**‘Exeter Transport Strategy 2020 – 2030’**

**Response from Ide Parish Council**

Ide village lies two miles south-west of Exeter, within the Teignbridge District Council area. It has a population of 526 (2011 census). 75% of those who work choose to commute by car. The vast majority of those who work do so in Exeter. In addition, children from the village travel into Exeter to school and college.

As a village typical of those that need to be ‘connected’ with our nearby City, there is much within the Exeter Transport Strategy document that is relevant to us.

It is good that the need to move to sustainable transport systems is recognised however the elephant in the room – climate change – is barely mentioned. In October 2018 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, issued a report for the United Nations combining expertise from 91 scientists and government agents from 40 countries around the world, referencing 6,000 studies and other reports. The IPCC report states that “Earth’s inhabitants need to reduce our global net CO2 emissions by 45 percent compared with 2010 emission levels. We need to do that in the next 12 years.”. The fact that the Exeter Transport Strategy makes no mention of climate change when planning through to 2030 is alarming.

We note that the number of people who are residents in the city and drive to work has dropped to below half. This is good. However, it may be this is simply because the city is so congested that walking is faster than driving. We think stronger incentives are still needed. We hope that increased car parking charges have had some influence here.

**WALKING and CYCLING**

The document states the aim that 50% of work trips originating in Exeter be made on foot or by cycle. We feel this is a very unambitious aim when the current rate for walking and cycling is 39.3% of in-city journeys. There seems little reason not aim to reduce car journeys inside the city more.

Of those walking or cycling within the city, 30.9% walk, but only 8.4% cycle. Cycling has many advantages over walking, speed, range, carrying larger items. It is obvious that something is putting people off getting on their bikes for short journeys around the city.

The Cycle Paths around the Estuary, Canal and The Exe, and routes around new developments to the east of the city are excellent, but those within the city streets have problems.

Many are fragmentary, stopping and starting at dangerous points, and do not offer a joined up viable route for a person making a real life journey by bike.

Many feature frequent stops and give ways for the person cycling, or lengthy waits for toucan crossings. This makes the route more hazardous, and less viable as a serious means of transport.

The hazardous trend of re-routing cycles from roads onto pavements causes frustration and reduces the viability of a route for cyclists.

Many designated cycle routes are simply white lines at the edge of the road. This offers no protection and may encourage motorists to ignore cyclists and pass more dangerously.

Separate dedicated cycle paths need to be provided, designed to meet the needs of people who cycle as a form of transport. If alternative transport is going to be genuinely preferred over motor vehicles, it needs to be vehicles that work around cyclists and pedestrians and not vice versa.

Research into cycle journeys made in Britain by the DtF shows that women make up only 21% of cycle miles within then UK. Research by [Sustrans reveals that not feeling safe when on a bike](https://www.cyclinguk.org/article/campaigns-guide/women-cycling) is the most off-putting concern they have regarding cycling. Again we conclude that safer more viable cycle routes are needed. The DfT recently called for all Highways Authorites to invest at least 15% of all transport spend on cycling infrastructure.

It would also be helpful if a 20mph speed limit were applied and enforced within the city.

**RAIL**

We welcome the proposal to increase the frequency of trains into and out of the city, and it is good that two new stations (Cranbrook and Newcourt) have been created. It is clear that the city, and residents of the Greater Exeter Area would benefit from additional rail links.

The strategy document notes that travel within the city by bus is neither reliable or fast, which prevents more people from seeing it as a viable alternative to their personal motor vehicles.

Trains, are faster and have a set timetable. Improving rail links would be a major factor in reducing congestion and cutting carbon emissions. It seems Exminster, Marsh Barton and Cullompton could all benefit from stations, with adequate car and cycle parking to reduce car journeys into the city.

Current provision of cycle places on trains is poor. Spaces are limited may have to be booked. Transport cannot be guaranteed which makes it not a viable option for serious commuters.

**BUS**

There is a shortage of bus services from rural areas into the City/ Improving this service could also reduce vehicle commuters travelling in from outlying villages. Bus services to and from rural areas have been cut and seem likely to be reduced further.

Whilst Park and Ride can deliver benefits, they must be researched and modelled to ensure they can deliver the intended benefits and not cause more problems.

**A Case Study: The Exeter Transport Strategy 2020 – 2030 and Ide village**

Some aspirations in the strategy document make good reading for parishioners of Ide:

***1.48****. [ . . . ] This will be complemented by new high quality strategic cycle links creating a city region strategic leisure network to encourage short to medium distance trips from existing settlements into Exeter and the Exe Estuary Trail.*

***1.55.*** *In combination, the enhanced rail, bus and active travel links between key settlements and Exeter form the basis of a Connected City Region network.*

* *Comprehensive citywide Exeter cycle network linking all key destinations,*
* *delivering safe routes that can be enjoyed by all.*
* *Enhance key pedestrian corridors, including new river and main road crossings and improved access to transport interchanges.*
* *Improved access to cycle, including city-wide bike hire scheme and greater access to storage facilities.*
* *Modal filters [ . . . . ] to remove through traffic and create quieter and safer environments for pedestrians and cyclists.*

These words need to be backed up by real action.

The modal splits for commuters into Exeter from the Greater Exeter show great opportunity for improvement, with only 1.2% walking and 2.1% cycling. Obviously some commuters have larger distances to cover, but for Ide, alternatives to the car should be good options given the small distances. Regretably, this is not the case.

Currently, there are four buses a day into Exeter, and five out. The first bus into Exeter drops passengers off in the city around 8am, the last bus into Exeter leaves at 14:34, the last bus to Ide from Exeter at 17:55. The service has been cut back over the last few years.

Walking and cycling should both be viable options. However in reality the routes available are disappointing. If modal filtering were applied we could create safe, convenient and viable routes to and from the City.

There is a footpath alongside the very busy C50 / Ide Village Road, also generally used by cyclists as there is light foot traffic and the road is unsafe for people using bicycles. This arrives at the very busy Alphington A30 interchange, where there are extremely unsafe crossing points over two very heavily-used slip roads, with extremely poor visibility. This route is noisy and unpleasant, but the Alphington crossings are exceptionally dangerous.

In Ide, there is a foot and cycle bridge over the A30 to the Twisted Oak Pub. From here pedestrians can go into Doctor’s Walk and up Little John’s Cross Hill to the top of Dunsford Hill.

Perhaps the best route is from the Twisted Oak into Ball’s Farm Road, which emerges onto Cowick Lane via Crabbe Lane and connecting with frequent ‘A’ bus services or the side-roads of St Thomas to Exe Bridges. It is also be used by children from the village attending West Exe School.

The routes by the Twisted Oak are subject to traffic restrictions including no motor vehicles except for access. We have noted that modal filtering using bollards and barriers has been very effective in preventing the roads at the north end of Cowick Lane (Holland Road, Coleridge Road, Shaftesbury Road etc) being used as a rat runs.

Unfortunately the traffic restrictions for the in question to and from Ide are widely ignored and surveys since 2013 show a steady increase in traffic, most recently showing up to 290 cars per hour accessing these routes at peak times. [<http://idevillage.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Balls-FmRd-181215TrafficAnalysis-Paper-4-for-16-1-19.doc>] The Police have been helpful, mounting several operations, but in their words it would, ‘need 365 days a year enforcement’, which they cannot provide. Illegal traffic on these roads was a problem for many years before the surveys began in 2013, with various community groups, newspaper articles and action by councillors, but traffic keeps increasing. Sometimes it feels as though these roads are being abandoned to the illegal traffic rather than defended as the alternative travel route into Exeter that they should be.

We are working with Devon County Council and Devon Highways to bring about a permanent solution so we welcome the aspirations in the strategy document, but these must be backed up with real funding and action.