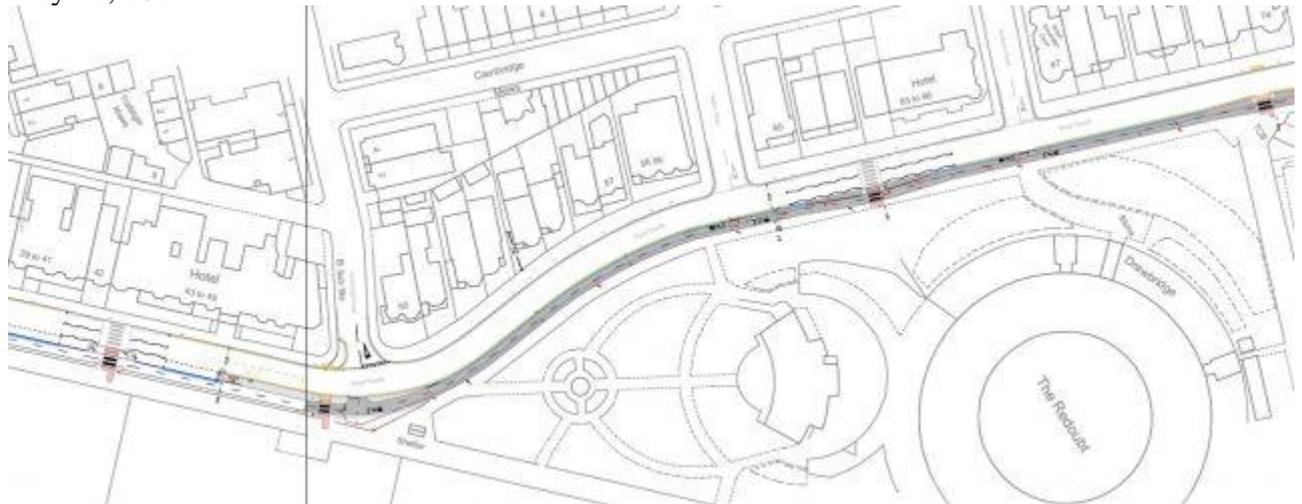


Eastbourne seafront cycling saga – a solution at last?

May 12, 2021



Practical design by a leading cycle infrastructure specialist

Most seaside towns in Britain benefit from safe cycleways along their seafronts, fully separated from traffic. Eastbourne remains an exception in 2021, despite countless debates, strategies, proposals and petitions over nearly 30 years.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, East Sussex County Council (ESCC) bid for funding for a “pop-up” seafront cycle path, to help people travel across Eastbourne while maintaining social distance. ESCC received the funds in 2020, but failed to produce a suitable design within the timeframe – and another opportunity was lost.

Bespoke recognises that the promenade between the Pier and Redoubt fortress is too narrow to support both cycling and walking at busy times, and we suggested a solution of a dedicated two-way cycleway alongside the seawall on Marine Parade. We wanted to see if this idea would be supported by a professional infrastructure designer or, if not, what solution they would suggest. So last autumn we joined forces with Eastbourne Chamber of Commerce and commissioned [Transport Initiatives](#), with support from [PJA](#), to make an assessment and write a report.

During their work, PJA’s engineers met with many Eastbourne groups and thoroughly evaluated the seafront options. The full report by Transport Initiatives, with PJA’s plans, is below – to summarise, it recommends creating a segregated two-way cycle lane in place of car parking on the seaward side of Marine Parade, adjacent to the sea wall. The route would

necessitate the re-location of around 80 parking spaces to arguably safer and easier-to-use locations: purpose-built car parks and nearby residential roads.

Mrs Scarlett McNally, Consultant Orthopaedic surgeon at Eastbourne District General Hospital and longstanding member of Bespoke said: *“We need more people to cycle for their health benefits and to reduce pollution, congestion, collisions and the cost of care for conditions linked to inactivity. Electric-cycles are amazing and could be a game-changer. If Eastbourne’s iconic seafront had a proper, safe cycle route I’m sure families from London and beyond would want to come here and locals would be tempted to use bikes for short cross-town trips rather than driving. Let’s not waste another generation moving this forward”*.

Richard J Garland, Director and Immediate Past President of Eastbourne UnLtd Chamber & Director of Sea Change Sussex said: *“Cycling is one of the healthiest and happiest things we can do and for these reasons alone it should be an accessible, affordable, inclusive and safe way to travel for everyone. Eastbourne UnLtd Chamber of Commerce is fully committed to improving the provision of cycling along our unique seafront and integrating segregated cycling with all other forms of transport and planning for the economic benefit of our beautiful Town”*

Christina Ewbank Chief Exec of Eastbourne Chamber of Commerce added *“A Really innovative suggestion from the consultants was to create a Low Traffic Neighbourhood so that motor vehicles could access the seafront but not use it as a cut through. The only vehicles to travel from end to end would be bicycles and buses. At the moment the seafront sees over 30,000 vehicle movements a day, which really spoils the ambience of our seaside. The seafront is our greatest asset – we need to protect it!”*

What happens next?

The ESCC budget for this year (2021-22) has funding allocated for a feasibility study for the seafront cycle route.

We hope this report has moved this further forward.

The report is in one file and the maps in another.

- [Eastbourne Seafront Cycle Route – Report](#)
- [Eastbourne Seafront Cycle Route – Maps](#)

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