



ESRA Rail and Road Manifesto – County Council Elections

The transport infrastructure is not fit for purpose and plans for development are almost non-existent – so East Sussex Rail Alliance is calling on the East Sussex County Council to press for major new initiatives, by launching its own manifesto ahead of the County Election on 2 May 2013.

As Ray Chapman, Co Chairman of ESRA comments:

“Travellers over Sussex and Kent rail and road systems have some of the rawest deals in the country with highest fares, poorest punctuality – calls by Central Government for urgent assistance being largely ignored and available funds going to all other parts of the UK. This is a slap in the face for travellers, especially by rail on the Brighton Line to London and on the Victorian East and West coastal lines, but also on the equivalent motorway and trunk roads serving the South Coast.

“Lack of infrastructure development is actively preventing regeneration schemes from progressing as the incentives are generated elsewhere. It is a chronic fact that there is no direct freight rail or motorway that connects from the Channel Tunnel to key Cities and conurbations of the South Coast, from Ashford to Exeter.

“We therefore call on all parties engaging in the election for the East Sussex County Council to press immediately for a Rail Action Plan and Road Development Strategy, to help to draw in new work opportunities for employment, especially to relieve some of the worst areas of deprivation in the UK.” Here is the ESRA 5 point plan:

1. ESRA calls for adoption of a major new Infrastructure planning initiative and a review of its current extensive holdings in properties and reserves to fund new road and rail schemes vital to commerce, industry – and the passenger and freight operators who are under constant threat from the failure to modernise.
2. ESRA highlights in particular the need to raise the priority of a major development of the Brighton-London main line and the conversion of the coastal railway into the South Coast Main Line, giving through traffic capability and the potential for much improved services.
3. ESRA calls on East Sussex and Kent County Council administrations to back an immediate bid for funding of rail Business Case Studies through the South East Local Enterprise Partnership – having had minimal support from Central Government funding over the last decade.



Putting Sussex back on the map

4. ESRA seeks the commitment to ease passenger difficulties and delays on roads and rail by seeking public consultation and presenting to Central Government for higher priority funding.
5. ESRA backs increased rail connectivity across the southern regional boundaries - between sea and airports, County and City conurbations with the Capital, and direct rail access between Exeter and Ashford (Kent) and HS1 for EU mainland and London connections.

“Until there is a fuller realisation that County authorities can and must engage with higher levels of local financing, East Sussex will continue to resist incoming investment, stunt regeneration initiative, or the County will decline to below Third World status”, ends Ray Chapman.

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For more information please call the 24 Press Hotline on 0792 086 7344