

## ***Tavistock Neighbourhood Development Plan***

### **Stakeholder interviews by Transport & Connectivity Lead: summary of relevant points**

#### **18<sup>th</sup> Jan 2023 West Devon BC, Officer leading on digital / broadband and active travel**

One officer combines both roles, with half time to each, covering both West Devon and South Hams. Responsible for delivery of active travel elements of the successful Shared Prosperity Fund bid.

Currently in process of appointing consultant to prepare Local Cycling and Walking Plan (LCWIP) for West Devon. Will include a plan for Tavistock. Process depends on contractor but will include macro-modelling of movements and key routes, high level costing of potential new infrastructure. Also hoping to include an element of research on behaviour change re cycling in rural areas, as little has been done on this nationally. Contractor will start by March. NDP Steering Group would be among stakeholders consulted prior to plans going for wider public consultation in summer. Timetable to be developed - LCWIP may be complete by November 2023.

Potential for a “quiet lane” trial if consultation if LCWIP shows support for this. (Involves a rural road managed to give pedestrians and cyclists priority over vehicles.)

Relationship to Devon CC activity under recently awarded through Active Travel Capability Fund is still to be worked out. Expects this to be mainly in other parts of the county, but to include a county wide LCWIP mainly focused on the leisure network of multi-use trails.

Agreed that desirable for county & district to co-operate on public consultation, in particular re cycling which is relevant to working age & young people. West Devon LCWIP consultation to be planned by the contractor, but likely to include one event in each town (inc Tavistock) and otherwise be online. Would look to local stakeholders inc NDP Steering Group to help generate local awareness and interest.

While funding is for revenue action not infrastructure, there could be some available towards end of period for small improvements. This might help with taking forward the community action to identify and seek mitigation for places where pedestrian infrastructure is inadequate.

Shown the Transport element of NDPv3 Aims and Objectives, officer thought these would provide a suitable hook for relevant policies – it is the detail of those that matters. Under current NPPF an LCWIP has no statutory effect on planning, so useful for NDP policy to include something on lines that development should not disrupt or add to vehicle traffic on a designated cycle route. Also suggested highlighting role of cycle storage – may already be in JLP supplementary guidance, but can be overlooked.

Digital connectivity: following the meeting, sent suggested wording for a supportive NDP policy.

-----

#### **22<sup>nd</sup> Feb 2023 Devon CC, Transportation Planning Officer (West Devon Area)**

[Note incorporates some details added in later correspondence.]

Work has started on the updated Devon & Torbay Local Transport Plan (LTP) which should be ready in about 2 years. Current Devon CC Multi-Use Trails Strategy is being superseded by area LCWIPs.

Aware of WDBC planned LCWIP and will be liaising with officer there in future Devon CC planning of cycle links between towns.

Devon CC plans for road network are limited, with focus on decarbonisation of transport eg where can improve public transport access or active travel through road schemes. Do seek developer contributions to highways. No recent consideration of bypass for Tavistock, and no land has been secured for a future one. National experience is that bypasses increase traffic overall. For small improvements, eg to junctions, Neighbourhood Highways Officer would be the contact.

Devon CC unlikely to have funds to develop park and change sites for towns the size of Tavistock. Recent feasibility study looking at potential options for a park and change to serve Newton Abbot found that the scheme would not be viable based on the costs involved and the predicted levels of usage, and so the project is no longer being progressed. Considerable data on existing and potential future public transport and active travel in Tavistock would need to be collected to undertake a similar study, but as a smaller town with a smaller catchment than Newton Abbot, likely the same conclusion would be reached.

Peninsula Rail's 20 year plan for rail was signed up to by Devon County Council, other South West highway authorities, key stakeholders and South West MPs in 2016. Regarding the Northern Route a 3-phased approach was agreed, beginning with Okehampton to Exeter, then Tavistock to Plymouth and finally looking to Tavistock to Okehampton in the longer term.

Railway – land (relevant to NDP) is sorted. Currently no action re Tavistock to Okehampton route. With increased competition for limited funds, schemes that can demonstrate affordability and deliverability are more likely to succeed as demonstrated by the Dartmoor Line (Okehampton to Exeter). This message has been reiterated by rail partners (track and train operators) and the DfT's rail planning and investment team throughout the development of the Tavistock to Plymouth business case, the second phase of the Northern Line. Getting buy-in and support from these organisations is essential in influencing funding decisions on future major rail infrastructure projects and DCC have sought to strengthen these relationships in recent years. Therefore, DCC's current approach is to prioritise this second phase rather than the full Northern Route as this offers the greatest chance of securing further investment in our South West railway.

Parking policy is a separate team. There is a central Devon CC budget for cycle parking which can be requested. Lockers are more expensive and would need evidence of cycling levels.

-----

**6<sup>th</sup> Mar 2023 GoSouthWest: Managing Director, Head of Commercial & Marketing, Commercial & Customer Manager.**

[NDP Secretary also present. This meeting was arranged in response to an invitation sent through Devon CC Transport Co-ordination lead to all bus companies operating in Tavistock. The MD is formerly worked for Stagecoach, and is on the Heart of the Southwest LEP. The draft NDP Transport Aims & Objectives shared and discussed were version 3.]

GoSouthWest is the trading name of Plymouth Citybus Ltd. It is part of the GoAhead Group and operates as GoCornwall Bus in Cornwall. Dartline is now a subsidiary. Hence it provides a number of the bus services to Tavistock.

**Rail (A2, O1):** Support rail in principle, but noted that there is transfer from buses to rail when new routes opened, so risk of undermining viability of Tavistock – Plymouth route. This has significantly greater use between Roborough and Plymouth than between Tavistock & Yelverton.

**Bus station & stops (A2, O2):** Agree with this objective. Bus companies pay a fee (per departure) to WDBC who own and maintain the bus station. Is scope for improvement, including to shelter and of facilities for electric buses to charge. All bus stops are owned by public authorities who arrange for their maintenance, not bus companies. Increasing bus use means making the overall journey experience attractive, so would favour good shelters, with lighting and real time information. For bus stops on roads with on street parking the pontoon design is best – gives clear space for passengers to alight / disembark, and means bus can just pull up rather than have to manoeuvre. Siting of bus stops and preventing blocking by parked cars is important. Location of education sites is an important factor in predicting demand.

**Access / Car Parking (A2, O2 & A3, O2)** Examples from Plymouth of new estates where aim was to reduce car dependency through restricting car spaces per home (eg to < 2) and this has led to on-street parking by residents which blocks bus routes – vicious circle. Is important that bus routes are planned in, with parking restrictions ensure route is kept clear at potential pinch points. No current national standards for how this can be done, or south west good practice examples. Nottingham a possible example.

**Park & Change (A2, O4)** Having multi-purpose transport hubs on outskirts of town is essential for net zero. Facilities could include parking & EV charging for nearby residents who need it, parking for people going into town, frequent buses into town centre, bus storage / charging. Possible pick up point for demand responsive transport. (See below). Factors in site choice: on or near line of sight (from road?), nearby population density, good access and egress inc for buses.

**EV charging (A3,O3)** Provision will be needed for buses to charge in Tavistock – not feasible for electric powered buses to complete rural routes without this. Electrification of transport must not further disadvantage access and mobility for the least well off (including those reliant on buses) by prioritising those able to buy an electric car. Noted that bus facilities not addressed in Devon CC EV charging strategy. MD emphasized importance to net zero goal of providing for power infrastructure within the area to ensure sufficient generation capacity and grid connections.

**Potential future transport models** Demand responsive transport is being discussed in regional transport forums, and aware of trials elsewhere, but no schemes have proved financially viable beyond the initial seed funding. Inherent compromise between cost and timeliness for users. (Unlike community transport schemes where destination & time determined in advance, which can be viable.) Major change in patterns of transport use unlikely without national legislation or difficult local choices – eg ultra low emissions zone – to change the factors affecting individual choice.

-----

**1<sup>st</sup> June 2023: Tavistock Town Council, General Manager**

The Public Realm Strategy developed in 2014 as part of the Townscape Heritage Initiative this is still relevant. Includes a policy on street furniture, aiming for consistency. In addition to Pannier Market and Guildhall redevelopment since undertaken, there was a potential 3<sup>rd</sup> element including the resurfacing and closure or partial closure of Market St. Support for it in the public consultation was mixed, and lower than for the other options.

TTC have now reached agreement with WDBC and look after all the seats & benches within the parish (c140). Priority when get offers to donate new ones is to agree a replacement, as still less suitable older ones around.

TTC does not have evidence on cycling patterns. Observation suggests cyclists look for convenience when parking, eg fixing to railings. TTC installed the Sheffield stands around town centre. In discussion of possible locations for further cycle parking, WS pointed out that Bedford Sq would not be suitable location as want maximum free space / minimum infrastructure to move for events. Is potential to allocate some space on Market Rd – including potentially secure hangars.

The highway of Market Road is owned by TTC. Repair work on the river bank is being done this summer. In the resurfacing needed after that aim to incorporate some future-proofing for transport needs, including cables for chargepoints. Guildhall Square already has charging infrastructure under 2 of the bays.

TTC has accepted responsibility for the 11 bus shelters in the parish. Those with just the flag & pole remain the responsibility of Devon CC. Under TTC contract with Fernbank for maintenance, seats will be put in all the shelters deep enough to hold them.

Finding sites for park & ride would be difficult, based on experience of using them for Goose Fair. Since a field at Lumburn ceased to be available, have to use Whitchurch Down football pitch. Morrisons Car Park is the other site. Does not think there would be much demand for it from traffic heading for town centre – is enough car park space within walking distance.

Only car parks owned by TTC are Guildhall Car Park and the small triangle at the base of Down Road. WDBC manage income collection / compliance for Guildhall Car Park. Motorcycle parking area is well used. Observation (office overlooks) is that Guildhall Car Park normally has only 1 or 2 free spaces at a time during the business day. Does not think there is a lack of car park spaces, though signage to help drivers find them on arrival could be improved. Observation is that WDBC Riverside Car Park and Abbey Rise usually have plenty of spaces, and Bedford Car Park rarely full. While not formally a car park, the open space on Pixon Lane which is owned by TTC is well used, probably by locals who are aware of it, for free parking.

TTC owns Market St and the land on the other side of the Tavy as far as the first house on Dolvin Rd. Also the Dolvin Rd cemetery, and the paths both sides of the Tavy from Abbey Bridge to West Bridge. Recognises the problem of heavy traffic inc large lorries on Abbey Bridge, but no past or current plans for a cycle/foot bridge nearby as alternative.

BID have access to funding to set up a Town Centre WiFi, which would cover area from Bedford Sq to the Co-op. TTC would be involved in providing a base for equipment. TTC is also looking into logistics of installing superfast broadband for properties around the market. No planning issues arising.

-----

**2<sup>nd</sup> June 2023 Tavistock Area Support Services, Manager**

[TASS is a charity providing services to older and disabled people, based at the Anchorage Centre near Tavistock Bus Station. Also operates “Rest a While” café next to the Pannier Market, and a charity shop to raise funds.]

Get a lot of drop in enquiries at the Anchorage Centre reception from a range of vulnerable people, including those with hidden disabilities (wearing Sunflower emblem). Some related to bus information – people not sure which bus goes where, or confused about when next service is. Includes people with sight / hearing difficulties. Digital literacy, including finding transport information online, is an issue with some older people – others are more confident. Some clients rely on relatives for digital access to services, but that can encourage dependence.

Anchorage Centre is beside WDBC run Chapel St car park. The 3 reserved spaces for users are very useful. Observation is that car park overall is never empty (in daytime) and rarely completely full.

The disused waiting room and closed kiosk at the bus station (also adjacent) are an eyesore. Scope for additional public-facing services to be run from them- perhaps by TASS as already has systems in place for food service & sales in its other premises.

Discussed whether secure cycle storage hangar(s) could be located on the widest bit of bus station paving (which is at Anchorage Centre end). Manager thought this would be good idea which could be combined with other ideas to improve look of area, eg seating / planters. Young people sometimes sit outside on the wall after school.

TASS transport to hospital service, with volunteer drivers, is not age restricted and does have younger clients, including some with life-limiting illnesses. Scope to increase wheelchair hire and Shopmobility and general assistance with transport, but finance a limitation.

*Points relevant to other NDP themes:*

Main use of Anchorage Centre is daytime. Two evening activities at present – an all age table tennis group and an exercise class geared for older people. Hire of rooms by external groups not age restricted. Scope for developing pattern of use of the building for charity purposes.

Scope for more inter-generational engagement in future, both in volunteering and apprenticeships. Challenge for charities is capacity to supervise such schemes.

-----

### **9<sup>th</sup> Aug 2023, Manager Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership, Manager**

DCRP is a not for profit organisation based in the geography department of the University of Plymouth, funded by local authorities and train companies serving Devon & Cornwall. Objectives are to promote use of branch lines in Devon & Cornwall.

DCRP is in favour of the restoration of the rail line to Tavistock. Bere Alston to Tavistock is, in engineering / planning terms, among the simplest rail restoration projects nationally, so there is as good a chance as there has ever been that the current Devon CC led bid for government funding to prepare detailed plans will succeed. If so, could be operational within 5 years. If not, he is confident that it would be put forward again for future funding opportunities. Tavistock to Okehampton also supported in principle by the partnership, but harder to implement, so achievement decades away.

The current Joint Local Plan, and previous ones, make provision for the full route – protection could not be stronger. Agreed would be useful to include an NDP policy so that evidence of public support is at this level too. Thinks consideration of non-car access to station would be part of the fuller planning for which funding sought, and led by Devon CC.

[Following meeting RB sent copy of presentation to Peninsula Rail Group (now TaviRail) by lead officer from Devon CC, given in March 2022 (in evidence log as “DCC Tavistock PRG meeting”).

Includes evidence of need for rail link due to increasing time taken to drive from Tavistock to Plymouth Station and aerial view of proposed station location.]

-----  
**22<sup>nd</sup> Aug 2023 Devon County Council, Principal Highways Development Management Officer (West Devon and Dartmoor National Park)**

Responsible for the highways authority's responses arising from planning application consultations and new road adoptions, covering West Devon and Dartmoor National Park. Main policy basis for this is NPPF esp #110-113.

Explained that showing "severe" cumulative impact on the road network as a basis for objection to a development is a high bar. Tavistock is not currently among the areas of Devon where the potential for this is of most concern. Test is impact of the site subject to application – no means in planning system for highways authority to propose a cumulative cap on a sequence of small developments (eg along road such as Brook Lane).

Predicted motor vehicle movements from new homes are calculated from a standard trip generation model (TRICS). Typically 6-8 per dwelling per day. No specific model for cycle or pedestrian movements: test would be whether there is suitable access for them – then volume not likely to be an issue.

More specific guidance on highways aspects of development, eg road geometry, visibility at junctions, are in a combination of government Manual for Streets 2 and the older Devon Design Guides. Cited the requirement for a right turn lane on the A386 to the proposed Plymouth Rd development as an example of this. This application also discussed as example of how the type and location of extra points for pedestrians to cross was decided. A safety audit had concluded that a new crossing opposite Hawthorn Rd would be suitable, but this could be reconsidered during construction. Plymouth Rd also example of a sloping site where appropriate to have alternative stepped pedestrian paths and step-free shared paths. Designated parking spaces within new developments are a matter for district planners, not Highways.

Discussed connectivity, with Plymouth Rd site / Morrisons as example. A pedestrian link had been considered, but there are examples elsewhere of supermarket car parks being used by criminals when easy link to housing, so likely that police would oppose.

Community infrastructure levy can be used to improve transport, eg active travel links, but has to be directly related to the planning application – cannot use for eg improving a route in another part of town.

Discussed the NDP Aims and Objectives for the Transport & Connectivity section (v4). Officer content that these did not conflict with Devon CC policies.

[Role does not cover some other questions of interest to NDP (route to getting small highways changes to improve walkability, details of Devon CC intentions re cycle infrastructure, rail and electric vehicle charging, availability of figures on traffic congestion in Tavistock or Devon CC approach to reducing congestion in market towns). In follow up emails officer provided list of relevant national and Devon policy documents, and also suggested another Devon CC officer who could address or provide contacts for some of the other questions. Attempts to arrange a meeting with that officer to fit NDP timescale were unsuccessful.]

-----

**6<sup>th</sup> Oct 2023 Neighbourhood Policing Team (at Wellbeing Fair, Butchers Hall, Tavistock)**

*2 officers (PC & PCSO) staffing the police information stall.*

All parts of Tavistock are safe for people to walk around, including at night – there are no “no-go” areas. Police are advocating for town centre to have a CCTV system, which would aid policing of the night time economy.

Crime in Tavistock is low. Most offences do not affect the community, but involve people known to each other – eg domestic abuse, assaults after drinking.

Car parks viewed as safe. Notice that a lot of cars using Bedford Car Park arrive around 9am. Think Riverside Car Park used less due to distance to walk into centre. Theft of cars much less of a problem with modern vehicle security.

*Relevant to community facilities theme (NDP Community Facilities Lead also present).*

Community facilities in the town are “OK”. A new skate park would be good for the community as current one now tatty. A fenced MUGA where young people could self-organise informal games eg football would be helpful to give them more options for getting together. Some places in West Devon smaller than Tavistock have them – eg Lamerton. Funding available from the Police and Crime Commissioner for reducing anti-social behaviour could be available for this.

-----