

# Devon and Torbay Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) Consultation:

## Response from Torrridge District Council and North Devon Council

### Key and information:

Torrridge District Council and North Devon Council responses are indicated in **bold font** below.

The questions and text have been taken from the Devon County Council, 'Have Your Say', [online questionnaire](#).

Questions 1 to 5 asked for the name of our organisation, how we heard about the consultation, what materials we have read or seen, and whether we attended an Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) consultation event.

### The Vision

6. "The Local Transport Plan is based on a vision for transport in Devon and Torbay. To what extent do you support the vision below?":

*"Transport will facilitate sustainable growth and support reaching net zero carbon by 2050 at the latest. Well-integrated, accessible and inclusive transport will improve travel choice and benefit the health and wellbeing of everyone."*

Strongly Support; Somewhat support; Neither Support nor Oppose; Somewhat Oppose; Strongly Oppose

**The Councils somewhat support the vision; however, the Councils feel that consideration of a reliable network should be included in the vision statement.**

## The Objectives

“To help the Local Transport Plan achieve the vision, a set of six objectives have been developed. These are stated below, please tell us how important these objectives are to you.”

7. “Decarbonisation: Reaching net zero by 2050 at the latest by reducing the need to travel, increasing digital access, and shifting trips to sustainable transport and fuels.”

Response options: Very Important; Somewhat Important; Not important; No Opinion

**This objective is considered Very Important.**

8. “Reliable and Resilient: Protecting and enhancing the strategic road and rail links that connect Devon and Torbay to the rest of the country.”

Response options: Very Important; Somewhat Important; Not important; No Opinion

**This objective is considered Very Important.**

9. “Easier Travel: Providing well-integrated, inclusive and reliable transport options for all residents and visitors in both rural and urban communities.”

Response options: Very Important; Somewhat Important; Not important; No Opinion

**This objective is considered Very Important.**

10. “Unlock Development: Supporting clean growth by providing new transport choices within and to new developments and using technology to improve existing infrastructure.”

Response options: Very Important; Somewhat Important; Not important; No Opinion

**This objective is considered Very Important.**

11. “Greater Places for People: Enhancing the attractiveness of streets by reducing negative impacts from vehicles, regenerating the public realm, and facilitating safe active travel movements.”

Response options: Very Important; Somewhat Important; Not important; No Opinion

**This objective is considered Very Important.**

12. “The Place to be Naturally Active: Expanding the multi-use trail network, delivering a network of quieter lanes and improving facilities and safety in urban areas to enable people to be more active and experience our outstanding natural environment.”

Response options: Very Important; Somewhat Important; Not important; No Opinion

**This objective is considered Very Important.**

13. Which of the objectives is the most important to you?

**North Devon and Torridge Councils find that all objectives are important, therefore no single objective should be identified as the most important.**

14. Do you have any other comments about the Vision and Objectives (Sections 1 & 2) of the new Local Transport Plan?

**Although one of the objectives is a reliable network, this is not expressed within the vision statement. The Councils feel that this should be addressed. There also appears to be a focus in urban areas to reduce car transport but no attempts to reduce car dependency in rural, market town and coastal areas.**

**In terms of the objectives, the District Councils assert that all of the suggested objectives are important and the stated responses to the ranking exercise reflect this.**

**A ‘golden thread’ through all of the objectives could be active travel, as it addresses all of the objectives in significant ways. Active travel need not be expensive, and the County Council should look to Somerset Council’s approach, who have delivered simple active travel interventions quickly and cheaply (see the multi-partnership and volunteering approach of Dulcote Extension and the West Shepton Link for the Strawberry Line). There are also**

**examples (that almost link to the Strawberry Line) in the North Somerset area (Pier to Pier Way). A key point of these schemes is that they are, as well as long, linear active travel routes, contributing to a network of travel routes that people can use to get around to accomplish day to day activities by visiting the centre of settlements or neighbouring settlements. North Devon and Torridge Councils would be supportive of linking the Tarka Trail and Ruby Way and increase the network of active travel routes from the Tarka Trail through settlements such as Bideford to Westward Ho! via the Kenwith Valley. The Councils are also supportive of linking the Tarka Trail to other beaches in the region at Saunton, Braunton, Croyde and Woolacombe.**

## Connecting Devon and Torbay

15. Would you like to comment on the strategy for Connecting Devon and Torbay?

Response options: Yes, No

**Yes**

16. To what extent do you support the proposed strategy for Connecting Devon and Torbay?

Response options: Strongly Support; Somewhat support; Neither Support nor Oppose; Somewhat Oppose; Strongly Oppose

**The proposed strategy for Connecting Devon and Torbay is 'somewhat supported' as there is concern over the continuing reliance on the car for rural, market and coastal areas.**

17. Do you have any other comments about the strategy for Connecting Devon and Torbay in the Local Transport Plan?

**The strategy is generally supported however the Councils feel that there are some missed opportunities which should be explored.**

**The District Councils recommend that there should be a vision to open the Bideford to Barnstaple railway, in addition to the Barnstaple to Lynton line, as per Policy BAR16 of the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan 2011-2031. Improvements to the Tarka Line railway between Exeter and Barnstaple are supported by the councils. Cycle, walking and wheeling provision along the tarka trail remains fully supported by the District Councils and such provision should continue to be provided if a Barnstaple to Bideford railway is achieved.**

**The Councils consider that the local ports in northern Devon are a valuable asset that can provide good strategic transport opportunities to reduce road haulage, to support economic prosperity through existing and emerging sectors and affording wider tourism benefits. At present these are under-utilised and should be promoted as opportunities.**

**As local authorities that border neighbouring counties, the Councils feel that there needs to be stronger cross-border integration of the transport network**

**with neighbouring counties. An example is as Hartland children (Devon) go to schools in Bude (Cornwall) and can't access the school buses. In addition, the school buses are not open to the public so this means school staff cannot use them.**

**The District Councils are concerned that routes and timetables for public transport do not always allow for efficient commuting and inter-modal transport in the North Devon and Torridge districts. For example, the bus route 21 does not always align with train timetables to allow people from Bideford to reasonably catch the train at Barnstaple railway station. This is often as a result of congestion along the route, preventing the bus from keeping to its timetable. There is concern that this might also be the case for buses connecting Great Torrington with Barnstaple railway station.**

**It is questioned whether double decker buses are needed on all routes and whether smaller buses should be considered to reduce pollution. The proposed use of electric buses in the Districts is welcomed and supported to reduce noise, pollution and increase passenger comfort.**

## Exeter

18. Would you like to comment on the strategy for Exeter?

Response options: Yes, No

**Yes**

19. To what extent do you support the proposed strategy for Exeter?

Response options: Strongly Support; Somewhat support; Neither Support nor Oppose; Somewhat Oppose; Strongly Oppose

**The Exeter Strategy is neither supported nor opposed.**

20. Do you have any other comments about the strategy for Exeter in the Local Transport Plan?

**Councils have no comment to make about the Exeter strategy.**

## Torbay

21. Would you like to comment on the strategy for Torbay?

Response options: Yes, No

**Yes**

22. To what extent do you support the proposed strategy for Torbay?

Response options: Very Important; Somewhat Important; Not important; No Opinion

**The Torbay strategy is neither supported nor opposed**

23. Do you have any other comments about the strategy for Torbay in the Local Transport Plan?

**Councils have no comment to make about the Torbay strategy**



## Growth Areas

24. Would you like to comment on the strategy for Growth Areas?

Response options: Yes, No

**Yes**

25. To what extent do you support the proposed strategy for Growth Areas?

Response options: Strongly Support; Somewhat support; Neither Support nor Oppose; Somewhat Oppose; Strongly Oppose

**The proposed strategy for Growth Areas is somewhat supported. Whilst the Councils recognise the need to plan based upon existing information, it is important to note that the strategy is based upon the growth areas are determined from the current Local Development Plan and that the Councils are committed to preparing a new local plan that will supersede the existing in due course. Under government proposals, the new standard method would require North Devon and Torridge to deliver approximately 26,140 dwellings over 20 years. Therefore it is likely that delivery requirements will increase for the districts. It is essential to be mindful that the new Local Plan may seek to alter the spatial strategy for northern Devon and potentially amend the approach to accommodating growth. This could conceivably include a refocus of growth or the accommodation of additional growth in different locations. This is however all yet to be established. It is necessary for the strategy to recognise the potential need for a change of approach and to be responsive to emerging spatial strategies and growth.**

26. Do you have any other comments about the strategy for Growth Areas in the Local Transport Plan?

**There should be recognition from Devon County Council that North Devon and Torridge Councils are preparing a new Local Plan. The district councils will inevitably be considering their future locations for growth and their future spatial strategy, and therefore the County Council should be aware that transport implications and needs may therefore change.**

**To unlock development in northern Devon, wider strategic transport issues need to be addressed. For example, the recently cancelled dualling of the A358 at Taunton between the A303 and the M5 has the potential to have a significant**

effect on the economy of northern Devon, as the scheme would have improved the area's economic competitiveness, reducing the time taken to both receive and get goods to market.

To enable easier travel, promote alternatives to car travel, support economic opportunity and prosperity there needs to be a direct fast bus service from Bideford to Barnstaple railway station which is guaranteed to integrate with rail timetable. The loss of a National Express service from Ilfracombe is also a concern to the Councils, as communities become more disconnected as a result. It is considered that there should be an express service from Ilfracombe to Tiverton Parkway, via Braunton and via Barnstaple railway station and South Molton. Similar services should also be afforded from Bideford. The Councils also feel that to further enable easier travel and encourage use, there needs to be a better and more integrated multi-modal ticketing system to avoid needing numerous tickets on longer cross-regional journeys – for example from London Waterloo to Barnstaple.

The District Councils are pleased that the improved Okehampton rail service is well-used, and recommend continued integration of bus services from settlements in Torridge and North Devon. Holsworthy, Winkleigh and Bude (and settlements in between) will benefit from more frequent bus services that are integrated with the railway timetable to support effective multi-modal journeys.

There is support for the expansion of the Multi-Use network, however it is not considered necessary to always develop them to an urban tarmac standard and that alternate surfacing and lesser construction standards may be appropriate in some locations, possibly being more cost effective. A rubberised crumb surface may suit the principal tourist sector uses as it is recognised that many sections of the Tarka Trail are not currently used for commuting but rather as a tourist and recreation route. The Councils consider that multi-use trails should also be equine accessible where appropriate and possible; including exploring the opening up of existing routes for this. It is also recommended that until multi-use trails are upgraded to a higher standards, it would be good for communities to access gravel trails or trails with cheaper surface treatments until those treatments are upgraded.

As a tourist destination there are three beaches which can only currently be reasonably accessed by car. The Tarka Trail should be extended to connect to Westward Ho!, Saunton and Croyde beaches. The Councils would also strongly encourage the reinstatement of the buses which allow surfboards on them.

In addition, although topography can be a challenge, the active travel possibilities for users increase should they choose to use electric bike. Through use of electric bicycles and scooters, there is opportunity for active

**travel trips to shops and local services in rural areas and towns despite challenging topography.**

## Rural Devon and Market & Coastal Towns

27. Would you like to comment on the strategy for Rural Devon and Market & Coastal Towns?

Response options: Yes, No

**Yes**

28. To what extent do you support the proposed strategy for Rural Devon and Market & Coastal Towns?

Response options: Strongly Support; Somewhat support; Neither Support nor Oppose; Somewhat Oppose; Strongly Oppose

**The proposed strategy for Rural Devon, Market and Coastal Towns is “somewhat supported” as, whilst it is recognised that the private motor vehicle will likely always be necessary for some users in more rural locations, there is concern over the continuing focus on the use of the car as the main transport option, without seeking to supporting, encouraging and providing alternatives.**

29. Do you have any other comments about the strategy for Rural Devon and Market & Coastal Towns in the Local Transport Plan?

**There should be recognition from Devon County Council that North Devon and Torridge Councils are preparing a new Local Plan. Under government proposals, the new standard method would require North Devon and Torridge to deliver approximately 26,140 dwellings over 20 years. Therefore it is likely that delivery requirements will increase for the districts. The district councils will inevitably be considering the future locations for growth and spatial strategy, and therefore the County Council should be aware that there may be transport implications arising from this and needs may therefore change.**

**There are concerns that this strategy still places the emphasis on the car as main transport with the bus services further reduced.**

**There needs to be a reliable, frequent and consistent public transport service for rural communities to use public transport.**

**Without greater emphasis on active travel and decarbonisation, the objectives of decarbonisation and active travel would be difficult to achieve within this strategy.**

**Unfortunately, it is felt that the current cycle network is south Devon centric and by not investigating new active travel routes in northern Devon, this limits the objective to be naturally active, which is a concern to the District Councils.**

**It is also felt by the Councils that the Bideford Kenwith Valley route to Westward Ho! should continue to be proactively investigated and progressed through to delivery.**

**To improve connectivity of active travel routes and options, the West side Bideford should be linked up to the Tarka Trail. Therefore, a cycle way across the old Bideford Bridge should be considered or a better connection could be made from the Tarka Trail to the A386 where the A386 crosses the river Yeo and meets the Tarka Trail. Alternatively, a better walking, wheeling and cycling route across the new A39 Torridge bridge should be considered and progressed. This would also increase footfall on the bridge which would help improve surveillance. The Councils strongly recommend improving the accessibility to the Tarka Trail to Barnstaple street.**

**The District believe that there needs to be a more ambitious plans to link rail, bus, cycle and active travel into an integrated travel solution. For example, there needs to be a guaranteed connection to Barnstaple railways services from major bus routes.**

**And although topography can be a challenge, the active travel possibilities for users increase should they choose to use electric bike. Through use of electric bicycles and scooters, there is opportunity for trips to shops and local services in rural areas and town despite challenging topography.**

## Asset Management and Road Safety

30. Would you like to comment on the strategy for Torbay?

Response options: Yes, No

**Yes**

31. To what extent do you support the proposed strategy for Asset Management and Road Safety?

Response options: Strongly Support; Somewhat support; Neither Support nor Oppose; Somewhat Oppose; Strongly Oppose

**The Asset Management and road safety strategy is somewhat supported.**

32. Do you have any other comments about the strategy for Asset Management and Road Safety in the Local Transport Plan?

**The remaining A361 upgrades need to be prioritised as the improvements need to help unlock development.**

**The District Councils encourage implementing 20mph zones in villages, where supported, at a quicker pace of delivery than currently envisaged. In addition, the Councils request that there is more spent on enforcing where restrictions are already in place.**

**It is recommended that support should be provided for National Express and Stagecoach services that have been lost to be reinstated.**

**The District Councils recommend that rural lanes need to be maintained to an adequate standard for modern agricultural business use as these are a large sector of both Districts' economies.**

**Whilst wishing to see the whole road network maintained to an appropriate standard, the Councils consider that should this not be possible then there should be focus on maintaining preferred priority routes into all rural settlements, which would free up other rural routes for more walking, wheeling, cycling and horse-riding.**

**For walking, wheeling and cycling routes, the County Council should consider the use of recycled rubber surfaces rather than tarmac. These may benefit walkers and runners by reducing impact on knees, and may reduce risk of slips and hip and head injury for other users.**

**The Councils are concerned that diversions can cause significant problems for local residents, businesses and visitors, and that areas of northern Devon do not have enough high quality alternative routes under current guidelines (e.g. diversions from an A road need an A road diversion) to afford reasonable diversions. The Councils therefore suggest that B roads should be considered to divert around A roads too, where it can be made safe and appropriate to do so.**

### **33. Overall... To what extent do you support Devon and Torbay having a new Local Transport Plan?**

Response options: Strongly Support; Somewhat support; Neither Support nor Oppose; Somewhat Oppose; Strongly Oppose

**For the reasons given throughout this wider response, the Devon and Torbay Local Transport Plan is “somewhat supported”.**

34. Do you have any additional feedback regarding the Devon and Torbay Local Transport Plan?

**Reliable, affordable public transport is needed by many residents including young workers who need to use public transport for work and others who are seeking to remain in education. For many rural workers the cost of cars and insurance are prohibitively expensive and therefore may not be able to access jobs in their local towns.**

**The miles of unused railway track which crosses both Districts should be explored for their active travel potential. These tracks could conceivably be opened up for walking, cycling, riding and wheeling.**

**There is concern that there remains a lack of understanding between some different road users. Efforts to raise awareness of shared highway use of different modes of travel (motorised, cycling, walking, horse riding) should continue. It is suggested that subtle reminders (not necessarily signage) for road users along the highway would help raise awareness. For example, colour strips in tarmac could indicate on all roads where cyclists, pedestrians**

or horse riders are advised to use the highway, which would simultaneously act as a reminder that there may be vulnerable road users around a corner.

### 35. Do you have any further comments about transport in Devon and Torbay generally?

**Devon County Highways should look to Somerset Council as an example of best practice as they have managed to develop Active Travel routes at a lower cost due to different surfacing practices.**

**When changing streets to 20mph speed limit areas, the County Council should consider marketing and signposting these as 'Child Safe Zones', as suggested by Active Travel England. This may help increase understanding for the need to reduce speed limits in highways withing settlements.**

**The Councils suggest that Active Travel could be recognised as Active and Sustainable Travel, in order to increase awareness that bus and train journeys often start with walking, cycling or wheeling.**

**There are concerns that the Tarka railway line is unreliable in poor weather, and therefore modernisation and upgrades to the line are vital.**

**There is also concern that there are insufficient bus services between Northam and Bideford, and that the strategy could aim to improve the bus services between the settlements.**