

TRANSPORT STRATEGY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

EXETER CITY COUNCIL'S SCRUTINY COMMUNITY COMMITTEE, 3RD MARCH 2015

These questions focus on travel modes other than rail. It is recognised that rail has a significant part to play in Exeter's transport strategy; however, the Devon Metro project is progressing well, so the purpose of this session is to explore what more can be done to promote other travel modes.

Respondents:-

JH = Jamie Hulland, Transportation, Planning and Road Safety Manager, Devon County Council;

MW = Mike Watson, Managing Director of Stagecoach South West;

RH = Ross Hussey, Principal Project Manager (Infrastructure Management & Delivery), Exeter City Council.

Question	Answer
Park & ride	
Could park and ride be promoted more, to reduce parking and congestion in residential areas, and does the existing P&R network have sufficient capacity for this?	MW: Carries 2m passengers pa, including contra-peak journeys to employment sites. Yes, could be promoted more; looking at possible relaunch.
Could rail park and ride be promoted?	JH: Yes, Cranbrook stn will have large car park to serve those living away from the station, including neighbouring villages. Plans for enhanced parking at Pinhoe. Scope at stations along the Tarka line to Barnstaple, e.g. Copplestone.
Could vacant sites around the city be used for park and change, or additional parking for local centres?	JH: P&C suitable for edge of city where P&R not viable, such as Crediton and Tiverton corridors. Also looking at A3052. Need car parks with capacity during weekdays.
Could park and ride be extended later into the evenings, and to additional sites on Sundays?	MW: Extended Christmas services not intensively used, nor is comprehensive evening service on city buses. Scope to use other services which pass P&R sites, but DCC lock at 7pm.

	JH: Could explore.
How would a park and ride at Alphington fit with the overall strategy?	JH: Strategy is current (LTP runs between 2011 and 2026), having been developed to relate directly to growth plans for city (linked to the Core Strategy). P&R is one of a number of measures which include Devon Metro and cycling. It needs a range of solutions. JH noted that 22% travel to work on foot. Considerable synergy with aims of groups represented here – i.e. more people getting into the city by other modes.
How would it attract people out of cars, when the bus would be caught in the same congestion on Alphington Road?	JH: Alphington Road needs regular service; and P&R needs direct route, although stops could be included without adding undue delay. Looking at bus priority corridors. Some priority options; Grace Road link has changed movements. The journey time of bus vs car should be offset against comparative benefits of cheaper cost of parking all day and distance to walk to destination at end of journey (i.e. walking from car park will add to overall journey time).
Could it use Tan Lane?	JH: Tan Lane restricted to single deckers so depends on type of vehicle.
What about unauthorised parking in P&R sites?	JH: Difficult to enforce – may need to be more flexible in the future to allow people to park and cycle – still avoids cars driving into the city but recognise problem of walking to neighbouring businesses. RH: Charging for parking liable to VAT; more cost effective to charge for bus.
How can we tackle parking by RD&E staff? Parking causes problems in residential areas. P&R not suitable for 8-8 shifts.	See below for subsequent answer by JH.

Bus	
Could and should Water Lane Link be constructed, as a bus-only link?	JH: Would require £10m bridge and divert buses away from passenger destinations in Marsh Barton – unlikely to represent good value for money.
Bus lanes generally - could they be made more effective (wider, more continuous), and if not, are they worthwhile?	MW: Worth having. Increasing congestion requires us to add two vehicles each year, costing £200k. Would like lanes to be wider and operate consistently from 7am-7pm. JH: We're looking at Heavitree generally. Complicated, because road serves lots of functions. See below for subsequent detail provided by JH on enforcement of yellow boxes and bus lanes.
Can there be a strategic review of residents' parking across the city?	See below for subsequent answer by JH.
Are there any other measures available to improve bus timekeeping, and are there plans to introduce any of them?	MW: Just turned on vehicle location system across Devon which will enhance service control. Can feed in to real time system; working with DCC on this. JH: DCC in Punctuality Improvement Partnership with Stagecoach.
Which elements of the Exeter Bus Growth Strategy are still to be implemented?	JH: The strategy was produced because we needed a plan to cater for new developments, and provide evidence base for section 106 contributions. £5m has been secured towards extending existing services, particularly to serve growth on the east of Exeter.
Could the Strategy be updated? Should it be more ambitious?	JH: Could be updated to take into account technological opportunities.
How are the proposed cuts to supported bus services to be reconciled with the Strategy?	JH: Long lead time to enable responses to be considered. See subsequent details supplied below.

<p>Could bus fares be reduced, as they deter and even prevent people from travelling?</p>	<p>MW: Yes and no. Have reduced day ticket from £4.10 to £3.60, and extended Exeter and Exeter Plus zones giving up to a 35% reduction. Can't do it across the board, as costs increase 3-4%pa due to congestion, wage demands. Fuel costs are hedged so haven't benefited from reduction.</p>
<p>What are the current figures for the daily passenger journeys on each of the Exeter City Buses, Exeter P&R and the Country Services arriving in Exeter?</p>	<p>MW: 16m pa for Exeter, comprising 4.5m on rural services, 9.5m on city services and 2m on P&R. Roughly 48k journeys per day, and 290k per week.</p>
<p>How would these numbers be expected to grow by 2030 and how might such growth be achieved?</p>	<p>MW: Numbers have doubled in Devon in ten years. In some cases can double capacity by changing the vehicle; eg Cranbrook can grow to double decker every 10 mins. Highest loads on some services aren't at peak times.</p>
<p>The figure for Exeter City Buses in 2009/10 of 20,200 implies that the number of passenger journeys per bus per day was about 400. At what corresponding value would it be considered that the vehicle was working at its full capacity?</p>	<p>MW: Maximum is 80 for double deck, 60 or 50 for single deck. Aim below those in interests of comfort.</p>
<p>Public transport generally</p>	
<p>Trevor Preist calculates 15,000 extra people will need to get to work using car or public transport by 2030.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is DCCs target for the fraction of these who will use public transport? • What elements of the current infrastructure plan will yield enhancement in the public capacity to support this? • If these enhancements take place, how many extra users of public transport are they estimated to generate? 	<p>JH: Not clear whether these figures are all assumed in the peak, or where these trips are going. The County tends to look at trends. We're predicting limited growth in demand to the city centre with significant jobs growth on the eastern edge. Need to look at past trends; rail up 100%, bus 50%. Traffic reduced but a 1% reduction in speeds – it is a far more complicated calculation as new interventions (e.g. a new rail halt) will affect how new residents will travel but may encourage mode shift amongst existing people travelling in Exeter. This may explain why traffic volumes have continued</p>

	<p>to reduce on all corridors over the past 10 years despite significant growth in housing.</p> <p>Also, households with internet has increased by double in the last 10 years and the number of trips made for a range of purposes (commuting, leisure, business) are reducing substantially, which needs factoring in to future projections – increased home working for instance.</p> <p>Need to build on past success and do more of the same. Numerous big LTP schemes coming to fruition – Cranbrook & Newcourt stations, Bridge Road widening, Tithebarn Lane link, £5m of bus services, further extension of cycle routes and only 4 years into LTP.</p> <p>Also people time shift to avoid congestion. Contributions made by working at home, less shopping.</p>
Other modes	
What more could be done to improve facilities for cyclists and pedestrians, to encourage travel by these modes?	JH: DCC is developing a cycling and multi use trail strategy and planning to market some of the good scheme work (Exe Estuary) using funds from last year of LSTF.
Are there plans for any more major cycle corridors?	JH: Developing two new high quality primary routes from Monkerton & Newcourt to city centre. May need bold decisions eg closure of minor roads to motor traffic in order to achieve priority for cyclists.
Is there guaranteed funding for the cycle network?	JH: Budget down from £8.9m in 2008/9 to £3.6m. More reliance on growth fund; can't guarantee funding as down to the LEP and Community Infrastructure Levy. MPs want us to continue investing in cycling; we're urging them to put pressure on the LEP.

<p>Are there any plans to ease congestion at Countess Wear roundabout, in addition to Bridge Road widening (which won't address all the problems), especially in view of the large number of new dwellings along Topsham Road?</p>	<p>JH: Scheme will remove bottleneck on Bridge Road, which currently results in blocking back through the roundabout, causing queuing on all approaches. Modelling shows high value for money. Will review roundabout afterwards.</p>
<p>General</p>	
<p>How do you see non-car modes being promoted, following the end of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund and responsibility for major scheme funding passing to the LEP?</p>	<p>JH: Following Zsolt Schuller's voluntary departure, Sustainable Travel now part of single Transportation Planning team. Still have dedicated staff and a plan for future investment.</p>
<p>What efforts have been made to devise an overarching transport strategy that is supported by partners including businesses and other stakeholders, and which can underpin funding discussions?</p>	<p>JH: The LTP is the overarching strategy that had buy in from a range of businesses and stakeholders. Within the financial context, we have needed to prioritise our critical schemes that are going to the LEP/LTB for funding. In the past couple of years, the county council has been delivering approximately £50m of infrastructure to support growth, directly linked to our Local Transport Plan. Unprecedented growth is a success story; congestion as a result so we need to keep planning, and being proactive to get the remaining schemes developed and shovel-ready for future delivery.</p>
<p>What efforts have been made to consider technological solutions, eg in relation to parking?</p>	<p>MW: Lots more we can do. Moving towards rechargeable smart card; also credit cards and mobile ticketing. Hoping to get some buses with wifi for Exeter this year.</p> <p>JH: Can transform bus travel using improvements to info systems, e.g. smartcard technology will allow people to see exactly where their bus is and can use their time more efficiently to create a more demand responsive system. Being able to do things on public transport (check emails/read) is far more productive than sitting in traffic – selling these benefits</p>

	is an important part of making travel by bus more attractive.
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Subsequent answers and more detailed information provided by JH.

Clarification on the residents' parking review, and whether it could be expanded to include parking restrictions around the RD&E hospital

A parking working group of County Councillors has been set up recently with the approval of the Exeter Highways and Traffic Orders Committee. The main remit of this group is to explore the possible expansion of residents' parking permit schemes to areas in the city that do not currently have a scheme and suffer from parking availability issues from non-residential parking. This review includes areas that may not have a current parking availability issue but could suffer in the future or could be affected by displacement parking from any new parking schemes.

The group has had its second meeting and has set the extents and areas of the main focus of the study, which include the areas around the RD&E. It has also had a preliminary review of the parking survey that has recently been undertaken to establish current parking patterns.

The next step is to begin a consultation with a small catchment area of the overall areas being considered, in order to get some early views and feedback to help inform the consultation to the much larger area under consideration. This is with a view to begin delivering County Council approved schemes within the coming financial year.

With reference to the specific query regarding parking around the RD&E for staff, with any proposals for parking schemes we need to consider the effects it would have on displaced vehicle users. With local members' input and with help from the rest of the County Councillors on the working groups, it is hoped that we will be able to strike the right balance between parking availability for residents and utilising available space for workers.

Views on enforcement cameras and which body is responsible for yellow box and bus lane enforcement – particular issues around parking in bus lanes and cars blocking yellow boxes at First and Last junction and Exe Bridges

The use of enforcement cameras is currently being considered as part of Parliament's proposed Deregulation Bill that is at its latter stages of approval. Once this bill is passed the County Council will be able to take a more informed view as to what options it has available to enforce regulatory markings such as box junctions and bus lanes. Until this time it is still within the remit of the police to enforce markings of this nature.

The surfacing of the bus lane between Waitrose and Barrack Road keeps failing; what is being done about it?

The County Council spent £70k last summer doing deep recon patches between Waitrose and Barrack Road, so this issue should now be resolved. There is an action for the Neighbourhood Team officer to monitor the issues.

Consultation on proposed bus service reductions

The proposals to reduce DCC-funded bus services is currently being consulted upon within a public consultation process that ends on 20th April 2015. The context of the proposed reduction in the public transport budget is the Government's Spending Review, which is reducing council funding year on year. With a shrinking budget, some very difficult decisions on priorities are having to be made across county council services.

We are therefore consulting on a set of proposals that aims to minimise the impact – accepting that it is inevitable that the impact of a cut of this magnitude will be significant to many people. This is based on analysis of cost per passenger for different services. Given the high cost per passenger of many current council-funded bus services, with less funding available it is considered appropriate to consider whether there should be an upper limit to the amount spent per passenger journey.

As this is currently out to consultation, it is recommended that any comments / thoughts / feedback on the proposals are articulated through the consultation process (<https://new.devon.gov.uk/publictransportbudget>).