

## Consultation Response to Devon County Council: Clearbrook to Roborough Multi-Use Trail



This response is on behalf of Transition Tavistock, a volunteer run community environmental group drawing membership from Tavistock and the surrounding villages. Our Travel Action Group advocates for all modes of sustainable travel. We have publicized the consultation, during the period it has been open, through our newsletters and social media, encouraging individual responses.

We welcome the Council's recognition that there is a need for an additional connection for non-motorised travel to northern Plymouth, as the Drake's Trail route connects with the city only at the eastern edge. We endorse the obvious point that the A386 is unsuitable for cyclists and pedestrians, and regularly hear of the difficult choices made by people, including medical staff, who are strongly motivated to cycle to work in or near Derriford Hospital, but cannot do so at reasonable pace via Drake's Trail or quieter lanes.

The background given references recent national policies on transport decarbonisation and active travel, but the Devon strategy cited is now 7 years old, well predating the Council's declaration of a climate emergency, and the extensive consultation with local stakeholders and the public which has informed the Devon Climate Plan. The proposals here do not convey the urgent need to transform travel patterns which both national and local climate policies acknowledge.

We are aware that housing growth already planned for Tavistock and Woolwell will add to travel volume on this corridor, and urge that Devon CC works closely with Plymouth CC to develop an ambitious plan to enable and encourage low carbon, healthy travel options. It is therefore disappointing that this proposal seems to have been drawn up without cross-reference to the Plymouth Local Cycling and Walking Plan (and vice versa) and contains not even an outline for connections to the new Woolwell development, which is, we understand, currently a planning proposal within the remit of South Hams Council – ie within Devon.

While we are not primarily a cycling group, we have been aware for several years of the considerable volunteer effort which Plymouth Cycling Campaign have put into researching an off road, commuter standard, route between Yelverton and Roborough. We have found support for this in Tavistock, both from cyclists and those who drive on the A386. We were therefore disturbed to realise that the current proposal is not only for a significantly different route starting at Clearbrook not Yelverton, but that Plymouth Cycling Campaign's preparatory work is not even acknowledged as an option.

The start near Clearbrook also does nothing to address the way the double gated controls between Yelverton and Clearbrook slow and hinder progress. E-bikes are giving increasing mobility to older people, but repeatedly mounting and dismounting to manoeuvre through these gates makes this section into an obstacle. We understand that a new traffic free route in this area will have to accommodate cyclists, walkers and other non-motorised travellers, but the language of the consultation, including the term "trail", suggests this is seen as primarily a leisure route.

We encourage the Council to be more ambitious with this plan, and to evaluate the option of a direct route starting near Yelverton along the east side of the A386. Of the two options presented, we think Option A unacceptable without traffic lights to enable safe crossing of the A386. Option B is hard to comment on without more information eg the slopes involved and the nature of the waterworks. As a leisure trail it would add to the choices currently available, but it does not address the demand for a fast cycle route. We do not want that ignored for a further generation, with consequent avoidable car traffic.

*Transition Tavistock Travel Action Group, 6<sup>th</sup> May 2022*

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