# Public Consultation

A comprehensive consultation exercise was undertaken to obtain the views of stakeholders and the wider population in East Lothian on transport issues. This commenced in June 2011 with a paper setting out the main issues which was sent to a wide range of stakeholders. In addition, an electronic questionnaire was promoted on the Council’s website, in letters, press releases and the Council’s “Living East Lothian” community newsletter published in early August 2011. The response to this questionnaire was very good with 204 replies covering a wide range of issues. The text of the questionnaire is included as Appendix 1.

An Easyread version of the Issues Paper and questionnaire (Appendix 2) was prepared in order to obtain the views of local groups with learning difficulties and people with additional support needs. This was the first time this has been tried and brought forward a number of issues specific to these groups. Meetings were held with the People First East Lothian group and representatives from Partners in Advocacy to discuss their issues in detail.

The consultation was included on the agenda of the meetings of three Local Area Forums in Musselburgh, North Berwick and Dunbar which enabled the attendees to bring forward a range of issues specific to their areas. In addition, there were two Planning for Real exercises which took large scale models of Musselburgh and Tranent High Streets into the community for their views on the current isues in these areas. These exercises were not part of the formal LTS consultation process but they did raise a number of transport issues which have been included.

**Results of consultation**

A wide range of detailed views and suggestions were received from the respondents and the key points are summarised by topic below. The most comments received related to public transport and buses in particular with many of the issues being the same as those raised in the consultation for the previous LTS which is a cause for concern at the lack of action by the bus operators.

**Walking:** Provide wider footways and additional pedestrian crossings where required.

Pedestrianise North Berwick High Street.

**Cycling:** Provide more off-road tracks and cycle parking with better signing and maintenance of existing tracks.

**Bus:** The main concerns relate to punctuality, fares, condition and appropriateness of the vehicles used. In the west of the county, there is competition between Lothian Buses and First whereas in the east First has a monopoly. This is reflected in the fares which are substantially higher in the east.

**Rail:** The major issue was the provision of additional services to Dunbar and North Berwick. There is an aspiration for an all-day local service between Edinburgh and Dunbar with a new station at East Linton. This service should call at all intermediate stations with a late Saturday night service to Dunbar. The potential for services running through Edinburgh to access the employment sites on the west of the city should also be investigated.

**Car:** It was suggested that charges for parking at both the coastal car parks and in town centres should be introduced with the income used to support rural bus services. 20mph limits could be introduced in towns to encourage walking and cycling, this could also help to reduce the numbers of cars used on the “school run”.

Cars need to be properly planned for in certain key locations so that problems do not occur.

**Meetings with People First East Lothian and Partners in Advocacy**

A similar range of issues were raised at both these meetings. A key issue is the re-design of the Day Centre service which has the potential to have a major impact on their users’ travel patterns. Other issues raised were:

* Access to buses is not always possible in a wheelchair, in particular First’s current coaches on the Dunbar services. The cost and reliability of services was also raised;
* It is difficult to access stations by bus and wheelchair users then have to sit with bikes when on the train;
* Trip hazards on footways and a lack of road crossings at key locations. On Dunbar High Street, pedestrians often have to wait for a car to stop as there are no formal crossings;
* There is a high proportion of accessible taxis although there is a problem with electric wheelchairs fitting in some vehicles;
* There are only two direct bus services to the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh from East Lothian, other journeys have to made by taxi or car; and
* Safety when travelling, passengers and bus drivers can be rude and the fear factor when travelling at night. Bus stops can be isolated and dark and the possibility of using solar lighting was raised.

**Local Area Forums – key issues**

**Musselburgh** There was a request for more child-friendly, safer routes to school as it was not felt to be safe to cycle on the road.

There is good public transport in Musselburgh as most of the bus services between Edinburgh and East Lothian pass through the town. Lothian Bus’s Bustracker system has a number of signs showing the real time of their services. Improved services to the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh and the Western General Hospital were felt to be necessary.

Crossing the town from east to west by car can be difficult at times and this was put down to the traffic signals.

**North** Parking and traffic are major issues in North Berwick, especially during **Berwick** the summer months when there are large numbers of visitors. It was

noted that a separate parking study is being carried out to determine long term recommendations.Other issues raised include:

* Provision of more facilities for pedestrians and cyclists including cycle lanes within and between settlements;
* Charge for parking and provide additional spaces with better control;
* Improve local employment, shopping and home/hub working to reduce need to travel; and
* Integration of bus and train services.

**Dunbar** A similar range of issues were raised at the Dunbar meeting. There was more emphasis on encouraging cycling by putting in more cyle lanes and paths, reducing traffic speeds and re-thinking the existing layout of islands. A number of bus-related issues were raised, mainly relating to First as Dunbar relies on their services with the exception of the 2-hourly Perryman’s service between Edinburgh and Berwick-upon-Tweed.

There have been a number of other consultations recently which have transport implications and these are reported under the relevant town centre.