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Chapter 11

Transport and Access

CHAPTER 11 - TRANSPORT AND ACCESS

Strategic Overview

- 11.1 Travel and transport patterns and movements in East Devon are greatly influenced by the predominantly dispersed rural pattern of settlement and the physical topography of the District. The main towns of the District are generally well served by public transport. Exeter, which lies to the west of the District, is a major focal point for routes and services. In the remoter rural areas, however, where public transport is scarce or non-existent, many journeys are only possible by private car.
- 11.2 The key responsibility for managing and regulating the transport network in East Devon rests with the Highways Agency, an Executive Agency of the Department for Transport, for the management, maintenance and improvements to the Motorway and Trunk Road network in East Devon, and Devon County Council as the Highway Authority for the remainder of the highway network. A range of other public and private sector organisations involved in transport infrastructure and service provision and development augment the roles of these bodies. The Local Plan will have a significant impact upon movement and travel patterns through its role in influencing and regulating development.

Regional Transport Strategy

- 11.3 Section 8 of the Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (September 2001) sets out the Regional Transport Strategy. This document provides the regional context for transportation planning over the period to 2016, and gives the strategic framework for Local Transport Plans and development plans.

Devon Local Transport Plan

- 11.4 In July 2000 Devon County Council submitted to Government 'Devon on the Move' the Devon Local Transport Plan for 2001-2006. The Local Transport Plan was prepared in response to the Government's White Paper on the future of transport 'A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone'. The Local Transport Plan will be a key mechanism for delivering Government initiatives of promoting integrated transport with better travel and transport choices and options. Whilst the Local Transport Plan addresses more than land use planning considerations, it does provide clear guidance on planning policy considerations and it emphasises the relationship between location considerations and the movement patterns of people.
- 11.5 The Local Transport Plan sets out the County Council's strategic approach to travel and transport in Devon and the Government has awarded funding for the Plan's five-year implementation programme for the 2001-2006 period. The programme details various schemes and initiatives with these including specific proposals for an 'Exeter Zone Programme'. The whole of East Devon along with Exeter City and other adjoining areas falls in the Exeter zone.

SWARMMS

- 11.6 The government initiated a study of the transport issues covering the majority of the South West called the London to South West and South Wales Multi-Modal Study (SWARMMS). The study was completed in May 2002. Reflecting the fact that there is likely to be growth in traffic by all modes over the next fifteen years the SWARMMS strategy proposes a series of measures to limit this growth including the adoption of Green Travel Plans for workplaces, car sharing etc. However, the Study recognised that the scope for reducing demand by such measures is limited and that there will be a need to improve transport infrastructure. The core vision of the SWARMMS Strategy is for the development of two high quality road corridors to the South West (M4/M5 and M3/A303/A30) and two high quality rail corridors (Paddington to Exeter via Westbury and Waterloo to Exeter). The significant infrastructure proposals for East Devon are:-

- i) A proposal for doubling the single line sections of the Waterloo to Exeter rail line between Salisbury and Exeter to permit an hourly service to London, together with additional services between Honiton and Exeter.
- ii) Proposals to support the transfer of freight from road to rail, including the provision of an intermodal facility for the transfer of freight and a freight distribution centre in the vicinity of Exeter Airport as is proposed in the Local Plan.
- iii) The SWARMMS consultants identified two options for the A303 strategic corridor to the west of Ilminster. In November 2004 the Department for Transport, announced that, rather than dualling the A303 through the Blackdown Hills, the route would connect to the M5 at Taunton via an improved A358. Assuming the A358 improvement is implemented a series of minor improvement schemes have been identified for the A30/A303.

Strategy and Objectives for Transport in the Local Plan

11.7 The East Devon District Council Corporate Strategy includes a number of direct references to access and transport issues. These directly inform objectives for the Local Plan Transport and Access chapter which are:

- i) To support communities by creating new development close to facilities with good access to public transport and by other transport modes.
- ii) To seek provision of adequate infrastructure to meet existing needs and keep pace with the requirements of new development.
- iii) To minimise the use of greenfield land and direct most new development to existing towns and new community to reduce the need to travel and maximise the potential of modes of transport other than the private car.

Land Use Planning Context

11.8 Government Guidance on transport policy is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 13: Transport and Local Plan policy has been informed by this guidance and also by the Devon Structure Plan. Structure Plan Policy emphasises the importance of the development of an integrated and sustainable transport strategy.

11.9 The Structure Plan advises of the relationships between patterns of land use including mix, location, density and layout and their relationship with travel and movement patterns. Emphasis is placed upon the importance of minimising extent of travel and Structure Plan Policy TR5 identifies a hierarchy of transport modes with these seeking to promote more sustainable travel patterns. The hierarchy of travel modes, based on safety and sustainability, is defined as:

- i) Walking.
- ii) Cycling.
- iii) Public Transport.
- iv) Private Transport.

11.10 The District Council's influence on the transport system will be through policies and proposals adopted in this Local Plan and pursued through the Council's development control function. The Local Plan will help shape the pattern and nature of development in East Devon. By consistent application of policy in respect to location, scale, density, design and mix of land uses the Local Plan will be able to contribute to development patterns in which:

- i) The need to travel can be reduced.

- ii) Journey lengths may be shortened.
 - iii) Walking, cycling and public transport are viable modes of travel.
- 11.11 Where appropriate the District Council can play an important enabling role by requiring developers to enter into planning obligations in order to secure the adequate provision of transport facilities for their proposals. The District Council is also responsible for public car park provision.

Transport Provision in Association with New Development

- 11.12 One of the key means by which the District Council can most positively influence travel and movement patterns is through promoting development in the most sustainable locations. Such locations will be where people can make realistic and viable alternative choices to the use of the private car. New developments, particularly where they may attract large numbers or volumes of people, should be located and designed so as to be accessible by, and encourage the use of, walking, cycling and public transport. In particular, development requiring a high level of access (e.g. schools, hospitals, town centres and major shopping developments) should be located near to public transport services. Development in such locations will give people the choice of using more sustainable means of transport than the car. It will also increase the accessibility of these facilities to people who do not have regular use of a car including the disabled, elderly and children. Where developments will have significant transport implications a transport assessment will be required to be submitted with any planning application. For major proposals this will illustrate accessibility to the site by all modes of transport and the likely modal split of journeys to and from the site. It will also give details of proposed measures to improve access by public transport, walking and cycling and as such reduce the need for parking associated with the proposals and also to mitigate against adverse transport impacts.
- 11.13 Notwithstanding the importance of non-car modes of transport it is recognised that vehicular access will be an essential requirement for most developments especially in rural areas. Therefore when considering development proposals the Council will take into account accessibility to the site and the traffic movement implications of the proposal, within the development site and on the surrounding area. For major developments, developers will need to demonstrate that roads, footpaths, car parking, open space and other associated works have been comprehensively planned for in order to assist the safe and convenient movement of people.
- 11.14 Roads and footpaths associated with new development must be constructed to a good safe standard. Advice on the design of residential estate roads is given in DOE/DTP Design Bulletin 32: Residential Roads and Footpaths (1992), the Companion Guide to DB32: Places, Streets and Movement (1998) and Devon County Council's own publications 'Residential Estates Design Guide' and 'Commercial Estate Design Guide'. The Council will have regard to this supplementary planning guidance and emerging good practice in road design, when considering development proposals that include new roads and footpaths. Proposals for development will be expected to meet these standards in order for the highway to be considered suitable for adoption by the Highway Authority. This guidance allows for a variety of designs and layouts. It is essential that all aspects of movement are planned comprehensively since the design of car parking, footpaths, open space, play areas and landscaping all affect convenience and safety. Special attention should be paid to ensuring that new developments which are accessible by members of the public should provide satisfactory access to persons with reduced mobility, including persons with limited ability to walk, persons with impaired sight and persons with prams and pushchairs. New proposals must not undermine the mobility of people with disabilities.