Wealden District Councils a suitable location for a new sustainable garden community between Lewes and Uckfield to be served by a new rail link between those two existing market towns and linked directly with Eastbourne, in collaboration with MHCLG, DfT, Network Rail, Transport for the South East, and East Sussex County Council.*"

We wish to reiterate that observation in light of Transport for the South East's more recent Strategic Investment Plan which identifies a new rail link between Lewes and Uckfield as a project to be taken forward. Although Lewes District is not an adjoining authority as Wealden District is, it is in a sense joined through 'shared services' arrangements and so we hope that there would be conversations about a shared approach to meeting the challenges and opportunities of growth as Eastbourne grapples with pressures which it cannot accommodate within its own borders. We are already closely engaged with Lewes District's evolving Local Plan process.

Accommodating some of Eastbourne's housing growth pressure in Lewes District, for example at Ringmer (outside the South Downs National Park), could be persuasive in helping make the strategic business case for a Lewes-Uckfield rail link and arranged to include an Eastbourne-facing connection putting Ringmer only 25 minutes away by rail, with onward linkages northwards beyond Uckfield.

As shown under Question 1, Railfuture has a strategic interest in the Local Plan overall and would welcome any opportunities to make suggestions as the structure and content of the Local Plan start to take shape.

Yours faithfully,

Roger Blake BA, MRTPI (Rtd), MTPS
Railfuture
Vice-Chair London & South East regional branch
Director for Infrastructure & Networks, national Board