

EXETER CITY COUNCIL
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - ECONOMY
5 SEPTEMBER 2013

TRANSPORT INITIATIVES AND ISSUES - UPDATE

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report is to update Members in relation to transport initiatives and issues affecting Exeter.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Responsibility for transport rests with numerous organisations, including the Department for Transport (DfT), Devon County Council (DCC) as Local Transport Authority, and private operators like First Great Western and Stagecoach who run the trains and buses. The Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) is also gaining an increasing role in transport issues, with funding for major schemes now devolved to Local Transport Boards (LTBs) based on LEP geography.
- 2.2 Exeter City Council is involved in transport issues in a number of ways:-
- (a) As local planning authority, we plan the location of development in relation to transport networks. We work closely with Devon County Council in this regard; the City Council's spatial planning policies informed production of DCC's Local Transport Plan, and conversely DCC produced a body of evidence to support our adopted Core Strategy. A product of this collaboration is the Devon Metro proposals, discussed below at paragraph 3.2, whereby it is proposed to serve Exeter's new development areas by an improved rail system.
 - (b) Also as local planning authority, we endeavour to ensure that new development is designed to maximise use of sustainable travel modes. See paragraph 7.2 below.
 - (c) We provide some transport infrastructure, notably facilities for cycling and walking, and off-street car parks.
 - (d) We respond to consultations from government and elsewhere (see for example paragraph 6.2).
 - (e) We also deal with the licensing of taxis and private hire vehicles, although this is outside the scope of this report.
- 2.3 It will be seen from the content of this report that in many cases Exeter City Council's involvement in projects is as more than a mere consultee. Much of our input into transport issues is through working in partnership with DCC, and influencing decisions made by them and others to ensure that Exeter's interests are promoted. Our views on transport matters are conveyed to the LEP via the Exeter and Heart of Devon Growth Board and through participation by the Projects and Business Manager in the LEP's own Transport Special Interest Group.

3 RAIL

- 3.1 This Committee has previously resolved to endorse DCC's Devon Metro proposals, and to support the principle of working with DCC and other stakeholders to lobby for rail improvements.
- 3.2 A summary of the Devon Metro proposals is included as Appendix 1. They include new stations at Newcourt and Marsh Barton and, in the longer term, Monkerton/Hill Barton. Newcourt has now received planning permission, together with money from the New Stations Fund to supplement section 106 contributions, and the aim is now to build it during 2014.
- 3.3 The process for awarding the new Great Western franchise was interrupted by the review of the franchising system, following legal action by Virgin in relation to the West Coast franchise and discovery of errors by the DfT. The Department is currently negotiating terms with First Great Western for a temporary contract from this October, with a new long-term franchise now scheduled to begin in July 2016. We have been active in impressing upon the DfT that this temporary contract must not result in a loss of momentum in improving the system, and it is hoped that the service requirement will include some of the enhancements which we were expecting as part of the new full-term franchise.
- 3.4 The national shortage of rolling stock continues to cause problems, particularly on our local lines where passenger numbers are continuing to increase. At least it appears that our demands for more and better carriages are likely to be satisfied when the Thames Valley services are electrified in 2016 and stock is available for cascade, as Network Rail's spending plans include gauging work to enable these wider vehicles to operate in the south west. Although it remains difficult to get any other commitment to improving the infrastructure locally, current works at Reading and those planned in future for the Bristol area will improve the reliability of our intercity services when complete.
- 3.5 Frequent disruption caused by flooding last year, particularly in November and December, has prompted Network Rail to draw up a list of projects to address this issue, not only at Cowley Bridge but also at other locations further up the line. Implementation of these schemes is dependent on funding in the region of £31m, and we are pressing the DfT to ensure that these works go ahead.
- 3.6 The long-awaited plans to improve Central Station forecourt are coming to fruition with work starting on site around now. The plans (included as Appendix 2) envisage removal of vehicles from the crescent, to enable improvement of the environment for pedestrians, since the majority of journeys to and from this station are made on foot. The Council is making a contribution of £185,000 to a scheme costing around £660,000, which will complement the significant improvements already carried out at this station by the rail industry under the National Stations Improvement Programme.

4 OTHER PUBLIC TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENTS

- 4.1 The city's bus network continues to expand and improve to serve new developments, notably Newcourt (route J). New route 4 to Cranbrook has introduced a regular half-hourly service along Honiton Road, and route B through the city now has a Sunday service for the first time following its extension to Exminster.

- 4.2 The opening of the John Lewis store in October 2012 was accompanied by a campaign encouraging shoppers to use public transport. Stagecoach extended the evening service on the Red (Honiton Road) park and ride to include John Lewis's extended opening hours for the benefit of shoppers and staff. The opening went smoothly with no significant traffic congestion, and a large increase in passenger numbers on bus, rail, and park and ride (over 25% increase on the same period in 2011 on local rail lines and the Red park and ride). By way of contrast, the approach to Christmas proved particularly challenging in terms of traffic congestion, showing that more can be done to encourage use of public transport.
- 4.3 Three interactive versions of the red information "monoliths" will be installed imminently. These will display real time train information, to enable visitors and shoppers to see how their train is running before setting off for the station. Park and ride and bus information is also included. The two monoliths in the city centre (in Princesshay and outside John Lewis) are principally being funded by developer contributions from Princesshay, with the City Council having made a contribution to add interactive mapping. Separate developer contributions from the former County Ground have enabled the third monolith to be provided in St Thomas.

5 ROAD IMPROVEMENTS AND OTHER MAJOR SCHEMES

- 5.1 As mentioned in paragraph 2.3, funding for major schemes has now been devolved to the Local Transport Board, although the indicative amount of funding available has been reduced by the Government since the setting up of Single Local Growth Funds. In July the Board agreed that a number of schemes were worthy of financial support during 2015-19 and should therefore be progressed, including the outbound widening of Bridge Road (also receiving a contribution from the Regional Growth Fund) and Marsh Barton rail station.
- 5.2 One omission from schemes presented to the Board was a replacement bus and coach station. The principal benefits from this scheme would be economic ones, in terms of the land released for other uses, so it is likely to be a more suitable candidate for an application to the LEP's future Single Local Growth Fund, rather than to a funding stream purely for transport projects, although all possibilities for unlocking this important project will be investigated. It is essential that the replacement facility not only functions well as a bus station, but provides a welcoming gateway to the city. Now that improvements to the rail system are making good progress, the bus station has to become a top priority, and proposals are being worked up by DCC.
- 5.3 Alphington Park and Ride was considered by the LTB but was included in a reserve list and alternative sources of funding will need to be explored by DCC. The scheme also lacks planning permission. However, it remains an important component of the Council's future transport strategy, supported by our Local Development Framework.
- 5.4 The Tithebarn Lane link road, required to open up development sites in Monkerton and across the motorway in East Devon, has been awarded £1.75m from the DfT's Local Pinch Point Fund. Further contributions from the Regional Growth Fund and developers will enable the construction of the first stage of the road (from Cumberland Way to the Science Park Drive).
- 5.5 Further afield, it was announced in the Comprehensive Spending Review in June that a feasibility study would be funded into further dualling of the A303/A30/A358 corridor. The Council has supported the case for this, as any improvements would increase journey time reliability, as well as resilience through providing a genuine alternative to the M5.

6 AVIATION

- 6.1 The Council recognises the importance to the city of Exeter International Airport, both in terms of connectivity and the high quality jobs provided, particularly by Flybe. As a major domestic carrier, the airline is hit particularly hard by Air Passenger Duty (APD). Our tax is the highest of its kind in the world, and although levied in bands according to distance flown, the tax is charged on departures from British airports which means that someone making a return trip to (say) Manchester pays double the APD paid by someone making a return journey to Turkey.
- 6.2 The UK's regions (outside the south east) are more dependent than London is on domestic air links, and the Council has joined calls for differential rates of APD between London and regional airports. The Council has responded in these terms to the Davies Commission on airport capacity, not only because it would benefit regional economies, but because it would also attract air traffic away from the congested south east, encouraging the development of regional hubs (such as Flybe's hub at Manchester), and postponing or even avoiding the need for expensive new runways in or near London. A similar point has now been made by the Transport Select Committee of MPs. Although the debate about capacity and hub airports tends to be London-centric, it is of relevance to us because a new airport east of London would be difficult for us to access (as it would for much of Britain).

7 CYCLING AND WALKING

- 7.1 The formation of the Exeter Walking and Cycling Steering Group (comprising officers from ECC, DCC and a representative of Sustrans) was reported to the committee in September 2011. That group continues to promote incremental improvements to the walking and cycling network. Its work programme is attached as Appendix 3; highest priority is given to schemes which have section 106 funding, or which are important strategic links, especially those to cater for significant areas of new development. The group does not have decision making powers; it promotes schemes, whereupon they are subject to normal DCC and/or ECC decision making processes depending on their nature and scale.
- 7.2 The Sustainable Transport Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was adopted by the Council in March 2013 and is proving helpful in ensuring that new development is designed to encourage the use of sustainable travel modes.

8 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 Connectivity is essential if Exeter's economic success and competitiveness are to be maintained, and all transport modes have an important part to play. It is therefore important to make the case for improvements to rail including eventual electrification and the western link to Heathrow, a fair deal for regional air connections, and bringing the A303 up to standard. Transport investment is heavily skewed in favour of London, with projects like Crossrail, and HS2 will improve journey times to the midlands and north at our relative expense. We need to keep promoting the case for better connections to Exeter and the far south west.

8.2 With local transport too, the various modes each have a role to play. An analysis of travel to work mode by ward is attached at Appendix 4. This provides a few interesting facts, such as that residents of Mincinglake are the most prolific bus commuters; for rail (unsurprisingly) the honours go to Topsham. Perhaps more important, however, is the joint contribution made by the sustainable modes in keeping down commuting as a car driver to 47.5% (although these are Exeter residents; much of the city's traffic and congestion is caused by drivers travelling from elsewhere). So rather than seeing cycling and rail as catering overall for "only" 6.3 and 2.1% of journeys to work (respectively), we need to recognise the greater contribution they make on specific corridors, as well as their contribution to the impressive 40.5% combined share of "active" travel modes and public transport. It is more difficult to maintain this sustainable modal split with the newer developments on the city's fringes; therefore we keep striving to promote sustainable travel within and from these developments so that the city's attractiveness as a place to live and work is not degraded by worsening congestion and air quality.

9 RECOMMENDED

- (i) That Members offer their continued support for the Council's involvement in the initiatives outlined in the report, with the replacement bus and coach station being a high priority.

Ross Hussey
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CITY DEVELOPMENT

Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:

Devon Metro Appraisal Report – DCC 2011

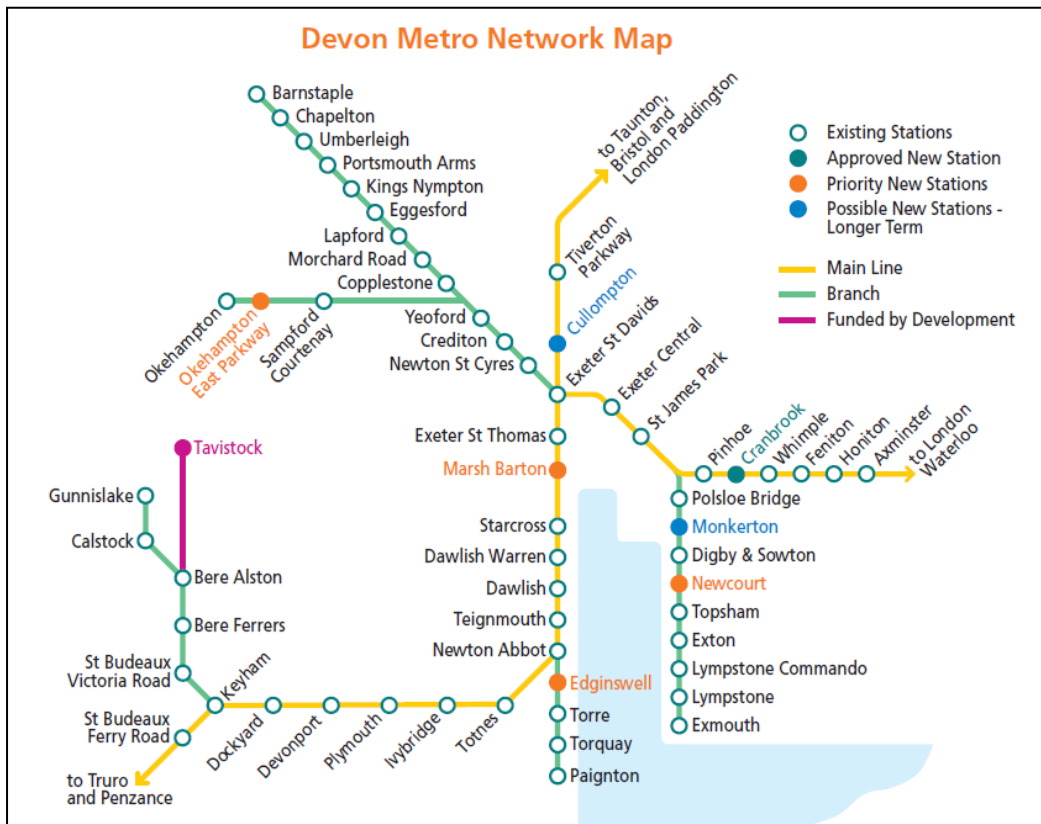
Western Route – Geo-Environmental Resilience (Network Rail, June 2013)

ECC's representations to the Commission on Airport Capacity

2011 Census

APPENDIX 1

Devon Metro proposals



Short term aims

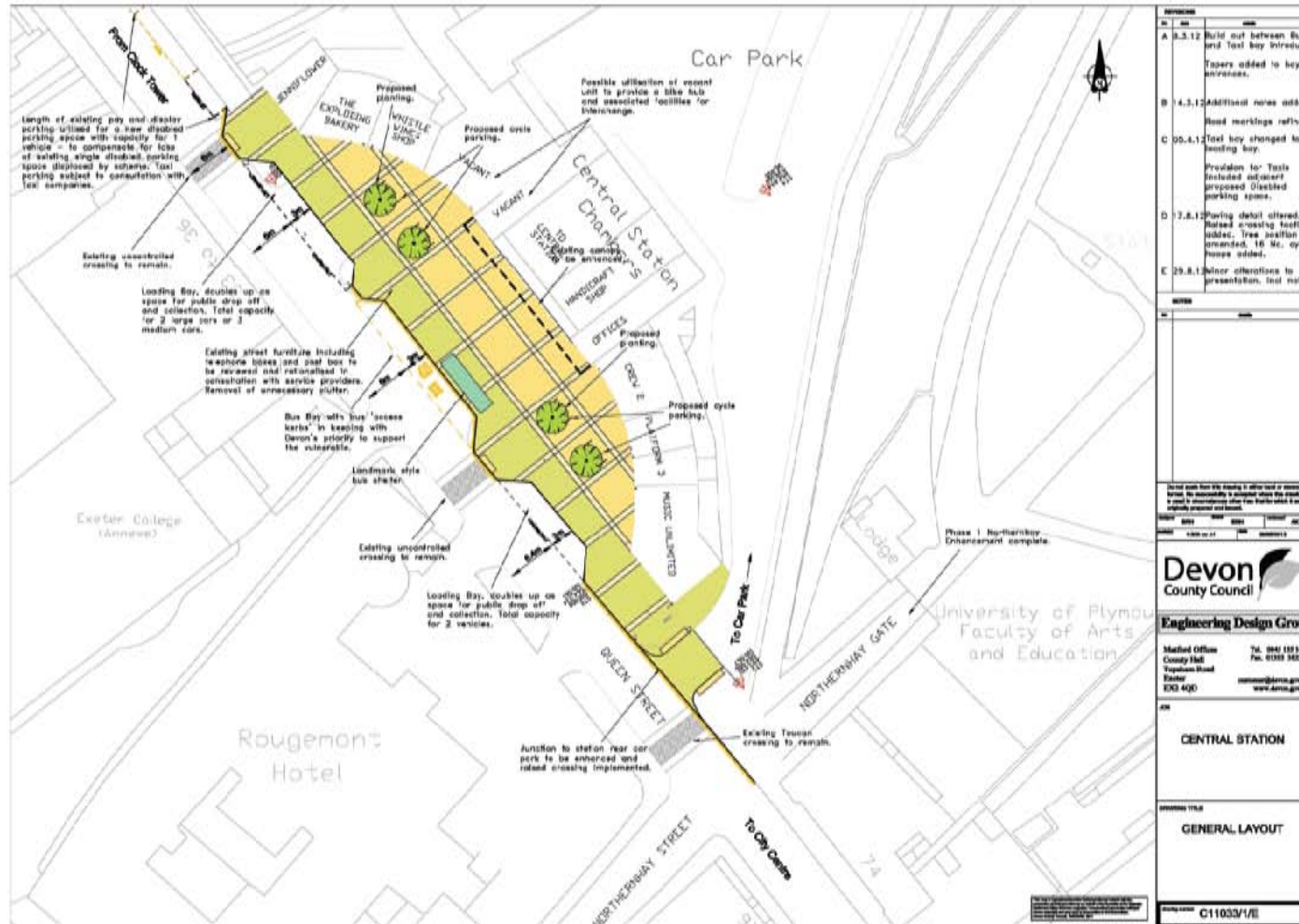
- 4 car trains in the peaks
- New stations at Cranbrook, Newcourt and Marsh Barton
- 30 minute local service frequency on the Paignton line

Longer term aims

- 30 minute frequency to Cranbrook, Honiton and Axminster
- Further new station at Hill Barton
- 15 minute frequency on the Exmouth line
- 15 minute frequency on the Paignton line

APPENDIX 2

Central Station forecourt proposals



APPENDIX 3

Exeter Walking and Cycling Steering Group Work programme – June 2013

Progress reports – active schemes				
Project	Ref	Description	Current position	
Queen St corridor	007	(a) Pedestrianisation of station forecourt, to include cycle parking. (b) Cycle hub in vacant unit. (c) Enhance corridor generally. (d) Scope for improving Clements Lane.	Works on forecourt likely to take place Sept-Dec.	
Cycle network signing	017	Jacobs have designed signing for Redhayes Bridge to City Centre. To design other routes.	DCC to order for installation for Redhayes route this year.	
Walking map reprint	022	Final proofs prepared.	DCC to deal with printing and distribution.	
Heavitree Pleasure Ground	023	New ped/cycle path through ECC park.	Path completed. Dropped kerb needed at western end.	
Cycle network maintenance	024	Seasonal issues, especially on strategic routes. Needs capital funding from DCC for scraping back verges for path widening. Known problems Bridge Rd – Lime Kilns, Double Locks, Bettys Mead, Crematorium path.	Identify requirements and costs. Sustrans rangers to report other poor locations.	
Flood defence scheme	025	ECC has identified diversionary routes. DCC identifying opportunities for new paths as part of works.	DCC preparing brief to Engineers to work with EA.	
Topsham Ferry	026	Landings at both sides surveyed for possible widening on Topsham side and improved surface on canal side. DCC could provide funding.	Designs being drawn up for works next year. New fingerpost needed on trail at Topsham Ferry to indicate location of ferry.	
Progress reports – watching brief				
Green Circle	001	Regular inspections by DCC and Sustrans volunteer.	June inspection completed by ECC	
Shakespeare Rd to Well Oak	002	Path being provided as part of housing development.	Remedial work required.	
Chancel Lane	005	Scheme comprises east-west ped crossing point by Taylor Wimpey development, and traffic calming.	Being considered by HATOC.	

Clyst Bridge	009	Likely to open Sept. Signing through Topsham dependent on management plan.	Under construction. Consultation on signing held.
Cowick St improvements	010	Major enhancement scheme.	Aiming to complete Sept.
Hamlin Lane PF bridge	011	Ped/cycle link including new bridge.	Public consultation in Oct.
Hollow Lane	012	Strategic cycle route; traffic restrictions proposed. Shared use path needed from Hollow Lane to new primary school entrance.	RTOs prepared for consultation. Design for Hollow Lane with Jacobs. Planning application for school awaited.
Pinhoe Station Road playing field path	016	Ped/cycle path across open space. Scope to improve link across car park. Potential to link with future residential development to the south.	Car park resurfacing not done because of other possible developments re station parking by DCC on north side.
Fore St jcts with Friernhay and West St	018	Assorted footway improvements.	No current progress.
Cycle safety schemes	027	Fore St, Heavitree Fore Street and Heavitree Rd/Spicer Rd junction identified for potential action.	Work this year to identify engineering improvements.
Stoke Hill school	028	New access paths.	Planning granted; northern link to be constructed this summer.
Future schemes – high priority (strategic importance; s106 funded; straightforward and low cost)			
Liverpool Hill to Kinnerton Way	003	Strategic link, particularly to Exwick Heights school.	DCC considering options to progress.
Loram Way	004	Strategic cycle/ped link. NPS negotiating with land owner. Planning permission needed.	
Bromhams Farm and Marsh Barton Rail station	006	Problem with parking on cycle path; scope for reducing parking on this side of canal when parking area provided on Water Lane tip. Scope for improving Clapperbrook Lane / Grace Rd jct for pedestrians and cyclists.	ECC has completed works to develop parking area. Awaiting legal agreement. Scheme being worked up for priority junction.
Uni to City centre	019	Signing and limited shared use provision using s106 money.	Brief required for engineers to work up.

Sidwell St right turn markings	020	Right turns for cyclists only from York Road and Summerland St into Sidwell St. Markings requested for cyclists' refuge in centre of road.	With Jacobs to action.
Barrack Rd links	021	Dropped kerbs needed to avoid pavement cycling where cyclists emerge from Wyvern Barracks and Wellingtonia developments to join Barrack Road.	Costed and ready to be built.
Ludwell Lane	030	Calming proposed for Ludwell Lane; strategic cycle link being considered. Section 106 money may be available.	Options being considered following site visit.
St Katherines Road	031	Eastern end needs safe crossing of Beacon Lane.	DCC to brief engineers.
Fitzroy Road	032	Eastern foot/cycleway to be extended northwards using s106 money.	DCC to design.
Bus stop improvements	033	Bus shelter replacement programme offers scope for minor relocations / improvements.	
Future schemes - other			
St Peters Mount to Exwick Lane	013	Footpath provided by developer. To be made a PROW.	With DCC PROW to progress.
Hamlins Lane & St Andrews Rd footway	014	Footpath from Farm Hill to St Andrews Rd to be made a PROW. Short section of footway to be created along western side of St Andrews Rd from Kinnerton Way Roundabout.	With DCC PROW to progress.
Glasshouse Lane to Sir Alex Walk	015	3 rd party partial obstruction of footpath. Damage reported between M5 and reed beds.	ECC dealing.
Thornton Hill to Hoopern Valley	034	Potential for upgrade to shared use but unknown ownership.	ECC Estates investigating ownership.
King William St	035	Dropped kerbs and raised tables needed to ease pedestrian crossings from car park. Also improved link to Sidwell St.	Review when time permits.
St Leonards to City Centre	036	In Walking Strategy; suggestions received from a member of the public.	Schedule after Queen St corridor.
Western Road	038	Excessive speed humps on road past allotments.	All in DCC ownership. DCC to investigate solutions.

APPENDIX 4

2011 Census Travel to work by Exeter residents

	Those in work	Work Mainly at or From Home	Train	Bus, Minibus or Coach	Public transport combined	Motorcycle, Scooter or Moped	Driving a Car or Van	Passenger in a Car or Van	Bicycle	On Foot	Active travel combined	Active or public transport	Other Method of Travel to Work
Devon	353913	9.4%	1.6%	3.8%	5.4%	1.0%	60.1%	5.0%	2.7%	15.3%	18.0%	23.4%	0.8%
Exeter	57139	4.6%	2.1%	9.2%	11.3%	1.2%	47.5%	5.3%	6.3%	22.9%	29.2%	40.5%	0.5%
Exwick	4853	3.2%	1.6%	10.4%	12.0%	1.9%	55.8%	7.0%	5.4%	14.0%	19.3%	31.3%	0.4%
Priory	4332	3.3%	0.8%	13.3%	14.1%	1.8%	47.5%	6.6%	6.6%	19.4%	25.9%	40.0%	0.5%
Alphington	4670	4.2%	0.9%	7.7%	8.7%	1.0%	53.8%	5.8%	6.8%	19.1%	25.9%	34.5%	0.4%
St James	2578	5.4%	4.0%	6.5%	10.4%	0.5%	27.9%	2.9%	5.7%	45.5%	51.2%	61.6%	0.7%
St David's	3078	5.0%	4.0%	9.7%	13.7%	0.6%	27.5%	3.8%	6.2%	42.2%	48.5%	62.2%	0.5%
Polsloe	3355	4.5%	2.4%	6.9%	9.2%	0.7%	38.5%	4.6%	8.3%	33.5%	41.8%	51.0%	0.3%
Whipton Barton	3543	3.3%	1.0%	10.9%	11.9%	1.5%	54.5%	7.1%	5.6%	15.4%	21.0%	32.9%	0.3%
St Thomas	3706	4.3%	2.1%	10.0%	12.1%	1.2%	44.7%	4.6%	6.9%	25.6%	32.5%	44.5%	0.3%
Newtown	2776	4.5%	2.5%	9.4%	11.9%	0.7%	31.7%	3.4%	7.4%	39.0%	46.4%	58.4%	0.8%
St Loyes	3591	3.7%	3.4%	8.0%	11.4%	1.1%	58.3%	5.9%	4.8%	14.2%	19.0%	30.4%	0.3%
Duryard	1324	7.1%	2.6%	7.1%	9.7%	0.8%	44.8%	5.5%	4.0%	26.7%	30.7%	40.5%	0.5%
Pinhoe	2959	4.0%	2.4%	10.0%	12.3%	1.6%	60.3%	6.0%	4.8%	10.2%	15.0%	27.3%	0.5%
Heavitree	2940	4.8%	1.5%	7.7%	9.1%	1.2%	41.4%	5.0%	7.7%	30.3%	38.0%	47.1%	0.4%
Pennsylvania	2665	6.0%	1.3%	9.4%	10.7%	1.4%	51.4%	5.6%	6.0%	17.8%	23.9%	34.5%	0.6%
Mincinglake	2821	3.1%	1.0%	13.4%	14.4%	1.9%	56.9%	7.4%	5.4%	10.4%	15.7%	30.1%	0.2%
Cowick	2659	3.5%	0.9%	9.5%	10.3%	2.0%	54.2%	5.6%	5.3%	18.2%	23.5%	33.8%	0.4%
St Leonard's	2761	7.9%	1.9%	4.7%	6.6%	0.7%	40.1%	3.0%	8.9%	32.1%	41.0%	47.6%	0.5%
Topsham	2528	9.3%	5.6%	7.9%	13.4%	0.8%	53.0%	3.6%	7.7%	11.4%	19.1%	32.6%	0.6%