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**From:** Transition Exmouth  
**Sent:** 15 March 2021 11:46  
**To:** Planning Policy  
**Subject:** Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report - comments

Dear Planners,  
Transition Exmouth is a community group dedicated to taking steps towards a carbon zero lifestyle.

We welcome the broad goals of the Report.

We feel that this report should acknowledge the Shifting Baseline Syndrome <https://ore.exeter.ac.uk/repository/bitstream/handle/10871/29827/manuscript.pdf;jsessionid=3AC46122E2627F0F3B08C2F9266E2D4D?sequence=1>, by which researchers take the current state of the environment to be the natural norm.

It is true that our biodiversity is precious, but maintaining it at current levels is inadequate, given that we have lost so much of our historic tree cover, and pollinator insects and other wildlife have faced a similar decline here as across the country.

Climate change adaption p19 - there is need for local authorities to be in the forefront of educating residents about steps they can take to reduce their carbon footprint, improve recycling rates etc.

Transport: this should also include a baseline of cycle paths currently in place, and acknowledge the necessity of a rise in both their number and use, given that the main air pollutant in East Devon is noted as coming from traffic. Charging point availability and spaces for co-owned ebikes and cars should similarly be part of the baseline.

p56 Suitability of potential development sites for walking and cycling - more weight to be given to the necessity of segregated cycle lanes being a requirement for all new development, and a priority in retrofitting to all existing roads.

We hope EDDC may have an ecologist in house soon to draw on their expertise, and we look forward to the appointment of the proposed Climate Action officers.

The issue of EU Policy and protections is well-made, but in the wake of Brexit we have to do our best to replicate those protections. We are very sceptical about your statement at 3.24 that Government policy seeks to protect against biodiversity loss, both from some of the decisions we have seen, and in comments made by the PM and other senior ministers. We would ask the Council to be mindful of the need to exceed government objectives in building sustainability into the new plan in the wake of Brexit. We are pleased to read your 3.21, recognising that biodiversity loss had been happening over decades, so this needs some building back, as well as protection from future threats. Acknowledging the tendency towards Shifting Baseline Syndrome may help others appreciate this need.

Neighbourhood Plans are in place in many towns and parishes, including here in Exmouth, many of which have actions and policies connected with sustainability. These should be consulted.

The recovery from Covid is very important, and we can learn lessons from the positives and negatives in building the more sustainable East Devon we all want. The home page of every local authority website should have clear links to dealing with the Climate Emergency, as at present the covid emergency is covered. We recommend OurPlaceOurplanet.org in this respect.

Other key areas mentioned in your draft:

Waste - yes, reducing material use, and re-use are even more important than recycling, and the recent figures for waste per household - ED the lowest in England are encouraging, but still fall far below what is needed. This needs somehow factoring in. The message that incineration is also a damaging process needs to be factored in.

Public Transport - Actually, we need better services, buses and trains, and made cheaper and more accessible. . Active travel needs to be encouraged everywhere, to a level far beyond Government criteria.

Population Balance - To maintain balance, rather than a perpetually ageing population we need sustainable employment and housing policies.

Housing - There should be proper mention and encouragement of social rented housing. By lumping all under "Affordable" whatever the definition used, you diminish the perceived need. At present private renting is expensive, and often of poor quality. This leads to divided communities - not sustainable.

Employment Policy - We should be doing everything possible to minimise commuting to Exeter and other places to create self sufficient local places. Use of electronic communication, improvement of broadband etc should also help facilitate this.

best regards

Carol Jay (TrEx Secretary)

Connect with us on:

[Our Place Our Planet : website with local and national links to help us take steps for Climate Action Transition Exmouth website](http://www.greendrinks.org/Devon/Exmouth)

<http://www.greendrinks.org/Devon/Exmouth>

 [@TransitionEX8](https://twitter.com/TransitionEX8)

 <https://www.facebook.com/transition.exmouth/>



Transition Exmouth's mission: To strengthen the community's response to Climate Change, inequality and shrinking supplies of resources, including energy, water and land.

To build long-term town resilience, preserve biodiversity and reduce carbon emissions.