

Report to: Head of Highways, Communities, Economy, and Transport

By: Major Projects & Growth Team

Title: East Sussex Bus Service Improvement Plan - A259 Seaside & St Anthony's Avenue Tree Felling Consultation Outcome Report

Purpose: This report presents the outcome of the statutory consultation, considers all representations received, and provides the basis upon which the Head of Highways can make an informed and transparent decision regarding the proposed removal of the highway tree on A259 Seaside, Eastbourne.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

(1) To agree on the felling of one tree on A259 Seaside, Eastbourne.

1 Background Information

1.1 The East Sussex Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) A259 Seaside and St Anthony's Avenue scheme aims to improve bus journey times and reliability along the A259 between Windermere Crescent and Langney Roundabout, while also making it safer and easier for pedestrians to cross the road.

1.2 A new eastbound bus lane is planned on the A259 Seaside between Windermere Crescent and Seaside Roundabout. To accommodate this, changes are required to the existing highway layout between Churchdale Road and Southbourne Road.

1.3 The bus priority scheme is integral to delivering the objectives of the East Sussex Local Transport Plan 4; enabling residents to enjoy higher quality bus services with improved journey times and reduced delays, that provide a frequent, integrated and comprehensive choice and an alternative to the car. The proposals also aim to improve safety and accessibility for all road users within the area.

1.4 The scheme is being funded by East Sussex Bus Service Improvement Plan capital funding, which the County Council has received from the Government's Department for Transport for the purpose of delivering bus priority infrastructure within the county.

1.5 To achieve the necessary carriageway width, while maintaining suitable pavement widths, one English elm tree (the tree) has been identified for removal. The tree is located on the north side of the A259 Seaside, between Sandwich Street and Rye Street, opposite 389 and 391 Seaside.

1.6 The tree has been assessed through arboricultural survey as Category B2, indicating that it is of moderate arboricultural value, being in the early-mature age class and in fair physiological and structural condition, with an estimated remaining contribution of at least 40 years. The tree is not protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) and is not located within a designated Conservation Area.

1.7 Images 1, 2 & 3 show tree location and the tree which is proposed to be felled:-

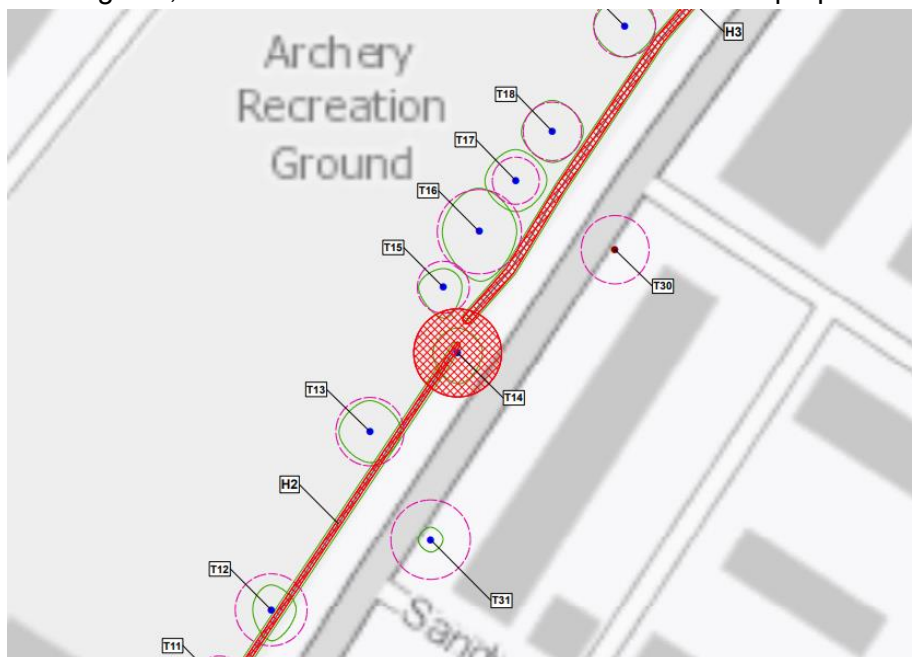


Image 1: - Shows the area where the tree is located and which tree is proposed for removal (T14)



Image 2: The tree in situ 26 May 2026

2 Supporting Information

2.1 The A259 Seaside and St Anthony's Avenue has been developed to improve bus journey time reliability, accessibility, and the overall operation of the transport network. Throughout the design process, detailed traffic modelling, technical assessments, and independent road safety audits have been undertaken to ensure that the proposals are both appropriate and proportionate.

2.2 Alternative options that would not impact the tree were considered during the design process, including removal of kerbside parking and the introduction of half-on/half-off footway parking.

2.3 One option required the removal of an additional 74.5 meters of kerbside parking, including a designated disabled parking bay. The nearest alternative kerbside location for the disabled bay would be Sandwich Street, approximately 40 metres walking distance from its existing location.

2.4 Another option proposed half-on/half-off footway parking between Sandwich Street and Rye Street. This would reduce the residual footway width to 1.5 metres, with further localised reduction adjacent to the street lighting column outside No. 391. This is below the desired minimum width of 2.0 metres set out in [Inclusive Mobility](#). Although 1.5 metres does achieve the minimum acceptable in this guidance, allowing a wheelchair user and pedestrian to pass one another, it may lead to conflicts in the likely event that larger electric mobility scooters are used. The constrained footway width would extend over approximately 55 metres. Footways in this area are well-used, with several nearby trip generators including St Andrew's CE Infants' School.

2.5 It was determined that the alternative options would result in either a significant loss of parking provision or a reduction in footway width. Neither option accords with accessibility and inclusive mobility best practice and, therefore, they were not progressed.

2.6 Site visits were undertaken with East Sussex County Council Senior Asset Engineer and the Project Design Team to exhaust all possible engineering solutions to reduce the impact on the tree. The options assessed demonstrated that retaining the tree would compromise safety, reduce the effectiveness of the bus priority measures, or introduce further constraints to the scheme.

2.7 No reasonably practicable alternative has been identified that meets safety, accessibility and scheme objectives. Consequently, widening the carriageway on the northern side of the A259 Seaside, between Sandwich Street and Rye Road, was deemed the most viable option. This will require the removal of the tree in this location.

2.8 If the tree were to be retained, the entire scheme would require a full redesign, and further Traffic Regulation Order to be approved. This would likely introduce a programme delay of at least six months, putting the scheme at risk of not being able to be completed in line with the DfT funding deadlines. Furthermore, the cost associated with redesign, consultation, statutory processes and programme delay could result in the scheme exceeding its available budget, requiring significant descoping of the proposed measures or potentially rendering the scheme undeliverable.

2.9 As mitigation for the removal of this tree, East Sussex County Council has discussed new planting opportunities with Eastbourne Borough Council. If the Elm tree is removed, three new trees are proposed to be planted within the Archery Recreation Ground.

2.10 A public consultation on the felling of the single English Elm tree took place between 29 May 2026 – 26 June 2026. This link provides you access to view the detailed design option

drawings [The consultation webpage includes the detailed design options drawings and Landscape plans](#)

2.11 Notices were placed on the tree in question with a QR code which directed people to the consultation web page. A contact email address was also provided on the notice.

2.12 There were a total 132 responses received to the consultation, 5 in support of the tree felling and 127 objecting to tree being felled. Two objections have not been considered due to duplicate email addresses and correspondent details. A summary of all key objection themes is provided below.

2.13 Objections were raised regarding the age and health of the tree. Feedback included complaints about the proposed loss of a healthy/disease-free tree, or the loss of mature trees in Eastbourne. The Council acknowledges the amenity and arboricultural value of the tree. Retention of the tree was considered throughout the design process, however, no reasonably practicable alternative was identified that would enable the tree to be retained whilst also meeting the safety, accessibility and operational objectives of the scheme. To mitigate the loss of the tree, three Semi-Mature English Elm (*Ulmus procera*) trees are proposed within Archery Recreation Ground. Discussions are ongoing with Eastbourne Borough Council regarding the long-term maintenance and management arrangements for the replacement planting.

2.14 Objections were raised regarding the environmental, ecological and climate impacts of the tree removal. Feedback included concerns about the impact on air quality, carbon capture, biodiversity, wildlife habitats and shading and cooling, often mentioning the ongoing effects of climate change/global warming. The Council recognises the environmental and biodiversity benefits provided by mature trees, including their contribution to local amenity, air quality and habitat provision. The potential impacts associated with the removal of the tree have been considered as part of the assessment process. Alternative options to retain the tree were explored but were found to introduce unacceptable constraints or impacts on the scheme. Three Semi-Mature English Elm (*Ulmus procera*) trees are proposed within Archery Recreation Ground to provide replacement canopy cover and contribute to the long-term environmental value of the area. Liaison is ongoing with Eastbourne Borough Council regarding future maintenance arrangements.

2.15 Objections were raised regarding the bus lane scheme itself. Feedback included assertions that the bus lane was not needed, that it would increase congestion, that it was a waste of public money or that it was opposed by local residents. Comments relating to the principle and merits of the wider bus priority scheme have been noted. However, the principle of the scheme has been considered through previous consultation and approval processes. This consultation relates specifically to the proposed removal of the tree required to facilitate delivery of the approved scheme. No mitigation is proposed as these comments relate to the wider scheme rather than the proposed tree removal.

2.16 Objections were raised regarding the alternative design solutions and that these should be explored further. Feedback included suggestions to design around the tree, to move bus stops, to remove parking spaces, to narrow the carriageway or to prune or transplant the tree. Alternative design options were considered during scheme development to determine

whether the tree could be retained. Options assessed included the removal of additional parking and the introduction of half-on/half-off footway parking. These options introduced accessibility, safety and operational constraints and were therefore discounted. Site visits were also undertaken with the Senior Asset Engineer and Project Design Team to identify potential engineering solutions. No reasonably practicable alternative was identified that would retain the tree whilst meeting the scheme objectives. The proposed design represents the option that best balances delivery of the scheme objectives whilst minimising impacts on the surrounding environment.

2.17 Objections were raised regarding the proposed replacement planting. Feedback included concerns that saplings cannot replace mature trees, that more replacement trees were required, requests for disease-resistant elms, or concerns about ongoing maintenance. The Council acknowledges that replacement planting cannot immediately replicate the amenity, environmental and ecological benefits provided by a mature tree. However, replacement planting represents the most appropriate and practicable form of mitigation available in this instance. Three Semi-Mature English Elm (*Ulmus procera*) trees are proposed within Archery Recreation Ground. Liaison is ongoing with Eastbourne Borough Council regarding maintenance responsibilities and establishment requirements to support the successful long-term growth of the replacement trees.

2.18 Objections were raised regarding the perceived failure to listen to residents. Feedback included comments that the Council has not listened to its residents, that the decision to remove the tree had already been made, or that the tree removal was not clearly identified previously. The consultation has been undertaken to inform the Council's decision-making process. All representations received have been reviewed and considered alongside the arboricultural assessment, engineering assessments and option appraisal undertaken during development of the scheme. No mitigation is proposed. The consultation process has provided an opportunity for interested parties to comment on the proposal, and all responses have been taken into consideration as part of the decision-making process.

2.19 In addition, responses were received in support of the tree felling and the wider scheme proposals, quoting the bus reliability benefits, the anticipated congestion reduction of the scheme, or support for the proposed replacement planting. These comments have been noted and taken into account as part of the overall consideration of the proposal. No mitigation is required in relation to these representations.

3 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 In conclusion the proposed removal of the single English Elm tree has been carefully considered through assessment of alternative design options and engineering solutions.

3.2 Throughout the development of the A259 Seaside and St Anthony's Avenue scheme, East Sussex County Council has sought to balance the need to improve bus journey time reliability, accessibility, road safety and network efficiency with the desire to minimise impacts on existing environmental assets. Detailed traffic modelling, technical assessments and independent road safety audits have informed the scheme design.

3.3 Site inspections were undertaken by East Sussex County Council's Senior Asset Engineer and the Project Design Team to identify any alternative engineering solutions. These investigations concluded that retaining the tree would compromise the effectiveness of the proposed bus priority measures, introduce additional safety concerns and place further constraints on the scheme.

3.4 Having considered the available evidence, the alternative options assessed, the engineering constraints, the consultation responses, accessibility requirements, road safety considerations, it is concluded that the removal of the English Elm tree is justified and represents the only practicable option available to facilitate the delivery of the A259 Seaside and St Anthony's Avenue scheme. By way of mitigation, three Semi-Mature English Elm trees are proposed within Archery Recreation Ground. Liaison is ongoing with Eastbourne Borough Council regarding maintenance responsibilities and establishment requirements to support the successful long-term growth of the replacement trees.

This report has been approved and signed off by:

ANDREW TURNER CEng MICE

Head of Highways

East Sussex County Council, Communities, Economy and Transport

DATE: 3 July 2026

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'ASTu', with a long horizontal stroke extending from the top of the 'A'.

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