

ECS: Highways and Transport Sub-committee

Minutes Meeting 1: 18th March 2014

Present: Trevor Preist (Chair), Keith Lewis, Sandra Dalglish, Peter Cleasby
James MacDowell sent his apologies.

1.1 Exeter's planned growth and the transport implications

This item looked at a document (Exeter 2011 – 2026) previously prepared and circulated by the Chair.

The document drew on information available in the County and City web sites and also the 2011 census data. ***Much of the analysis in the new document quantified the improvements proposed in the Local Transport Plan for Exeter (2011 – 2026) [LTP3].*** The committee whilst approving the aspirations outlined in LTP3 noted an absence of quantified outcomes to proposed initiatives.

The detailed document presented an analysis that showed that the provision of 23,000 new homes within Exeter and the areas adjacent to the city boundary was likely to result in ***an increase of at least 22% by 2026 in the traffic during the rush-hour period when currently (2014) the existing traffic flow is near to the capacity of the arterial roads.***

The document highlighted the relatively small capacity of the public transport sector as compared with the scale of the problems; by 2026 even with all the enhancements proposed it could transport no more than 15% of those travelling to work in the rush hour period.

Cycling and walking currently represented 30% for Exeter residents. This would be difficult to sustain during the growth period unless more attention was paid to safe routes for walkers and cyclists, segregated from traffic.

A brief summary of the conclusions is attached.

There were a variety of suggestions for how the document might be amended and improved and in addition it was agreed that a shorter punchy version summarising the assumptions, the current situation and the likely future scenario.

1.2 Future areas of activity

The Chair asked for suggestions concerning transport issues that the group might consider with a view to making an impact on a time scale much shorter than the first item.

The following were raised:

- i. Encouraging walking and cycling through Education

- ii. Seeking a reduction in unnecessary proliferation in traffic signs
- iii. Safety issues for walkers at lights-controlled crossings. Three examples of extremely short crossing times being permitted were noted: two on Heavitree Road at Waitrose and at Denmark Road, and in Sidwell Street.

1.3 Terms of Reference of Sub-committee

There was a discussion about the appropriateness of the terms of reference. They were generally agreed to be suitable with the addition of the following among the 'Principal Functions':

'Consider the safety environment for walkers and cyclists'.

1.4 Transport into Exeter Strategy

It was agreed that the committee should seek information concerning the overall strategy for managing traffic flow into and out of Exeter both currently and how it might change as the city grows.

Date of next meeting: Either 6th or 20th May at a venue to be decided. The Chair would confirm the date and venue by email.

Transport in Exeter 2011 – 2026

The population growth planned for Exeter during the next fifteen years will have an impact on the quality of life in various ways. A detailed analysis of the effect on rush-hour mobility has been carried out and the conclusions of the extended report are presented below.

Background

The Local Transport Plan (LTP3) considers the impact in transport terms of the approved construction of 10,000 homes within Exeter and 13,000 in the 17 parishes adjacent to the city boundary. The two areas together match the area used by Stagecoach for its Megarider Plus ticket; this reflects the fact that those living in the outer ring are effectively residents of the Exeter conurbation and distinct from ‘commuters’ who come from further afield. The additional ‘residents’ live within 5km of the city boundary.

[The conclusions in the following analysis are based upon the assumption that each new dwelling will have one worker and an average of two residents.]

Demographics 2011 – 2016

		2011	2026
Population:	Exeter	118,000	138,000
	Nearby Parishes	15,500	42,000
	Total	133,500	180,000
Jobs:	Residents	64,000	87,000
	Commuters	28,000	28,000 plus
	Total	92,000	115,000

Rush-hour Mobility

- Currently within Exeter the mode of transport to work is:

Work at home	5%	Motor vehicle	50%
Public Transport	15%	Walk or cycle	30%
- For commuters, 25% use public transport or the P&R facilities at the edge of the city. 75% drive to their place of work.
- Currently during the rush hour period, 31,000 residents and 21,000 commuters use their cars.
- The current capacity of public transport in trains, city and country buses and the park and ride system can cope with no more than 12,000/hr and the improvements envisaged in the next 15 years will only increase the capacity to 16,000/hr

- Currently 3 times as many people walk as cycle since the historical job area in the city is close to residential areas. This is changing with many more new jobs on the periphery increasing the average distance to work.
- Walking will be less feasible and sustaining the 30% walking or cycling figure will be difficult to achieve unless there is investment in SAFE, SEGREGATED routes for walkers and cyclists.
- Current car usage is 31,000 (residents) and 21,000 (commuters) totalling 52,000 which will rise to 64,000 by 2026. This increase of 22% assumes that all the transport improvements proposed will be achieved and 30% of those going to work will walk or cycle.
- ***The current road system within Exeter is used at a level close to capacity in the rush hour period and significant improvements are impossible. The growth of the extended city to 180,000 will see a 22% rise in the rush hour traffic volume with the prospect of greater rises as the city grows to over 200,000 by 2050.***

The only way to manage this is to develop a game changing transport strategy over 25 – 35 years. Rennes has been doing this since 1985. Exeter needs to start NOW since failure to do so will severely affect the attractiveness of the City as a place to live, work, visit or locate a business.

Trevor Preist

March 2014