

Devon Cycling and Walking Strategy 2018

Report of the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment

1. Background

This report provides an update on the Strategy for walking and cycling in the County, highlights significant schemes that have recently been delivered by the County and identifies the priorities for delivery over the coming years.

2. Current Strategy

The County's current strategy for Cycle and Multi Use Trail infrastructure was approved by Cabinet in 2015. This document describes progress and sets out proposals for the urban network, namely Exeter, Barnstaple and Newton Abbot, the Market and Coastal Town local aspirations and the strategic rural and leisure network. The strategy can be found online at the following link [Cycling and Multi Use Trail](#).

The strategy includes three core aims, which are

- Showcase Exeter, Newton Abbot and Barnstaple as premier cycling towns
- Invest in Devon's leisure routes and trails, such trails designed to be multi-use trails which are accessible to all
- Influencing the Planning process to enable delivery of cycle aspirations in market and coastal towns.

Within these core aims there is scope for a range of different types of infrastructure, including two-way segregated cycle paths, shared use paths, quiet streets and on road cycle lanes, all of which can be appropriate in certain environments.

The strategy also outlines the current financial climate which has limited the speed in which the walking and cycling improvements can be delivered.

Although the County has a strong track record of delivering cycle infrastructure, there is a need to be clear on our objectives and outcomes to ensure our efforts are focused on delivering those routes and improvements, which have a tangible positive impact on people in Devon and offer the best value for money. Our current strategy strongly advocates improved health and access for all and supports economic growth - whether it be helping support sustainable development and minimising car use or boosting visitors and spend in our rural communities.

3. National Context

Government policy continues to put a strong emphasis on the role of walking and cycling in the planning process. The July 2018 update of the National Planning Policy Framework further reinforces this with repeated reference to pursuing the opportunities to promote and improve walking and cycling provision.

Periodically, the Government announces specific cycle funding pots. Members may recall that we previously had success in securing Cycle Demonstration Town status for Exeter

from 2005-2010. This delivered over 44km of new cycle routes in Exeter and provided the springboard for continued cycling investment in the city. Since then the Government announced funding of £114m shared between 8 Cycling Ambition Cities nationally. Despite Exeter not meeting the criteria to apply for Cycling Ambition City status, the County Council has been able to use sizeable developer contributions as match funding to continue to be successful in securing funding through grant programmes such as the National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF) and the Growth and Housing Fund.

The Government is currently advocating the production of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP), which is a recommended analytical approach to planning walking and cycling networks and focusing on areas which have the greatest potential for cycling and walking trips. We are in the process of producing an LCWIP for Exeter. Until such time as this is in place, our existing Cabinet-endorsed strategic cycle plans for Exeter remain the priority for delivery.

In terms of the leisure network, whilst there have been limited ring-fenced funding opportunities specifically aimed at boosting walking and cycling in rural areas, the County Council has successfully secured Coastal Communities Fund and DfT National Parks Cycle Ambition Fund, which have respectively helped complete the Exe Estuary Trail to Dawlish and deliver over £7m of infrastructure improving access to Dartmoor National Park.

The District Council Local Plans across Devon also place great emphasis on the role of sustainable transport. We continue to work with the District Councils providing technical input to their development plans. This enables the key local walking and cycling links that are needed to support sustainable development to be identified and included in their Infrastructure Delivery Plans so that funding can be secured towards these.

4. Progress Since 2015

Following the production of the cycling and multi-use trail network strategy, the County Council has continued to deliver a number of significant cycle projects. These have included

Urban

- Exeter – E4 Cumberland Way. First phase of two-way segregated route from Pilton Lane heading east to Hollow Lane. (funded by DfT NPIF)
- Exeter – Hollow Lane (E3). Modal filter to prohibit through traffic past Ellen Tinkham School, reducing traffic on a key part of the E3 strategic cycle route (S106/LTP)
- M5 pedestrian / cycle bridge and cycle route linking Exeter Science Park (north) to Monkerton (Exeter) (Growth & Housing Fund)
- Newton Abbot – A383 Ashburton Road, Phase 1 Greenaway Road to Exeter Road in 2015 and Phase 2A Oak Park Road to Greenaway Road in 2018. (DfT)
- Barnstaple, Roundswell A39 Pedestrian/cycle bridge completed as a strategic link from development to the East-West cycle corridor (DfT).

In addition to these, new infrastructure has also been secured through new developments. For instance, this has included a 320-metre lit shared path connecting new employment at Matford Green to Bad Homburg Way and a new riverside path at Anchorwood Bank, Barnstaple.

Rural and Leisure Trail Network

- Exe Estuary Trail, final sections to complete the 16km Exe Estuary trail, including bridges over the railway at Powderham and River Clyst.(DCC)

- Dawlish – Shared use path linking Dawlish with Exe Estuary Trail. (£1.3million secured from Coastal Communities Fund)
- Granite and Gears, 36km of new routes on Dartmoor and two new bridges over the A38, which has supported substantial progress with the Stover Way, Wray Valley Trail and Drake's Trail (i.e. Clearbrook Ramp) & connectivity in Okehampton (Fatherford Bridge) - (DCC (£3m); DfT (£4.4m))
- Drakes Trail, including anew 300 metre bridge and refurbishing the 350 metre Grenofen tunnel
- Kingskerswell Road, redesign of old A30 through Kingskerwell to provide a lower speed, safer environment for pedestrians and cyclists
- Teign Estuary Trail – Newton Abbot to Passage House Inn sections completed
- Stop Line Way – majority of the route completed from Seaton to Colyford.

Market and Coastal Towns

A considerable amount of new infrastructure has been delivered through new developments or using developer funding. Recent notable examples include:

- Blundell's Road traffic calming scheme to provide improved facilities and safer environment for pedestrians and cyclists. (DCC,S106)
- Cranbrook Main Local Route, shared paths alongside main transport corridor through new town of Cranbrook.(Developer)
- Bovey Tracey, shared use path into Town Centre along La Molay-Littry Way (Developer)
- Broadclyst, toucan crossing of B3181 and calming measures improving ped/cycle access to school (S106)
- Sidbury to Sidford parallel crossing and upgrade of Laundry Lane.

5. Financial Context

The speed at which the County Council is able to deliver the walking and cycling strategy is dependent on funding. Currently, our only guaranteed source of funding is from the Local Transport Plan, which has reduced significantly in recent years.

Since 2010, the level of Local Transport Plan funding has been cut from approximately £10m per annum to £3.6m. The reduced funding has enabled Government to allocate more funding to the Local Enterprise Partnerships for projects that aim to boost productivity and economic growth. With the exception of the Roundswell pedestrian / cycle bridge in Barnstaple, LEP funding has primarily been allocated to major highway improvements aimed at unlocking strategic housing and jobs sites.

At the same time, most Government external grant funding opportunities has been targeted at delivering housing growth, i.e. Local Pinch Point Fund, Regional Growth Fund, Growth and Housing Fund, Housing Infrastructure Fund and the National Productivity Investment Fund. As a result, there have been reduced opportunities to secure funding to progress walking and cycling improvements in line with our strategy. The exception is in areas where there is substantial housing and jobs growth and where a high level of developer contributions can be used as match funding.

As a result, it has been possible to make some progress primarily in the urban networks of Exeter, Newton Abbot and Barnstaple. Where we have been successful in these locations we have been able to include the cycle proposals as part of a wider 'housing-delivery-

related' infrastructure package, which supports increased productivity and economic growth.

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Whilst the opportunities for external grant funding may be limited, the County Council has recognised the benefits of promoting healthy, active lifestyles and has continued to invest in cycling across the County, including the rural walking and cycling leisure network. The table below shows the capital commitments that have been made over the past few years, split by area / network. This shows continued work on projects that may have benefitted from previous grants, for instance through the DfT-funded Granite and Gears project.

YEAR	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	TOTAL
Exeter	£249K	£68K	£198K	£2,070K	£2,585K
Newton Abbot	£153K	£92K	£726K	£468K	£1,439K
Barnstaple	£34K	£105K	£648K	£1,691K	£2,479K
Tarka Trail	£426K	£128K	£132K	£88K	£774K
Drake's Trail	£1,500K	£468K	£36K	£28K	£2,032K
Wray Valley Trail	£1,809K	£1,308K	£1,039K	£488K	£4,644K
Ruby / Pegasus Way	£125K	£139K	£119K	£134K	£517K
Stop Line Way	£30K	£399K	£62K	£107K	£598K
Sidmouth – Feniton	£102K	£185K	£102K	£5K	£394K
Exe Estuary Trail	£1,886K	£241K	£287K	£9K	£2,424K
Teign Estuary Trail	£97K	£466K	£1,338K	£415K	£2,315K
M&CT / Misc	£743K	£129K	£141K	£185K	£1,198K
TOTAL	£7,153K	£3,728K	£4,829K	£5,687K	£21,397K

6. Future Programme / Reprioritisation

Allowing 10% of the Local Transport Plan budget towards capital walking and cycling schemes would amount to around just £300,000 per year. A similar amount is potentially available over the next 5 years from S106 funding secured from new developments.

Strategic cycle infrastructure costs in the region of £500,000 – £1,000,000 per kilometre, therefore LTP and developer funding alone will not enable much to be delivered in the coming years. The current Cycling and Multi-Use Trail Strategy includes schemes which are likely to cost well in excess of £30m to deliver, therefore in light of the limited funding opportunities, it is necessary to review and refine our walking and cycling plans for the County.

¹ For instance, £3m out of the £7.1m NPIF grant is being used for E3 and E4 cycle routes and approximately £1.5m of the £8m Growth and Housing Fund secured upgrades to cycle infrastructure between Cranbrook, Science Park and the eastern edge of Exeter.

External match funding such as developer contributions will continue to be secured and the current focus of Government around economic growth suggests that there will continue to be funding opportunities for the urban cycle networks. To continue to be successful, the County Council needs to consider which schemes are likely to gain support from the LEP and DfT. This is likely to continue to be walking and cycling improvements where there is a demonstrable link to large-scale housing delivery. Schemes will need prioritising based on how they will help deliver economic growth, support health outcomes and represent good value for money.

Surveys of some of our cycling and multi-use trail network have shown that some rural routes are not well used, particularly those in rural parts of the County where the potential catchment for walking and cycling is low. Surveys also indicate higher numbers of usage where the scenery or landscape is of a very high standard and/or where there are attractions making the route a tourist attraction. Examples include the Tarka Trail between Barnstaple and Bideford or the Exe Estuary. We see value in completing the long-distance strategic cycle routes where the costs are reasonable and delivering the sections offers good value for money. We recognise the need for ambition and we will continue our aspirations for a very limited number of showcase routes where experience shows they will be well used by a variety of users. We will aim to gradually develop these schemes ready for future funding opportunities.

Given the funding constraints, we may also explore opportunities for delivering routes at a lower design standard of route, which will still enable a better experience than the 'do nothing' alternative.

The current walking and cycling priorities therefore include continued investment in the urban cycle networks and a more refined list relating to the rural and leisure routes:

Urban

- Exeter Strategic routes - completing E4, E3 & E9 routes, in line with Cabinet recommendations
- Newton Abbot – completing the East-West Cycle Corridor and associated strategic links
- Barnstaple – completing the A361 Larkbear bridge as part of the East-West Cycle Corridor and associated strategic links including the Anchorwood to Tarka Trail link.

Rural and Leisure Network

- Completing the remaining 3.5km of the Wray Valley trail by Summer 2019
- Assembling final land at Seaton to complete the Stop Line Way (accepting use of rural lanes north of Colyford)
- Completing NCN 27 Coast to Coast route from Plymouth to Ilfracombe (remaining sections on the Tarka Trail between Braunton and Ilfracombe and between Meeth and Hatherleigh)
- Develop the Teign Estuary Trail with priority for the sections from Passage House to Bishopsteignton and from Dawlish to Holcombe
- Clyst Valley Way – connecting Exeter and East Devon Growth developments with a route trail linking the Clyst and Exe Estuaries.

Market and Coastal Towns

- More detailed investigation of feasibility into Crediton to Exeter cycle route
- Use developer contributions to progress the Cranbrook to Exeter cycle route as part of future phases of Cranbrook and the Hayes Farm developments

- South Molton – new route connecting development on the west of the town to employment to the north of town and schools to the south
- Assemble land for the Bideford to Westward Ho! Trail (Kenwith Valley Route)
- More detailed investigation of feasibility into Yelverton to Roborough.

In the Market and Coastal Towns, the planning process and developer contributions will be integral to the delivery of the strategy. Unless sizeable developer contributions are secured, this will limit the ability to deliver local aspirations. The County Council will continue to work with local planning authorities to ensure that routes and infrastructure are included in future Infrastructure Delivery Plans, linked to the Local Plan process. The DCC Transport Infrastructure Plan also helps local planning authorities understand when and where local contributions (e.g. CIL) may be required.

We will also need to influence the detailed design and layout of new developments to ensure that more walking and cycle-friendly developments are developed, which encourage more sustainable travel.

7. Conclusions

Devon has an up to date walking and cycling strategy and a strong track record of delivery. This has included over £20 million of projects delivered since 2015. This has been possible by the organisation taking a proactive, positive approach and being opportunistic when funding competitions have arisen. We will continue to do this by progressing design, securing planning and land so that we have a pipeline of shovel-ready schemes.

The walking and cycling strategy includes 3 main themes for investment; i) urban; ii) rural and leisure trail network, and iii) market and coastal towns.

In urban areas, where the highest concentrations of jobs and residents are and a high number of trips of a typical cyclable distance of 2-6km can be made, cycling offers the best value for money. The cycle strategy reflects this with a focus on the main urban areas of Exeter, Newton Abbot and Barnstaple which form part of the immediate priorities.

For the rural and leisure network, the strategy advocates finishing gaps in the existing network. There is also the need for greater scrutiny to ensure that investment will see good use of the trails and deliver value for money.

For the rest of the County where funding is limited, new developments represent the best opportunity for delivering local aspirations and expanding the walking and cycling network.

The ability to deliver ambitious plans for the cycling and multi-use trail network is constrained by the limited Local Transport Plan funding directly available and the lack of walking and cycling-specific external grant opportunities. We therefore need to be realistic about what may be deliverable over a reasonable timescale and we need to focus our design resources on a smaller number of good value schemes. The routes identified above in this report form the basis of the cycling and multi-use trail network priorities over the next 5 years.

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Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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Background Paper	Date	File Ref.
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Nil

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