

Old Hastings & Tressell County Councillor Report

- **Bus cuts:** The county council's consultation on proposals to reduce its financial support to bus services in Hastings has now closed with a huge response in opposition to the proposals. Nearly all day-time Monday to Saturday services are run commercially but buses at other times run with a subsidy to the operator. Therefore the threat has particularly been to buses on the 20, 21, 22 (the main cross town routes running along London Road, Warrior Square, the seafront) in the evenings or on Sundays and numbers 26 or 28 (key routes serving the Conquest hospital) on Sundays. In addition the dial-a-ride service would be cut back from a five-day a week service to a two-day. The consultation responses will now be considered by the county council in December and a final decision made to operate from next March. Stagecoach have now announced that they will take over on a commercial basis:

- The evening service on Hastings and St Leonards town routes 20, 21, 22, but not as many journeys as present.
- The Sunday daytime service, broadly similar to the current Hastings and St Leonards town routes 20, 21, 22 and 26, though not including Service 28. Stagecoach envisages their journeys will not run after 7.30pm on Sundays.

There is no mitigating offer from anyone for the dial-a-ride service. So the campaign must go on right up until the December meeting to secure a decent public transport system for local people of all ages and needs.

- **Hastings Walking & Cycling Strategy:** This had already been approved by Hastings Borough Council but has now been endorsed by the county council too. The strategy identifies a network of potential cycle and walking routes throughout the town and provides the basis for bidding for funds to realise some of them. The South East Local Enterprise Partnership has provisionally earmarked £2m a year for this from 2018-19 providing a convincing business case can be put forward – this would have been about attracting more tourists, encouraging job creation etc.
- **Ofsted Report on County Council school improvement service:** County Council Education Ofsted: Ofsted inspected the school improvement service (basically East Sussex as a local education authority) between 9-13th June. The Council's arrangements for supporting school improvement are judged by Ofsted to be ineffective. They particularly criticised "the council's decision to reduce funding and take a 'hands-off' approach to challenging and supporting schools." The county has now had to agree to the expenditure of an additional £870,000 to fund an action plan in response to Ofsted's criticisms. See <http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/yourcouncil/about/committees/meetingpapers/cabinet/2014/16september.htm>

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