

# Transition Tavistock response to Plymouth LCWIP consultation

## Introduction

Transition Tavistock is a volunteer run community group working for sustainability in Tavistock and the surrounding parishes. One of our projects is a Travel Action Group promoting sustainable transport. We are commenting on these proposals as many residents of West Devon are among the 100,000 people per day travelling into Plymouth from outside city boundaries and many Plymouth residents travel to Tavistock and beyond for both work and leisure.

## Comments on the LCWIP: cycling

We have seen the response to the consultation by Plymouth Cycling Campaign, and endorse the general points they make. In particular:

- The increasing popularity of cycling as a means of transport as well as for exercise, including among older people who find electric bikes enable them to stay mobile.
- The cycling design criteria of coherence, directness, comfort, attractiveness and safety as vital to encouraging and sustaining this trend.
- The perception that cycling in Plymouth is hazardous, with fragmented provision and reliance on on-road cycle lanes.
- The benefits of 20mph speed limits as standard in residential areas, so the focus of cycle planning can be on networks linking them.
- Disappointment that the detailed analysis presented in the LCWIP leads to only four routes proposed for development. (We respect your prioritisation, but note that none of these aids connectivity to West Devon.)
- The potential for also increasing cycling and walking through upgrading existing routes. (For example, the branch of NCN27 that runs along Embankment Road includes sections on a fairly narrow shared use path close to very heavy traffic, and crosses a fast slip road with no traffic control.)

We do not have the local knowledge to comment on the specific routes chosen or on the merits of those omitted.

## Comments on the LCWIP: walking

We welcome the analysis of walking in the city centre, and the detail of the audits of the particular routes. Our observations in Tavistock are that the factors identified, including narrow and missing sections of footway, obstacles, inadequate crossing points and surfaces in poor condition, do discourage everyday walking.

Bus stops are mentioned, but only as an obstacle or pinch point. The analysis does not address how easily people can walk from home or their destination to a bus stop (and then wait comfortably). This ignores the role of walkability in encouraging bus rather than car use for longer trips.

Given the size of Plymouth, and the fact that half the routes studied were “low cost” to address, there is plenty of scope to identify other areas that where this approach could be applied. You might consider means of empowering ward councillors to work with neighbourhoods and

community groups to identify both problems and solutions which could be included in the next version of the LCWIP.

### Other aspects of cycling and walking in Plymouth

We recognise that the LCWIP does not cover the Council's full plans for encouraging walking and cycling. However we take this opportunity to state our support for a commuter-standard off road cycle track between Roborough and Yelverton, which would enable many more people to cycle rather than drive to workplaces and other facilities in the north of the city, and make the A386 safer for all traffic. We also welcome the long overdue proposals for an off-road cycle path and safer junctions on the A386 between Woolwell and the George, though we are disappointed that this is on only one side of the road and includes shared use sections.

The document refers to a number of other plans which will affect cycling and walking, including the Transforming Cities Fund. There has been little publicity for this outside Plymouth. If the Council succeeds in its intention to make transport within the city more sustainable, eg through mobility hubs, we encourage you to make an effort to ensure those coming from further afield are aware of and can easily access the options. Without this, driving door to door will continue to be the default.

### Value for money

We welcome the intention to revise the LCWIP each year and to add further routes.

We understand that the Council like all local authorities has limited funds, and that government funding tends to be through schemes open for a short time with specific criteria. However, the document shows no recognition of the cost to public funds – or even just Council services – of current obstacles to cycling and walking. The health and social benefits of active travel are well proven, so simple improvements to infrastructure can reduce costs elsewhere.

We urge the Council to give greater priority within its own budget to continuous improvement of both cycling and walking, in addition to preparing schemes to submit for external funding. Without this, improvement on the scale required for the health of both people and planet is unlikely.

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