

Draft East Sussex Freight Strategy
Ringmer Parish Council response by email 30th June 2025

Dear Sir,

Please accept this email as the response to your draft Freight Strategy consultation on behalf of Ringmer Parish Council. The questions asked in your consultation do not cover the points I wish to make, hence this email.

Introduction

1.2 Second bullet point:

“Reducing wider environmental impact of sector including impact on people within communities, noise levels, and informal lorry parking occurring within industrial estates and/or residential areas..”

Comment:

This aim is welcome yet there is little within the draft strategy to suggest there are any plans to address these aims.

Engagement with Stakeholders:

It is disappointing that yet again ESCC Highways has chosen not to include Parish Councils and residents, ie Council Tax payers, as key stakeholders. There was no attempt prior to the publishing of this draft strategy to gain the views of residents and Parish Councils which has resulted in a very one sided strategy, targeting the needs and wishes of the freight industry over and above the lives of residents.

East Sussex Routing Network

Para 4.27 states that you propose that policy “Control of Heavy Goods Vehicles” policy PS4/5 should remain unchanged. You set out in para 4.24 a fairly limited range of questions around the potential prohibition for HGV movements, including questioning whether there is any evidence to support claims of increased HGV use.

In Ringmer the problem of HGVs has been well documented and frankly, if you wanted more evidence, you could have obtained it. You have been responsible for a number of traffic counts as part of an assessment of Earwig Corner, the latest of which showed that the volume of HGV traffic through the Village was double the County average. Had you consulted with residents and/or the Parish Council you would have had a lot more evidence about the problem these vehicles cause. For the avoidance of doubt these vehicles are not ones which are carrying out legitimate business in Ringmer. They are using the village as a rat-run, preferring to use the B2124 from the A22 to travel through Loughton and Ringmer en route to the A27 when they should be staying on the A22 to join the A26 at Ridgewood towards Lewes. Others are using the B2192 through Halland and through Ringmer when travelling from Wealden District instead of joining the A22 and A26.

The impact of these vehicles on residents lives and on property is immense. The village centre is a designated Conservation Area and which includes many listed buildings, including a G1 listed church. The residents of properties along the B2192 report experiencing vibration and damage including cracked masonry and cracked windows as a result of heavy vehicles travelling at high speeds over an uneven road surface.

Much of the B2192 through Ringmer has very narrow pavements which are poorly maintained. At a time when we should be encouraging people to make local journeys on foot or by bicycle, the presence of such a large volume of HGV traffic through the village makes walking unpleasant (at best) and cycling dangerous.

The decision (without consultation) to not make changes to policy PS4/5 is therefore disappointing and fails to recognise the impact of HGV traffic. There is no suggestion in the draft strategy that you will implement any mitigations to lessen the negative impact of HGV traffic on villages such as Ringmer. Such mitigations should include:

- Advising freight companies that they should not 'short-cut' through villages, but should stick to A roads when available (which they clearly are in the case of Ringmer);
- Introduce traffic calming through villages, especially where there are schools and Conservation Areas, to ensure that traffic is unable to travel at uncontrolled speed. Such measures could include the introduction of mini roundabouts at road junctions, or changing the road priority so that the long straight road through the village is punctuated with "give way" points at key junctions;
- Permit the introduction of speed cameras through the village at key speeding blackspots;
- Not relying on KSIs as the criteria for introducing traffic calming measures but permit them where residents and the Parish / District Councils support them;
- Where villages represent a popular freight route for traffic (and which you encourage), priority should be given to implementing safe cycling and walking plans in those areas. In the case of Ringmer this would mean widening some pavements, and resurfacing large sections where they are in a poor condition and present trip hazards for pedestrians and unsafe travel for those in a wheelchair or mobility scooter and introduce a safe cycling route where HGVs are prohibited (except for essential access); and
- If B roads are expected to continue to take large volumes of HGVs, equivalent to A roads they should be constructed and maintained equivalent to A roads. Much of the disturbance created by HGV traffic is a result of poor maintenance of the road surface. A smooth road would cause far fewer vibrations and less noise than the existing road surface does.

In summary the draft Freight Strategy is inadequate because it ignores the needs of residents and is too narrowly focused on the convenience of the freight industry, without considering any mitigations for affected villages and Council Tax payers.