

18 June 2020

Standing Overview Group – Corporate, Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Committee

Exeter Transport Strategy

Recommendations

The SOG recommends to Cabinet that:

1. Consideration to make some of the temporary pop-up measures to support walking and cycling be made permanent and for the strategy to extend this to “Green Lanes” supporting active travel access from villages on the edge of the city.
2. That a list of potential transport projects is compiled with the aim of creating a clear implementation plan to support the strategy.

Members discussed the following

Background

The SOG met to discuss and comment on the Exeter Transport Strategy and its recommendations. Members were presented with a summary of the work undertaken to date including the draft transport strategy, public consultation responses and changes since this consultation, including how it has been updated to align more with Devon County Council’s declaration of a climate emergency.

The SOG was invited to review the recommendations and provide comments before the Exeter Transport Strategy goes to cabinet.

Report

The SOG broadly supported the recommendations of the Strategy and were appreciative of the Strategy’s focus on improved travel choices for travel into the city; creating better places to support active travel opportunities for people travelling within the city and embracing the behaviour change and decarbonising opportunities arising from better technology and innovation.

Furthermore, members were impressed by the consultation, which received largely positive reaction from more than 1100 public responses as well as from key stakeholders and organisations.

Members also noted that the current COVID-19 pandemic has created uncertainty, but the strategy remains valid based on the travel behaviour findings during lockdown.

Issues Identified by Members

Connectivity

The SOG supported the need to encourage sustainable travel from outlying market towns and villages into Exeter and that this should not be constrained by municipal boundaries (i.e. the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan authority areas) as the city has a draw from a wider County and sub regional area. The group appreciated that the bus and rail proposals in the Greater Connectivity theme remains valid but would like to see consideration of faster, more direct public transport services to increase mode shift ambitions.

Green Lanes

Members applauded the current temporary pop-up urban measures that are being put in place to increase walking and cycling access during the COVID-19 pandemic. Members expressed a desire to see some of these become a more permanent feature and also extend this to include green lanes, which would support improved active travel access from villages on the edges of the city.

Longer term projects

The SOG felt it would be important to have an implementation plan to make clearer what future projects are planned for Exeter that support the strategy. The SOG recognises that Cabinet recently set out a 2-year programme as part of the transport capital programme report; however, a long list of measures would be beneficial. Some of these projects may prove to be impractical, but it would at least provide greater clarity of how the strategy might be fulfilled.

Impact on business

The SOG felt that many businesses may be concerned about the impact of parking removal in some local centres, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Members were nevertheless supportive of the overall ambition of the strategy but highlighted the need to engage with Exeter businesses on specific proposals.

Actions

The SOG broadly supports the recommendations in the Exeter Transport Strategy with the addition of the recommendations above and asks that these be presented to Cabinet.

Present

Councillors Alistair Dewhirst (Chair), Ackland, Asvachin, Atkinson, Aves, Ball, Bloxham, Colthorpe, Dewhirst, Hall, Hook, Leadbetter, Randall-Johnson, Slade and Whitton
Councillor Rufus Gilbert (Cabinet member)
William Pratt, Principal Transportation Planning Officer
Jamie Hulland, Transportation Strategy & Road Safety Manager

COUNCILLOR DEWHIRST
CHAIR