

Exeter Civic Society Transport & Highways Sub-Committee.

Review of the Local Transport Plan, LTP3.

Devon & Torbay Strategy 2011 – 2026.

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The LTP3 is a joint strategy for Devon and Torbay and was published in 2011. For Devon, and therefore Exeter, it was issued by the Head of Planning and Transport, and endorsed by councillor Stuart Hughes, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation. In addition to the Strategy document there is the Implementation Plan, also issued in 2011. Both can be found at [http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/transportroads/devon\\_local\\_transport\\_plan/ltp3.htm](http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/transportroads/devon_local_transport_plan/ltp3.htm)

The introduction to the LTP3 says:

*The transport system plays an essential part in everyday life. When it works well, transport supports the economy, enhances the environment, contributes to sustainable communities and encourages healthier and active lifestyles. To meet the needs of people now and in the future, the transport system must support and assist economic development and growth and enable safe, sustainable travel.*

The above is clearly aimed at supporting economic development to provide people with access to employment, but it also goes on to say *'At the same time, in order to reduce non-renewable energy consumption and carbon emissions the transport system must play its part in achieving a low carbon future.'* And to achieve this it will be necessary to significantly reduce car journeys, and other vehicles that use fossil fuels. It further states that *'National policy is evolving, with an emphasis on local participation in developing and delivering services. In order to reflect this, the LTP3 presents a flexible framework which focuses on places and the needs of people who, live, work and visit here. This plan will also be reviewed reflect the emerging Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) and national transport policy.'* This offers communities and interested parties the opportunity to introduce new ideas to address any new circumstances or evidence that emerges.

On page 14 it include this as part of the Vision:

*Over the next 15 years Devon & Torbay will need to diversify and grow the economy, but just as importantly develop a low carbon transport system that offers choice and encourages sustainable travel behaviour. To achieve Devon & Torbay's vision the strategy has five key objectives:*

- Deliver and support new development and economic growth.*
- Make best use of the transport network and protect the existing transport asset by prioritising Maintenance.*
- Work with communities to provide safe, sustainable and low carbon transport choices.*
- Strengthen and improve transport network.*
- Make Devon the 'Place to be naturally active.'*

The Vision is clearly desirable and has elements that should appeal to environmentalists, road users, and those that are non-car users.

On page 15 it states *'A strong economy in Exeter is critical to making the whole sub region work sustainably and effectively. By identifying Exeter as a transport 'gateway' into the peninsula, the focus will be on making sure strategic road and rail connections around Exeter and the M5 are reliable. This will support economic development in Devon & Torbay and the rest of the south west. And also states 'Devon & Torbay will also need to negotiate infrastructure and other travel planning measures to; manage travel demand and reduce its impact, promote sustainable travel and improve the transport network. Managing travel demand for new development is an important element in safeguarding the existing transport network.* It can be seen around Exeter's perimeter, particularly to the east, that new roads and infrastructure is being put in place to support

a growing population, but there is little in the plan to deal with the congestion on Exeter's existing road network which is operating at capacity at rush hour.

On page 16 it states '*Devon & Torbay will use intelligent traffic management to reduce congestion as it happens. This will mean that drivers will receive real-time information about congestion, journey time, planned and unplanned disruption and car park occupancy. Devon & Torbay will also prioritise traffic management giving priority to public transport journeys by reacting to congested situations. The authorities will review their traffic signal network to maximise the capacity of the existing road network*'. These proposals are interesting but if car use is still prominent it will simply increase congestion unless roads have additional capacity to allow drivers alternative routes.

On page 17 it states '*Councils will help people to travel 'smarter.'* This means making cycling and walking a realistic choice for a range of journeys, making bus and rail travel convenient and reliable making car journeys more efficient by using intelligent traffic management and maximising the potential of car clubs, car sharing and encouraging eco-driving.' This is again commendable and desirable but in Exeter there will need to be a huge step-change in reduced car usage to make these a reality if the increased number of cars from new development is also to be accommodated. And it also states '*Tackling the negative impacts of travel such as poor air quality and collisions is also important. In Devon & Torbay some of the busiest roads have a legal designation as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)*. This is certainly true in Exeter where the three busiest arterial roads are in this category with little strategy to make a significant difference.

On page 18 it states a desirability to strengthen and improve the public transport network, with Devon undertaking a review of the bus network and services, a desire to introduce smart ticketing across bus and rail networks, and will develop new multi-modal transport interchanges on some of the main bus corridors .

On page 21 the LTP3 states '*...focuses on places rather than travel modes in order to provide a transport system that meets the needs of local people, businesses, stakeholders and visitors. It is also a strategy that seeks to deliver a safe and sustainable transport system which enables economic growth and prosperity. The plan's objectives set the overall context for the development of the place based strategies.*'

Pages 52 to 66 is the Strategy for Exeter and the Vision states:

*Exeter will be a focus for economic growth, supporting prosperity throughout Devon and Torbay. It will offer new employment, new housing and maintain a high standard of living. Exeter will be better connected with Devon, Torbay and the rest of the UK.*

*Transport improvements will enable the proactive reduction of congestion and offer sustainable and high quality travel choices. A comprehensive cycle network and the Devon Metro rail project will provide a high quality and efficient transport network. The east of Exeter development will have a viable sustainable transport network. Overall, sustainable transport will play a key role in people living more active, healthy and inclusive lives in a vibrant and prosperous city.*

On page 52 it also says: *The key areas for economic activity are the city centre (including the University), and the four main employment areas on the edge of the city at Marsh Barton Trading Estate, Exeter Business Park, Pynes Hill and Sowton Industrial Estate.* But these areas are not well linked by public transport, and in the future they will also need to link to the new employment areas east of Exeter.

Page 54 states: *Accommodating this level of development and ensuring the transport system will cope with higher levels of traffic will be a challenge. With limited options for expanding the highway network, the level of car usage needs to be managed and greater use made of sustainable travel options.* But whilst the County Council recognises there will be a problem and it will be difficult to resolve, there are few plans to make a significant change to people's habits to reduce car useage.

Page 56 discusses the Transport Strategy for the City, with the transport priorities listed as:

- *Improve access to the city*
- *Enable and support smarter travel*
- *Unlock major growth east of Exeter*

- *Deliver major development within Exeter*
- *Protect Exeter as a gateway*

None of these are really transport strategies, but developmental issues that will need a transport input, although enabling and supporting smarter travel is very desirable. It is difficult to consider what 'improving access to the city' means; better roads, improved public transport, more car parks? There is little in the strategy that will alleviate the current congestion, but mainly strategies that will result in even longer queues at points of congestion.

Page 58 highlights a range of initiatives to reduce car usage: Improved train times and more carriages for the Devon Metro to bring more people into Exeter; additional Park & Ride sites at Alphington and Cowley Bridge; Installation of plug-in points for electric cars; develop new routes for cycling; develop improved pathways; segregated cycle and pathways; increase uptake of car sharing and car clubs; introduce real-time transport information and proactive traffic management measures.

Page 60 goes on to list more initiatives: An aim to reduce HGV delivery vehicles entering the city with the introduction of freight consolidation centres from where smaller vehicles will deliver goods to businesses; encourage businesses to develop travel plans for their staff; develop public transport services that are suitable for disabled people.

Page 63 identifies some key elements to achieve Exeter's Transport Strategy:

#### **FOUNDATION PROJECTS**

##### **Improve access to the city:**

- *Improve the comfort, journey reliability and cost of rail travel by lobbying the train operators, Network Rail and DfT.*
- *Develop a new park & ride to the west of the city and build on the success of the current sites.*
- *Deliver the hierarchy of cycle connections between key locations.*
- *Complete the Exe Estuary Cycle Route.*
- *Improve the walking environment.*
- *Improve bus journey times with a particular focus on the city centre.*
- *Improve parking enforcement.*
- *Develop a traffic management strategy focused on key corridors into the city.*

##### **Enable and support smarter travel:**

- *Support a continued programme of travel planning with retail, leisure, schools and employers making it easier for people to walk, cycle, use public transport or car share, and provide better information about transport options.*
- *Improve access to education and training by working in partnership with the University of Exeter, Exeter College and schools.*
- *Ensure that all users of the transport system in Exeter can travel safely by raising awareness, maintaining high safety standards and by using high quality design in all transport schemes.*
- *Support expansion of car clubs.*
- *Support continued provision of transport schemes for people with disabilities.*

##### **Deliver the east of Exeter development:**

- *Assist in the delivery of the key access roads and rail station.*
- *Develop a long term area wide travel plan with parking charges.*
- *Develop high quality bus and cycle connections.*

##### **Deliver major developments within Exeter:**

- *Develop an area wide travel plan and consider charging for parking.*
- *Enhance the walking and cycling links between the city centre and the main development areas and other key destinations.*
- *Review the traffic management of key junctions.*

##### **Protect Exeter as a gateway:**

- *Support low cost improvements to the trunk road network to improve safety and network resilience.*
- *Work with the train operators to improve connections to London and the rest of the UK.*

- *Improve the arrival experience at key transport interchanges.*

#### **TARGETED CAPITAL INVESTMENTS**

##### **Improve access to the city:**

- *Further development of the cycle network – increasing the number of high quality segregated routes*
- *Develop a branded high quality bus system to include the following: - Smartcard technology - Real time passenger information - Enhanced bus priority new bus routes - Additional park & ride capacity to the north west of Exeter - A well designed bus station*
- *Investigate locations for freight consolidation centres.*
- *Deliver the Devon Metro project*
- *Investigate the potential of ‘park and plug’ facilities at the park & ride sites.*

##### **Deliver major developments within Exeter**

- *Create new rail stations at Newcourt, Monkerton/Hill Barton and Marsh Barton to further enhance the rail network and link up employment and housing.*
- *Improve rail frequency to Cranbrook, Honiton, Axminster and Exmouth*
- *Invest in infrastructure improvements that will offer positive outcomes for other modes of transport and free up the road network to improve journey time reliability including: - Ring road – Alphington Cross and Bridge Road - East of Exeter development link road including bus only routes.*

##### **Protect Exeter as a gateway**

- *Support the electrification of the mainline rail connection to London and the rest of the UK.*
- *Support improvements to the strategic road network with a managed motorway scheme around Exeter in school summer holidays.*

#### **The LTP3 has an Implementation Plan, dated April 2011.**

The Implementation Plan sets out in more detail how DCC expects to deliver the schemes and other measures that achieve the goals in the Strategy document over the fifteen-year lifetime of the plan. The plan is divided into three five year time periods – 2011/12 to 2015/16, 2016/17 to 2021/22 and 2022/23 to 2026/27. Not all the funding sources were confirmed at the time of writing the implementation plan, and the proposals are therefore indicative. The Implementation plan will be reviewed annually and fully updated every five years to take account of this.

Paragraph 4.2.10 sets out aspirations to improve rail stations St David’s and Central. Whilst Central station’s forecourt has been improved, inquiries with Network Rail’s surveyors have revealed that the proposed scheme for the forecourt area of St David’s is not financially viable and is therefore ‘on-hold’.

Paragraph 4.2.12 advises that car-sharing has been successful but there is a need to identify locations to meet-up. DCC will investigate further.

Paragraph 4.3.5. – Bus real-time information is highlighted as a desirable scheme for bus users and to help monitor bus locations by operators. In July 2014 DCC were successful in obtaining government grant to introduce this.

Paragraph 4.3.8 to 4.3.13 discusses the Devon Metro and the desirability to have some new rail stations in Exeter, and to enable people to travel from outside the City to their workplace. It discusses many desirable projects but with little or no commitment. However, Cranbrook station is under construction, Newcourt station should commence soon and Marsh Barton Station will only start when Network Rail can identify the capital. Paragraph 4.3.13 says a full business case is being developed (in 2011?) to justify the infrastructure investment. It will be good to know if this has been written and its current status.

Paragraph 4.5 sets out the proposals for Exeter City. Table 5 below sets out the major schemes expected for the city, although paragraph 4.5.2 says funding after the first 5 years until 2015/16 is uncertain.

Project	Estimated cost (£,000) 2011/12 – 2015/16	Total cost band (15 years)*	Foundation (F) or targeted capital investment (TCI)	2011/12 – 2015/16	2016/17 – 2020/21	2021/22 – 2025/26
<b>Access to City Centre</b>						
Park & Ride	5,500	E	TCI	Z	Z	Z
Bus Station redevelopment	P	DEV	TCI		Z	
Bus priority	500	F	F	Z	Z	Z
Sidwell Street	500	A	TCI	Z	Z	
<b>East of Exeter</b>						
Cranbrook Rail station	4,000	C	TCI	Z		
Clyst Honiton Bypass	Dev	D	TCI	Z		
Junction 29	14,410	F	TCI	Z		
<b>Monkerton masterplan</b>						
Tithebarn Lane link	P	DEV	TCI	Z	Z	Z
Priority bus route	P	DEV	TCI		Z	
<b>SW Exeter masterplan</b>						
Matford P&R	P	C	TCI			Z
A379 junction	P	F	TCI	Z	Z	Z
<b>Newcourt masterplan</b>						
M5 junction 30 southbound off-slip	500	C	TCI	Z		
A379 junction improvements	P	D	TCI	Z	Z	
<b>Walking &amp; Cycling</b>						
Key cycling & walking routes	1,530	C	F	Z	Z	Z
<b>Rail schemes</b>						
Devon Metro	750	F	TCI	Z	Z	Z
National Station Improvement Programme & ExeRail	920	A	F	Z	Z	Z
<b>Highways</b>						
Local Traffic management and casualty and severity reduction schemes	1,225	B	F	Z	Z	Z
Alphington Cross forward design	1,170	A	TCI	Z		
Bridge Road	P	C	TCI		Z	
<b>Total (£,000)</b>	<b>31,005</b>					

Key.

Total cost band	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	DEV	P
Approx. future cost £m	1 to 1.9	2 to 3.9	4 to 5.9	6 to 7.9	8 to 9.9	10 to 14.9	15 to 19.9	20 to 24.9	25 to 29.9	30 to 35	Variable annual prog.	Part of development scheme	Preparation costs

Several of these projects have been completed or are in the process of being completed, although it is worth checking that this is the case:

Sidwell Street; Cranbrook Rail Station; Clyst Honiton Bypass; Junction 29 improvements; Tithebarn Lane Link; A379 junction improvements; Bridge Road improvements.

It is stated that an actual programme will be confirmed on an annual basis to reflect funding availability.

Paragraphs 4.5.3 and 4.5.4 state that the Alphington Park & Ride scheme is a priority to reduce congestion and improve air quality. However, the County Council withdrew their planning application for their preferred site, and to date there has not been any new application.

Paragraphs 4.5.5 and 4.5.6 discuss a Park & Ride site in the Cowley Bridge area to catch traffic from Crediton and Tiverton. It is acknowledged that sites may be subject to flooding and that a business case was being prepared. A copy of the business case should be obtained.

Paragraph 4.5.7 confirms that improvements to Matford P&R is being considered.

Paragraph 4.5.8 – Exeter bus station, says ECC and DCC are working on a development brief.

Vehicle priority lanes are considered in paragraphs 4.5.9 to paragraph 4.5.12. Additional priority lanes for public transport and a range of other vehicles together with priority signalling arrangements to give public transport priority. A business cases were being developed on a number of additional priority lanes on the main radial routes into the city.

Strategic walking and cycling network.

Paragraph 4.5.18. says *The Local Transport Plan takes this a stage further by developing a comprehensive network of primary and secondary cycle routes that link residential areas with the city centre and other key destinations including employment areas and hospitals.* Paragraph 4.5.19 goes on to say *The cycle routes need extending and joining together to ensure Exeter has a comprehensive new cycle network.* Paragraph 4.5.20 goes on to describe the expectation of a network of Primary Secondary and Tertiary routes and says *All routes will offer short cuts and time advantages where possible and be attractive and safe.*

**Paragraphs 4.5.24. to 4.5.26 discuss the work of Devon and Cornwall Rail Working Group to improve rails services and access to areas of economic activity. It is difficult though to understand how this strategy will have much of an impact and benefit for Exeter residents as routes are restricted and do not link residential and the main areas of employment that well.**

Paragraphs 4.5.27 and 4.5.28 deal with Traffic Management and says. *Both the County Council and Torbay Council have a duty (Network Management Duty, Transport Act 2005) to manage the road network effectively for all users. This includes reviewing the operation of the network and making any modifications as necessary to reflect changes in circumstances. Safety is a key aspect of this operation. 4.5.28. Principal routes within Exeter will be reviewed on a corridor by corridor basis. The funding set aside for traffic management will enable small changes to be made to improve the operation of the network. This may include signing, traffic signals, crossings, road lining, parking management, safety improvements and real time information provision. These will be linked in with other schemes such as bus priority and junction improvements such as Alphington Cross...*

Paragraphs 4.5.29 and 4.5.30 mention the only specific projects intended to deal with traffic congestion. Improvements to Alphington Cross with some road widening haveing been completed, except for the introduction of a bus lane should the Alphington P&R be approved. The other project is the dualing of Bridge Road from Countess Wear junction to the A379 which is intended to reduce congestion at the Countess Wear roundabout.

Appendix 1 (Summary Plans) concentrates on the development of Smarter Travel with improved information and options for people and communities. There is a desire to find community solutions that involve communities and it is stated that: *The focus is on options for the whole community rather than just individual organisations, bringing together different areas of information provision. The new approach will be based on a mix of personalised and organisation based travel planning support that works with community groups to*

*develop appropriate solutions. The local school(s) at the heart of the community will typically act as the hub for change, bringing adults and children together. Each community will organise themselves differently, but the County Council will encourage the development of groups that bring together different community organisations in an area such as the Traffic and Transport Forum in Totnes. This provides a single forum to debate issues and develop solutions with the support of both the District and County Council. The emphasis will be on the community instigating change with the support of the councils, i.e. helping communities to help themselves.*

Page 34 introduces Road Casualty Reduction information. There has been significant progress in reducing road casualties which must be applauded. On-going work aims to improve safety by either education, enforcement and engineering measures. This section also states ***“It is our vision that people’s travel choices - whether mode of travel, route or journey time - should not be restricted by fear of incident or injury.”*** This is reassuring but many potential cyclists or put off from cycling due to the fear of injury (need link to evidence).

Page 36 introduces proposals for Walking. For Exeter it states *Exeter’s compact nature and high quality built environment makes it a walkable city for many trips. Considerable investment has been made in the quality of the city centre’s walking experience in recent years through the enhancement of existing streets such as High Street ..... The strategy for Exeter recognises the importance of creating attractive links between the city centre and surrounding residential areas to support its vitality. Improvements to these links will be based on an analysis of surveys of people visiting the city centre.*

*Walking plays an important role in local trips within the city to key attractors such as schools, district shopping centres and employment centres such as hospitals and industrial estates at Marsh Barton and Sowton. They help minimise the number of short distance car trips within the city which are a particular contributor to air quality problems and congestion. School and employer travel plans will be used to help identify where improvements are required as well as helping to encourage use of the network. Housing and employment growth around the County will provide opportunities to make walking an attractive mode of choice for as many trips as possible. It is a pity that paving of the city centre is highlighted as this should be an accepted expectation, and unfortunate that the poor quality of the work resulted in loose paving which required a major overhaul in 2013/14. The recognition that walking to places of employment is desirable is good but there is no evidence that there has been improvements to make this a more attractive option.*

Page 37 introduces proposals for Cycling. It highlights the lessons learnt from Exeter’s cycling strategy and goes on to say *It recognises that capital infrastructure is only one part of the overall package and that effective promotion and training support are vital complementary elements which ensure that infrastructure investment delivers value for money.....* And goes on to set out the key priorities for Devon as:

- *Provision of a high quality accessible, cycle route network;*
- *Provision of comprehensive information on cycling;*
- *Inspiring the take up of cycling by promoting its benefits;*
- *Provision of recognised cycle training for all age groups and levels of ability;*
- *Enhancing cycling safety and tolerance amongst all road users;*
- *Provision of improved facilities for cyclists*

**This section highlights a number of positives and successes and talks about links to Park & change facilities, and for Exeter goes on to say** *developing a series of primary and secondary routes into a comprehensive network across the city with a particular focus on the city centre and key employment locations. This builds on the work that has previously targeted links to schools in the city.*

Page 39 buses. Much of this section relates to rural services, but the three areas of focus – information and ticketing; vehicle quality; and punctuality; does apply to Exeter. The implementation talks of *Accurate information is important in the event of delays or disruption, enabling alternative plans to be made. High*

*quality information is therefore a core part of Devon's approach to increasing the usage of the network into the future.* And goes on to say *On higher frequency services there is the potential to manage the use of vehicles and drivers to deal with disruptions such as congestion or accidents.* This would certainly be good in Exeter, how many times have passengers waited for a late and then 2 or even 3 turn up at once!!

With regard to ticketing, it suggests that multi-operator ticketing (bus and rail) will be investigated. There is a desire to introduce Smartcards to speed up boarding and support multi-operator ticketing.

There is a short discussion about Taxi use and development. Certainly in Exeter they are an option for occasional and short journeys, especially when part of an integrated transport scheme. However, they are expensive for people to use on a day to day basis relating to journeys to work.

Rail travel- page 43. The Devon Metro is discussed as a network that can bring people to Exeter and their workplaces. However, there are currently few suitable journeys for commuters. Improvement to stations is discussed, and Central Station has been completed. However, discussions with Network Rail surveyors have revealed that improvements and remodelling of St David's station forecourt is on hold because it is not financially viable at present .

Smarter Driving – page 45. This section discusses a range of successes for DCC and a desire to increase car-sharing and car clubs, as well as electric cars and car charging points. This area of work can only be supported as part of a strategy to reduce the number of cars.

There are discussions about managing roads; managing parking; and pre and in-journey driver information. However, none of this is likely to lead to a reduction of traffic in future years.

Summary and comment.

The LTP3 Strategy and Implementation Plan have many good proposals, and it must now be recognised that reduced government funding will restrict the delivery and timing of some proposals. However, many of the proposed improvements to the highway network, such as the Tithebarn link are being funded by developer contributions secured through the planning process, and possibly with some DCC funding. The LTP3 has proposals for new infrastructure around new housing and employment developments within the City and in the neighbouring districts of East Devon and Teignbridge. But most of these proposals are to keep traffic moving on the perimeter of the City, and we cannot find many proposals to reduce congestion in the central areas of the City with a significant step change to reduce car use which is disappointing.

Whilst cycling is promoted as a sustainable and healthy means of travel there are only promises of more research to find ways to improve participation. Recent national reporting (need links) says that there is unlikely to be much of an increase in cycling unless cycle routes are segregated and made safer. This will clearly be a challenge in central areas where most roads are narrow with few opportunities to introduce cycle lanes.

Proposals to increase the number of priority lanes sound good but the reality is that if existing highway is used then this will add to congestion by reducing capacity for the growing number of car users that can be expected up to 2026. Proportionally, priority lanes transport far fewer people than the rest of the arterial network by car, so it could be argued that they are not currently very efficient.

With recent changes to the flow of traffic in the city centre, particularly in the Paris Street and Sidwell Street areas, and the dispersal of traffic to other routes, it is now timely that DCC identifies the Primary and Secondary road network and put in place measures to keep traffic moving. On both Primary and Secondary routes traffic should be able to pass without danger of collision (including buses and lorries). Whilst DCC have been successful in reducing the number of car journeys, it can be observed that the flow of people/cars seems to be increasing both into and out-of the city at rush hours, suggesting that people's work places are more diverse than in the past.

There is mention of an integrated transport system but there is little evidence that this is adequate to meet the needs of either commuters from outside of the city or Exeter residents. For example, someone living in Newton Abbot but working in Sowton travelling by bus or train needs to go to the city centre before making a forward journey to their workplace. Similarly, someone living in Exwick and working in Sowton must travel by bus to the city centre before getting a second bus for an onward journey. Both of these scenarios result in traffic moving through the city centre and adding to congestion.

Better linkages of stations, bus stops, and park and change sites should be developed. In addition, a circular bus route with links to other modes of transport and radial bus routes will reduce the need for people to travel into the city centre first along the congested arterial routes. A circular route running from perimeter residential areas and through employment areas should see a reduction in the level of traffic on arterial routes and result in people getting to their work places quicker.