

Impact Assessment

Assessment of: Braunton Road Bus Lane and Bus Priority Bypass

Service: Planning - Climate Change, Environment and Transport

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Assessment carried out by (job title): Transport Planning Officer

1. Description of project / service / activity / policy under review

Government funding has been secured for the proposed bus lane improvements at Braunton Road. The proposal includes improved bus priority between Chaddiford Lane and A361 junction via new bus priority bypasses, as well as improved segregated footway and cycleway, and signalised crossings.

2. Proposal, aims and objectives, and reason for change or review

The aim of the Devon BSIP schemes are the following:

- Grow bus patronage across Devon
- Facilitate a positive step change in bus provision across the area
- Create a bus network that meets the needs of all potential users
- Create a framework to regularly consult bus users, and use this information to influence bus service provision in the future
- Ensure information regarding bus services is of the highest quality and accessible to all
- Ensure the bus is considered equally alongside other modes of transport

The scheme provides an improved 330m bus priority from Chaddiford Lane towards Barnstaple Town Centre along the A361 Braunton Road. The scheme would include upgrading the existing bus lane with less traffic lights for buses and improved pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities.

The existing bus lane starts just south of the Chaddiford Lane junction travelling towards Barnstaple. The scheme proposes to extend the existing bus lane through the lights, allowing buses to continue towards Barnstaple without needing to stop. It is proposed that opposite Pilland Way the bus lane is separated from the general traffic via a refuge island and hatched lines. It would not reduce or restrict lanes for general traffic.

At the main A361 junction towards the Taw Bridge, it is proposed that the bus lane is separated from other vehicles via hatched lines and a new refuge island. A crossing is proposed across the bus lane between the north pavement to the new refuge island. The traffic signals will allow people walking and cycling to cross from the new refuge island towards A361. No changes would be made to the outbound side of the road.

The scheme aims to improve bus journey times for services from Braunton/Ilfracombe towards Barnstaple, therefore improving existing user experience and encouraging the further use of public transport services. It promotes priority for buses and taxis to avoid the queuing traffic, and only stop at traffic signals for pedestrians and cyclists.

The traffic light for buses and general traffic inbound is the same at Pilland Way and A361 junctions, however buses shouldn't have to yield to general traffic as they have their own bus lane. At the A361 junction, buses should only have to yield to pedestrians and cyclists. If the proposals go ahead, providing a bus priority bypass and improved signalised crossing, buses and taxis would save significant waiting time at the traffic lights as they could go through them without needing to stop unless pedestrians and cyclists are waiting to cross.

3. Risk assessment, limitations and options explored (summary)

Road Safety Audit

A Stage 1 Road Safety Audit has been completed in 2023 and concerns raised were addressed in the final design that is being submitted for Cabinet approval.

It was recommended that the tree is trimmed back, allowing for seasonal growth, to provide suitable forward visibility to the directional sign and to provide unobstructed light from the lighting column lamp. If not feasible, relocate sign to provide suitable forward visibility to the directional sign and relocate lighting column to provide unobstructed light from the lighting column. - Trees are proposed to be removed to allow for widening of the carriageway, if still needed above items will be relocated to comply.

It was recommended that the segregated footway / cycleway is retained. This may require widening into third party land to the north of the junction. If this is not feasible, then it is recommended that the proposed bus lane is narrowed (possibly down to a 3.0m width) and the footway widened to provide a shared use footway / cycleway between the end of the segregated footway / cycleway and the cycle path towards Pilton. - Segregated footway / cycleway is retained by widening into third party land to the north.

It was recommended that controlled toucan crossings are provided for all crossing points, this would require a shared use facility on the northern side of the interface between the

crossing facility and Braunton Road (see Problem A). - Toucan crossings are provided for all crossing points.

Environmental survey

5 trees are proposed to be removed due to the widening of the carriageway to ensure adequate space for the bus lane, bus gate, segregated footway and cycleway and the new bus shelter. These trees have utility cables underneath them. Safely removing and replanting them is not possible, therefore 10-15 younger trees are proposed to be planted in the local area.

Limitations

A limitation of the scheme is the lack of space to extend the bus lane beyond the A361 junction into Barnstaple Town Centre without removing existing carriageway from other users.

Options

Alternative options considered the possibility of extending the bus lane north, on the southbound (inbound) approach to Barnstaple. This would require significant rearrangement of the public highway and complex highway arrangement for a high volume of vehicles wishing to turn across the bus lane at Chaddiford Lane Junction. These improvements were therefore considered out of scope for the available budget and timescales associated with the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding.

Maintaining the existing situation will continue to provide bus services with unnecessarily long and unreliable journey times. Maintaining this current service will do nothing to improve patronage, and therefore fail to meet the aims of the BSIP.

4. People affected, diversity profile and analysis of needs

The people potentially affected by the proposals are people principally living or working in North Devon and Torridge as the buses most affected are from Ilfracombe to Bideford. Therefore, the diversity profile is presented below with North Devon and Torridge, using Devon and England as a comparator. The propensity for certain demographic groups to use buses, walk or cycle is discussed, to inform assessment of the potential differential impacts of the proposals.

Age

Table 1 illustrates that the population in the area is significantly older than the national average, but similar to Devon's population. 65 years olds and over make up 8-10% larger

proportion of the population in North Devon and Torridge than the national average. This means the scheme would benefit more of the elderly population in this area.

Geography	Total	% Age 0-19	% Age 20-64	% Age 65+
North Devon	98,611	21%	54%	26%
Torridge	68,114	19%	53%	28%
Devon	811,638	20%	54%	26%
England	56,490,048	23%	58%	18%

Table 1: Age (Census, 2021)

As highlighted by the 2022 National Travel Survey, people under the age of 30 and over the age of 70 make the highest proportion of trips by non-London bus compared to other age groups. Particularly individuals ages 17-20 who make 10.4% of trips by non-London bus. Therefore, the proposed bus improvements may benefit these groups more than other age groups.

Younger people (aged 0-20) tend to be more reliant on walking and cycling than those aged 21-59 and older people (aged 60+), making 35% of trips by cycle or foot, compared with 31% and 31%, respectively¹. Therefore, the proposed walking and cycling improvements may benefit these groups more than other age groups.

Ethnicity

As shown in Table 3, North Devon, Torridge and Devon as a whole is lower in ethnic diversity than the national average.

Geography	Total	% White	% Mixed / multiple ethnic groups	% Asian / Asian British	% Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	% Other ethnic group
North Devon	98,612	97.0%	1.2%	1.2%	0.3%	0.3%
Torridge	68,114	98.2%	0.9%	0.5%	0.1%	0.2%
Devon	811,642	96.4%	1.4%	1.5%	0.3%	0.5%
England	56,490,048	81.0%	3.0%	9.6%	4.2%	2.2%

Table 2: Ethnicity (Census, 2021)

The National Travel Survey (5-year average between 2015-2019²) highlighted that bus use was highest amongst people who identify as 'Black' and of 'mixed ethnicity', with non-London bus use making up 7% and 6% of trips made respectively, therefore positive impacts of improvements to bus services would be expected for these groups.

¹ [National Travel Survey: 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\) \(nts0601\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-travel-survey-2022)

² [Travel - GOV.UK Ethnicity facts and figures \(ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.service.gov.uk/guidance/ethnicity-facts-and-figures)

Although the percentage of people from these ethnic minority backgrounds living in North Devon and Torridge is lower than the national average, a few thousand people would still benefit as a result of the scheme.

White people tend to make a greater proportion of trips (2%) by bicycle than Asian or Black people, who both make 1% of trips by bicycle. However, Asian and Black people and people from mixed/other ethnic groups make a greater proportion of trips on foot, and make a greater proportion of trips by 'active travel' (i.e. walking and cycling combined) than White people³.

Health and disability

Although people with mobility difficulties make fewer trips overall, the proportion of their trips made by bus is higher compared to groups with no mobility limitations, 5.1% of trips compared to 2.6%⁴, thus may disproportionately benefit from bus improvements. A larger proportion of people in North Devon and Torridge have bad or very bad health compared to Devon and England, suggesting a higher proportion of people will benefit from improved bus services.

Geography	% Activities limited a little by disability	% Activities limited a lot by disability	% Not disabled under the Equality Act	% Very good and good health	% Fair health	% Very bad and bad health
North Devon	11.6%	8.0%	80.4%	80.4%	13.9%	5.7%
Torridge	12.4%	8.8%	78.8%	78.6%	15.3%	6.0%
Devon	11.8%	7.7%	80.5%	81.4%	13.5%	5.1%
England	10.0%	7.3%	82.7%	82.2%	12.7%	5.2%

Table 3: Disability and General Health (Census, 2021)

Disabled people and people with long-term illnesses tend to make fewer trips by all modes than non-disabled people. The disparity is particularly stark amongst those whose condition(s)/illness(es) reduces their ability to carry out day-to-day activities 'a lot', who make an average of just 594 trips annually, compared to 1,014 among non-disabled people. Additionally, whilst the proportion of trips made by walking is similar amongst both disabled people and non-disabled people, the proportion of trips by cycle is considerably lower for disabled people (1.1%) than non-disabled people (2.0%)⁵.

³ [Travel - GOV.UK Ethnicity facts and figures \(ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk\)](https://ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/)

⁴ National Travel Survey Table NTS0709a: Average number of trips by mobility status and main mode, aged 16 and over (trips per person per year).

⁵ [National Travel Survey: 2019 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk) (2019 data tables)

Gender

In all geographies considered, there were slightly more females than males.

The National Travel Survey 2022⁶ reported that females make a larger proportion of trips by bus (non-London) than males; 3.1% compared to 2.3%.

Thus, the proposals may benefit females more than males.

In 2022, males made 5% fewer trips (837 trips per person) than females (886 trips per person), but travelled 20% further⁷. Females make a greater proportion of trips on foot, but a lower proportion by bicycle, with the result that the proportions by active travel combined were similar for both genders (34% and 32% respectively).

Socio-economic

The proportion and number of trips made by bus tends to decrease within increasing income primarily due to those with higher incomes typically having greater access to alternative transport modes e.g. private car. The table below illustrates among those in the lowest income quintile (1st), 6% of trips are made by bus, compared to just 2% in the highest (5th) income quintile.

Mode		All income quintiles	1 st income quintile	2 nd income quintile	3 rd income quintile	4 th income quintile	5 th income quintile
Local Buses (outside London)	No.	23	46	29	18	11	14
	%	3%	6%	3%	2%	1%	2%
All	No.	862	754	845	873	930	900

Table 4: Trips per person per year by income (National Travel Survey 2022, NTS0705)

The proportions of trips made on foot decline from an average of 36% among people in the lowest income quintile, to 22% among those in the highest income quintile. The proportion of trips made by bicycle is approximately the same (2%) for all income quintiles, albeit the absolute number of bicycle trips is highest among those in the highest income quintile, partly by virtue of said individuals making a greater number of trips across all modes.

⁶ National Travel Survey Table NTS0601a: Average number of trips by sex, age and main mode (trips per person per year)

⁷ [National Travel Survey 2022: Trips by purpose, age and sex - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-travel-survey-2022-trips-by-purpose-age-and-sex) (Chart 21, NTS 0601).

Compared to Devon, North Devon and Torridge are slightly more deprived with 48% and 46% of households not deprived in any dimension compared to Devon’s 50%. This suggests that higher proportion of people will benefit from the improved bus services.

	% Household is not deprived in any dimension	% Household is deprived in one or two dimensions	% Household is deprived in three or four dimensions
North Devon	48%	49%	3%
Torridge	46%	51%	3%
Devon	50%	48%	3%
England	48%	48%	4%

Table 5: Household Deprivation (Census 2021)

5. Stakeholders, their interest and potential impacts

- Local bus companies who run services along the impacted bus route. Improved bus services should have a positive impact on their business.
- Employers whose workers travel by bus may have better journey experience and faster journey. Those who walk and cycle will have a safer and therefore less stressful experience.
- Connects employers and employees to the town centre, improving journey experience for shopping and leisure.
- Community organisations e.g., bus user groups and environmental pressure groups, who may advocate for bus service enhancements or Living Options Devon who represent people with disabilities who are more dependent on public transport for access to services.

6. Additional relevant research used to inform this assessment

- Public Engagement
- Environmental Review
- National Travel Survey Data
- Census Data

7. Description of consultation process and outcomes

The Public Consultation ran between 17 January 2024 and 18 February 2024. Feedback was gathered via an online questionnaire which asked respondents for their opinion on the proposed Bus Lane Improvements, and then provided an opportunity for respondents to provide comment via an open answer question.

126 responses to the questionnaire were received. The dashboard online² shows summaries of the responses.

Almost equal numbers of respondents were represented in each of the frequency of bus use categories, indicating that opinions from all types of bus user have been received (Never, 1 day a year, a month, a week and multiple days a week).

Just over half of respondents strongly oppose the proposals, whilst a quarter of respondents strongly agree with the proposals.

A mix of views were reported, with reasons for not supporting the scheme including that it isn't needed, doesn't impact journey time, would cause congestion, is a waste of money and comments on road maintenance.

Reasons for supporting the scheme included improving the bus services, encouraging bus use and improving journey time.

Other comments and suggestions were also raised, relating to issues such as residential accesses, trees, walking and cycling and the construction period. These issues are being considered by the design team but significant changes are not anticipated to be required.

Background information

8. Equality analysis

Under the Equality Act 2010, the local authority must consider how people will be affected by a service, policy or practice. In so doing we must give due regard to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations across protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership (for work), sex, sexual orientation, race, and religion and belief. The Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation does not prevent the Council from taking difficult decisions which result in service reductions or closures for example, it does however require the Council to ensure that such decisions are: informed and properly considered with a rigorous, conscious approach and open mind, taking due regard of the effects on the protected characteristics and the general duty to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations; proportionate (negative impacts are proportionate to the aims of the policy decision); fair, necessary, reasonable, and those affected have been adequately consulted.

- a) Is this group negatively or potentially negatively impacted, and in what way?
- b) What could be done or has been done to remove the potential for direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or disadvantage and inequalities?
- c) In what way do you consider any negative consequences to be reasonable and proportionate in order to achieve a legitimate aim?

- d) What can be done to advance equality further? This could include meeting specific needs, ensuring equality of opportunity and access, encouraging participation, empowering people, making adjustments for disabled people and action to reduce disparities and inequalities.
- e) Is there a need to foster good relations between groups (tackled prejudice and promote understanding) and help people to be safe and protected from harm? What can be done?

All residents by geographic area

The aim of the scheme is to encourage more users to switch to public transport by improving the journey time and offering a more attractive alternative to the private car. In addition, improving the walking and cycling facilities might encourage more people to use them.

Construction works may generate noise and light pollution negatively impacting local residents.

Up to 5 trees will need to be removed in order to facilitate the width of the carriageway. This may negatively impact the immediate residents and discussions are in place to mitigate the impacts, as well affect the local landscape. The environmental impacts will be mitigated by replanting 10-15 new trees in the local area.

All residents will benefit from the improved walking and cycling links to employment, education and services through associated health benefits and improvement to local environment, including air quality.

Sharing road space will provide greater choice of travel mode and mitigate against some actual and perceived risks. This should enable people to better meet their needs and participate more fully in society, advancing equality.

The detailed design includes consideration of negative impacts and mitigation, such as encouraging modal shift to tackle the climate emergency, minimising impacts during construction and integrating active travel within the bus improvement proposals.

Age

Bus services which are for all to use are encouraged. As highlighted by the 2022 National Travel Survey, people under the age of 30 and over the age of 70 tend to use buses more than those aged in between, which is almost half of the population within North Devon and Torridge.

Older people (aged 60+) make a lower proportion of trips by active travel (walking and cycling) than those aged less than 60, meaning older people may receive a smaller share of

the proposals' benefits than their proportion of the overall population. Being physically active in old age is associated with positive health benefits, such as reduced cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and general mental wellbeing.

Younger people (aged 20 and under) make a large proportion (35%) of trips by active travel, so younger people will likely particularly benefit from the proposals. This should enable them to better meet their needs and participate more fully in society, advancing equality. Increased walkability also increases social engagement, physical activity and mobility.

Disability (includes sensory, mobility, mental health, learning disability, neurodiversity, long term ill health) and carers of disabled people

Disabled people make a lower proportion of trips by cycle than non-disabled people, meaning disabled people may receive a smaller share of the proposals' benefits than their proportion of the overall population.

The infrastructure will be designed according to latest standards and guidance, such as *Local Transport Note 1/20: Cycle Infrastructure Design*, as well as consider solutions developed by disabled people summarized in the Disabled Citizens' Inquiry report⁸.

The needs of disabled people will be considered throughout the proposals, for example, segregation between pedestrians and cyclists will be provided where appropriate and practicable, enabling all people to walk or wheel along the infrastructure as easily and safely as possible. This will remove barriers less able bodied people may face when using existing infrastructure, thus improving access to opportunities and encouraging participation. Less abled bodied people, if they do not have access to a car, are likely to make a greater proportion of trips by bus for long distances. Improving bus journey times and experience will enable them to better meet their needs and participate more fully in society, advancing equality.

Race and culture: nationality/national origin, ethnic origin, skin colour, religion and belief, asylum seeker and refugee status, language needs

Bus services which are for all to use are encouraged.

It is not considered that there is the potential for any adverse impacts on the basis of race and culture. Although, people who identify as Black or of mixed ethnicity, make a greater proportion of trips by bus compared with White ethnic groups, therefore improving bus priority may have a particularly positive benefit for these ethnic minority groups.

⁸ [Disabled Citizens' Inquiry | Executive summary \(sustrans.org.uk\)](https://www.sustrans.org.uk/disabled-citizens-inquiry)

Sex and gender identity and reassignment (including men, women, non-binary and transgender people), and pregnancy and maternity (including women's right to breastfeed)

Bus services which are for all to use are encouraged.

It is not considered that the proposals would have a negative impact on anyone based on their sex, gender identity, pregnancy, or maternity status. Although, females tend to make a higher proportion of trips by bus than males, thus there may be a greater benefit to females in terms of improving access to locations along the bus corridor. The national travel survey does not provide data on non-binary and other gender's travel patterns.

Sexual orientation, and marriage/civil partnership if work related

Bus services which are for all to use are encouraged.

It is not considered that there is the potential for any adverse impacts or beneficial impacts on the basis of sexual orientation and marriage/civil partnership.

Other relevant socio-economic factors and intersectionality

This includes, where relevant: income, housing, education and skills, language and literacy skills, family background (size/single people/lone parents), sub-cultures, rural isolation, access to services and transport, access to ICT/Broadband, children in care and care experienced people, social connectivity and refugee status/no recourse to public funds. Also consider intersectionality with other characteristics.

It is not considered that the proposals have the potential for any adverse impacts on the basis of socio-economic factors.

Bus usage is higher among lower income groups who in general may not have access to alternative transport modes, such as the private car. Providing improved journey times and less time in congestion may particularly benefit people in the lower income group who are more dependent on buses.

9. Human rights considerations:

We need to ensure that human rights are protected. In particular, that people have:

- A reasonable level of choice in where and how they live their life and interact with others (this is an aspect of the human right to 'private and family life').
- An appropriate level of care which results in dignity and respect (the protection to a private and family life, protection from torture and the freedom of thought, belief and

religion within the Human Rights Act and elimination of discrimination and the promotion of good relations under the Equality Act 2010).

- A right to life (ensuring that nothing we do results in unlawful or unnecessary/avoidable death).

No direct implications, however, enhancements to bus services may enable individuals to exercise certain human rights more easily, such as the right to employment or the right to education (both enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) by improving access to employment/education. Bus services are open to everyone.

10. Environmental analysis

An impact assessment should give due regard to the following activities in order to ensure we meet a range of environmental legal duties. The policy or practice does not require the identification of environmental impacts using this Impact Assessment process because it is subject to (please mark X in the relevant box below and proceed to the 11, otherwise complete the environmental analysis information below):

Devon County Council's Environmental Review Process	
Planning Permission	
Environmental Impact Assessment	
Strategic Environmental Assessment	

- a) Description of any actual or potential negative consequences and consider how to mitigate against these.
- b) Description of any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes and consider how to improve as far as possible.

Reduce, reuse, recycle and compost

No negative consequences. No direct outcomes.

Conserve and enhance wildlife

No negative consequence to wildlife, however, it is proposed that 5 trees are removed to widen the carriageway.

Safeguard the distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of Devon's landscape

No negative consequences. Increased bus use and less use of cars leads to less pressure for new road building.

Although 5 trees need to be removed in order to build the scheme, it is aimed that 10-15 new trees will be planted in the vicinity to mitigate any negative impacts caused.

Conserve and enhance Devon's cultural and historic heritage

No negative consequences. Increased access to leisure activities by bus contributes to more sustainable lifestyle.

Minimise greenhouse gas emissions

No negative consequences. Increased bus use and less use of private cars leads to less emissions, as well as passengers on the buses spend less time in the existing congestion.

Minimise pollution (including air, land, water, light and noise)

Although during the construction phase there might be an increased level of noise, light and emission pollution in the short term, but increased bus use and less use of private cars should lead to less traffic noise and less pollution in the long run.

Contribute to reducing water consumption

No negative consequences. No direct outcomes.

Ensure resilience to the future effects of climate change (warmer, wetter winters; drier, hotter summers; more intense storms; and rising sea level)

No negative consequences. This scheme meets the objectives of DCC's declaration of a Climate Emergency. For example, it will lead to increased bus usage and less use of private cars, resulting in less traffic noise and greenhouse gases.

Other (please state below)

11. Economic analysis

- a) Description of any actual or potential negative consequences and consider how to mitigate against these.
- b) Description of any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes and consider how to improve as far as possible.

Impact on knowledge and skills

No negative consequences.

The scheme will improve public transport links into the town. The 2022 National Travel Survey highlighted that younger demographics of 30 years and below including school and

university aged people disproportionately use buses more. Thus, improving buses can support greater independence and enabling individuals from the local area to access academic institutions, early careers / jobs and training courses.

Impact on employment levels

No negative consequences.

Commuting is the most common trip purpose for bus users at 23% of local bus trips. Improved bus journey times will enhance access to employment in Barnstaple. A more punctual and reliable bus service supported by the bus priority system, may improve buses viability as a commuting option for time sensitive activities such as employment. This is expected to increase an individual's area of potential employment, particularly if they currently do not have good alternatives for medium to long distance travel.

Impact on local business

No negative consequences. Bus services enable people to access their local shops and businesses, whilst affording reasonable choice. Bus services are particularly good for town centres.