

## HIGHWAYS AGENCY BILLION POUND GAMBLE – THE LOCAL PERSPECTIVE

### ‘EASTBOURNE AREA POORLY SERVED BY POLEGATE BYPASS/A22 NEW ROUTE’

Commenting on the study findings, Derrick Coffee, Campaign for Better Transport - East Sussex representative said:

The Polegate Bypass has had a temporary and limited number of positive effects locally, but the overall picture is one of greatly increased traffic levels, less use of public transport, and a general inertia across the whole range of non-car alternatives.

Even the few positive effects – less traffic on the old A27 and A22 – are limited, and from day 1, the traffic levels have grown, eating away at those benefits. The effects of the ‘new’ roads can be summarised as:

- A huge 32% increase in traffic over the whole corridor – this traffic is overwhelmingly local
- More traffic than planned sticking to the old A27, and this is growing
- No reduction in journey times by car, but costlier journeys due to increased length
- Transfer away from public transport
- Four times the forecast level of ‘climate change’ gases emitted
- Shifting of traffic congestion to the densely populated Seaside area of Eastbourne

In the view of the Campaign for Better Transport local group, at the very least, a whole range of alternatives should have been introduced simultaneously with the opening of the road. But it would have been far better (and in line with government policy) to introduce the alternatives ahead of the road instead of investing heavily in favour of car travel. Students of junior school age well understand this concept.

The costly bypass (£4m over budget) and associated A22 route have propelled us into an ever more car dependent era and introduced a new generation of local children to the idea that walking, cycling and public transport are for others.

Only now, years after the road openings are serious attempts being made to introduce bus priority schemes, and cycle route extensions that actually connect with Eastbourne town centre – and even these are only at the planning stage. As for a railway station at Stone Cross (pop. 20,000), that’s as far away as ever.

Despite claims that new jobs depended on the A27/A22 schemes, East Sussex County Council has no evidence at all of resulting job creation.

Derrick Coffee, County Officer  
**Campaign for Better Transport – East Sussex**