

A Strategy for Cycle Routes in Exmouth Consultation

7 November 2007 – 20 December 2007

Exmouth Cyclepath Working Group

The Exmouth Cycle Strategy is available for public comment during a six-week period from 7 November 2007 until 20 December 2007. Comment forms, explanatory booklets setting out the strategy and maps showing the cycle paths are available to view in the following locations:

- East Devon District Council Offices, Sidmouth
- Exmouth Town Hall
- East Devon Tennis Centre
- Exmouth Library
- Exmouth Sports Centre

Please contact John Maidment or Claire Rodway on 01395 516551 if you have any queries or require further information.

Comments should be returned to:

Policy and Conservation Section
Environment Directorate
Council Offices
Knowle
Sidmouth
Devon
EX10 8HL

localplans@eastdevon.gov.uk

Please ensure that all comments are received by 5pm on 20 December 2007 at the latest. Following analysis of the comments received, the document will be updated as required and will then form planning guidance for use in decision making.

Preface

The ECWG produced the first strategy in 2002 and a number of years have passed since the first edition of this strategy. Comparing with the original version, it is heartening to see that both cycle provision and usage in Exmouth has slowly but steadily increased.

There are currently major developments of the National Cycle Network through Exmouth underway. Construction of a completely new off-road route from Exmouth to Lympstone is scheduled by Devon County Council to be completed by autumn 2007; from Lympstone to Exton by autumn 2008 and all the way to Exeter by autumn 2009. The year 2006 has seen substantial work on the off-road route from Exeter to Powderham together with the Exmouth the Topsham route and the ferry this will give an off-road circuit with fantastic tourism potential. Moreover, the NCN Route 2 (mostly on-road) is now signed from Lyme Regis and Seaton through to Budleigh and connects with the off-road route to Exmouth currently ending at Marine Way in Exmouth.

Evidence from other such routes (such as the Camel Trail from Padstow) shows that the NCN Route 2 could become a major year-round tourist attraction that can attract of the order of

400,000 visitors per year. To benefit from this to the full extent we will need to prepare Exmouth in a number of ways. These include

- Provision of an excellent set of safe and memorable routes
- Marketing, signage and forward planning
- Provision of good 'stopping off points'
- Provision of cycle hire and maintenance
- Provision of cycle friendly 'link-up' transport, cycle parking etc.

Just up the valley at Exeter, the "Cycling England" government funding of £0.5million pounds per year for 2005/6-2008/9 has already resulted in a doubling of cycle usage for school travel while achieving a 5% drop in car use for school travel [Devon County Council information]. Other statistics show that the provision of new safe routes has nationally resulted in year-on-year increase in use of the NCN routes of at least 10% for every year since 2000. However, Exmouth has very much to gain from better cycle provision, not just for tourism but also from the point of residents, schools and businesses.

We emphasise cycle routes here simply because:

- They need to be planned over long distances to be useful,
- They can usually be made compatible with the needs of other 'non-car' users,

but the routes suggested are clearly also for walkers, the disabled, those with pushchairs etc.

The aim of this strategy

We aim to identify a coherent plan for provision of safe, direct and memorable routes for cyclists and pedestrians within and around Exmouth.

Who are we?

The Exmouth Cyclepath Working Group, P. and A. Ashwin, M. and J. Dunn, J. and N. Pawson, P. Kalaugher, J. Petty and L. Potter; consulting with local residents.

Contact: P.Ashwin@ex.ac.uk.

Why do we need a strategy?

Exmouth is privileged to be included on the Devon County Council stretch of the 'Sustrans' National Cycle Network Route 2. When the section Exmouth to Exeter is completed by 2009 we need a strategy to be able to make full use of this. The greatest danger we face at present is the loss of quite small but vital stretches of land through planning applications due to pressure of development. The most recent Local Plan enquiry recommended to make this strategy a supplementary planning guidance for the Local Plan of East Devon District Council precisely for this reason.

Why cycle routes in Exmouth?

For Residents there is great potential for:

- Reduction of traffic congestion and pollution, with improvement in quality of life.
- Increased mobility for young people presently confined to the perceived safety of their parents' cars.
- Significant health and fitness benefits for the population as a whole.

For Businesses there are benefits:

- The network will provide a distinctive marketing point for Exmouth and boost for year-round tourism in the town.
- Town centre shops and facilities will become more accessible by cycle and reduce the 'draining' effect of out-of town shopping.

For Tourists there is great potential:

- In making Exmouth a 'year round' destination.
- The natural beauty of the seafront, estuary and several inland tourist destinations are all within a reasonable cycling distance of any part of the town.
- There are reasonable public transport connections, and the seafront, estuary and disused railway lines provide perfect gradients for safe family cycling.
- Exmouth is on the Sustrans *National Cycle Network* (NCN) route 2, and the World Heritage Coastline status is an international selling-point for Exmouth.

For Schools:

- The Community College lies at the junction of several planned routes and would provide a wealth of safe routes from all parts of Exmouth.
- The 'school run' is a major source of traffic congestion and traffic danger in the town; cycle and walking routes tackle this directly by providing direct, continuous and safe routes to schools.

The routes we have identified consist of the following.

A. NATIONAL CYCLE NETWORK AND RADIAL ROUTES

We identify a number of safe radial routes with gentle gradients from beyond the outskirts of Exmouth to the central region; these are the 'Sustrans' National Cycle Network routes. The National Cycle Network Route 2 in Exmouth consists of :

Exmouth - Budleigh Cycleway
'Estuaryside Route' to Lympstone
'Seafront Route'

In addition the Valley Park routes

Bapton Valley Park
Withycombe Valley Park

fill in between the NCN routes while maintaining gentle gradients.

B. TOWN CENTRE ROUTES

We suggest routes through the town centre linking the main destinations in town to the radial routes.

C. LINKING ROUTES

We identify feeder routes, peripheral routes, 'links' between radial routes and routes into the countryside.

D. CYCLE PARKING

Suggest locations for cycle parking within Exmouth.

The attached map shows both existing and proposed routes A-C above, and the following pages give some details of (and possible alternative to) of the suggest routes.

Coordinating and constructing a cycle network in Exmouth

To implement the vision of this network, we recommend

- An Exmouth-based coordinator to liaise between planners, DCC Highways, Local Authorities, Sustrans and other interested parties to create a detailed plan and to secure investment and funds to build the network.
- Consultation with the public and interested parties about the strategy and adoption as planning guidance for future developments.

Aspects that need to be considered include:

- Planning, auditing and monitoring
- Budgeting and sponsorship
- Diverse sources for funding
- Road surfaces and cycling obstructions
- Signposting
- Promotion/marketing/advertising, a 'cycle/walking route map' for Exmouth
- Construction and maintainance
- Access to the network
- Education; cycle awareness, training and safety
- The network as a resource for health, fitness and reduction in obesity

Potential partners include:

- The local authorities; Devon County Council, East Devon District Council, Exmouth Town Council
- Town traders and Chamber of Commerce
- Sustrans
- Visitors Centre project leaders
- Exmouth Residents Association
- Landowners
- All schools, especially Exmouth Community College
- Public Transport operators, currently First Great Western trains and Stagecoach Devon, Ferry and Cruise operators
- The Countryside Agency, who would view many of the routes as 'greenways' or 'quiet lanes'

Proposed Routes

We include below suggestions for the main routes and for secondary routes; for more detail, see later. *The routes marked ** are strategically most important; those marked * are important.*

A (i) National Cycle Network- Radial Routes of greatest importance

A.1 NCN 2 (National Cycle Network) Exmouth - Budleigh Cycleway **

This runs from the 'hub' of the network at Phear Park to Bear Lane outside Budleigh Salterton and when completed will form part of a route to Budleigh, Sidmouth and beyond. The route links to the Exmouth Community College within Phear Park. There is an opportunity to create an off-road *cycle training area* in Phear Park that would be accessible to several local primary schools.

A.2 NCN 2 'Estuaryside Route' **

This currently exists on Marine Way, is planned to Lymstone in 2007 and to Exeter soon after that. The route follows the railway line on the eastern side up to Lymstone and promises to be a *nationally outstanding route* on the NCN. It is certain to be a great attraction for Exmouth and the wider area.

A.3 NCN 2 'Seafront Route' **

Sustrans are also proposing a second route that would run along the seafront and link to A.1 and A.2 at either end; this would connect from Castle Lane in the east to Marine Way in the west. Ideally this would pass through the docks/marina area.

A (ii) Other Radial Routes

A.4 'Bapton Brook Valley' *

There is an opportunity to build a continuous path from Phear park along the line of the Bapton Brook, through the Valley Park areas, upper Marley Road and beyond to the Common; fragments already exist through the work of EDDC over several years.

A.5 'Withycombe Brook Valley' *

From Phear Park a continuous cyclepath should be constructed along the line of the Withycombe Brook as far as Dinan Way and then beyond Veiges Farm towards the Common.

B. Town Centre*

Clearly construction of cycleways/routes within the town centre needs to be coordinated with pedestrian priority and road alteration schemes. A minimum would be to provide a 'cross' of safe routes:

From Exeter Road to the Seafront and

From Sports Centre/Station area to Rolle Campus site.

The routes should follow sensible lines that go past the most active areas of town, namely the Station, Lower Exeter Road, Parade, Strand Gardens, Church Street, Esplanade and Rolle Campus. A signed cycle link to the Docks is important for ferry access to the Heritage Coast, cruises and the South Devon Coast Path.

C. Linking routes

By providing a number of shorter linking and peripheral routes, the whole network would become accessible to a very large proportion of Exmouth, and in particular to provide safe links to Schools, Health Centres and the Hospital. Some cyclepaths and provision on main roads could be used to reduce danger areas such as the roundabouts on Marine Way and Salterton Road, and on Exeter Road.

A cycleway along Dinan Way would be a useful peripheral route and would link the radial routes, as would a Tourist Route that goes from the Bapton Valley Route past 'A la Ronde' and down Courtlands Lane. This could join the NCN Estuaryside route A.2 near Lymstone. It is important to safeguard verges from development on Dinan Way to keep this option open.

D. Cycle parking

Secure cycle parking needs to be provided at a number of points in the town and had been considerably improved near Pedestrian centre of town. The preferred option is to have a scattering of 'Sheffield' hoop cycle parking racks or equivalent in twos or threes around the town, in park areas and along the seafront. These should be off the road surface wherever possible. In addition there should be a few concentrations (3 or more) of cycle parking racks at points where there would be more demand. Concentrations would be useful at: The Strand (eg Cafe Quarter), Sports Centre, Station, Marina, near Phear Park activities, at several points on the Esplanade, and at the end of Queens Drive.

However, we note that one of the great advantages of cycle use in shopping is that it can be used as a 'mobile shopping basket' with the result that cycle users will want to leave cycles for short times at many points in town. Businesses that are keen to encourage this could be approached to sponsor the construction of nearby cycle racks, possibly with discreet built-in advertising panels.

General comments on the proposed routes

- A few of the following routes are already in place and many more of them could be provided at relatively low cost.
- The National Cycle Charity 'Sustrans' have *detailed minimum specifications* for cyclepaths and dual use cycle/footpaths; see www.sustrans.org.uk In particular the majority of routes should be safe enough for use by an unaccompanied 12 year old and our vision is that the whole of the town network can be negotiated safely.
- In all proposals we would like to emphasise that 'cyclepath' means a safe, direct, bidirectional path for cyclists that is suitable for pedestrians, wheelchair and pushchair users.
- In all cases, cyclepaths that have only shallow gradients should be greatly preferred to those with steeper gradients.
- In pedestrian priority areas that do not have space for cyclepath markings, cyclists are required to dismount.
- A number of short stretches of cyclepath are much less useful than a continuous route that joins two endpoints of a journey that people will want to travel. For this reason it is vital to **safeguard** land that lies on the routes to avoid loss of a future amenity. For the same reason, care needs to be taken in designing safe routes through traffic hazards.
- We support the provision of lighting of cyclepaths that remain within urban areas, but not outside the town. In some cases, discreet (possibly low-level) lighting may be preferable to full-sized street-lighting.
- Wherever possible cycle routes should avoid going past lines of parked cars due to the hazard from car doors opening suddenly. Other main hazard points for cyclists within Exmouth are presently perceived to be the roundabouts in town.
- Accurate signposting, provision of scenic stopping places with access to food and WCs is important for maximum utility of the network.
- While generally contributing to ease of cycling, traffic calming needs to be carefully designed with cyclists in mind to avoid presenting cyclists with unnecessary barriers, eg 'pads' tend to be preferred to 'humps' across the road.
- Similarly, small changes to maintenance of drain covers etc can often eliminate an uncomfortable or dangerous spot for cyclists that may not be evident to motorists.

Detailed comments on the proposed routes

(only where the line of the routes A.1 through C.5 are not obvious; referring to the map of routes)

A.3.1 Branch from A.1 into Capel Lane, through Littleham into Maer Lane, with loop into field to avoid dangerous stretch between Prattshayes Farm and Sewage works. Alternative: along the line of footpath number 5 which would need to be upgraded, then upgrade the footpath along Elm Lane, Randells Green and into Maer Lane.

A.3.2 Continue down Maer Lane, making this no access other than for residents and agricultural vehicles.

A.3.3 Go along Esplanade Cycleway, extended to Dock basin.

A.3.4 Either: (a) over the (presently disputed) bridge, along Shelly Road and then Imperial Recreation Ground or (b) remain east of the Marina basin, before going around the Imperial Recreation Ground. Either way it should reconnect with A.2 at the railway station area.

A.4 From the cycle/footpath at the edge of Raleigh Park:

A.4.1 Construct a cyclepath along the SE and NE edges of Raleigh Park and the Brook, over the Brook and into Burnside, mark cyclepath along Burnside and into end of Nutbrook. Also can open link to Community College Gypsy Lane site.

A.4.3 Cyclepath from end of Nutbrook, through field to Bapton Lane is **now in place**.

A.4.4 Greenfingers area. **There is now a path** that follows a very steep gradient up and then down to Pound Lane. It would be strongly preferable to construct a cyclepath close to stream through site of Greenfingers Garden centre in order to follow a contour as closely as possible. Although this is currently not possible, provision of a cyclepath here should be made as a planning stipulation for any future development of the site.

A.4.5 Safe crossing of Pound Lane **constructed** this year.

A.4.6 Link to Marley Road

Strongly preferred: Construct cyclepath across or around edge of field directly into Marley Road.

Alternative: Construct cyclepath along line of footpath into Partridge Road and Spiders Lane then Marley Road; this involves extra unnecessary steep gradients.

A.4.7 Construct a safe crossing of Marley Road, mark and convert to cyclepath link to Upper Marley Road and up to Dinan Way (would need discreet streetlights along Marley Road).

A.4.8 Safe crossing of Dinan Way and continue along Marley Road towards Common.

A.4.9 Mark path from A.4.8 to 'a la Ronde' then down Summers Lane and Courtland Lane to A.2 along line of East Devon Way.

A.5 From Phear Park:

A.5.1 Upgrade footpath along northeast side of College to Moorfield Road.

A.5.2 Construct footpath on South side of stream up to footpath from Nursery Mews to Withycombe Village Road.

A.5.3 : How to get to Bradham Lane crossing of Brook? Ideal solution would be along brook. This would require negotiations from house owners close to brook. Second best would be to go onto Withycombe Village Road, past two mini- roundabouts and then down Bradham Lane.

A.5.4 Up Brooklands Road and then to follow Withycombe Brook, probably on NorthEast side? Access to the Brook may be difficult here, but a dual use cycle/footpath along this would provide an essential link to town for the Dinan Way/ Meadow View area of town.

A.5.5 Upgrade present footpath (and lighting) under Dinan way and that through park on edge of Liverton Copse.

A.5.6 Continue by upgrading footpath from this park to Veiges Farm (may have to cross stream), over St Johns Road.

A.5.7 Continue cyclepath east of stream as far as stables, go up to St John's Lodge on tarmac then parallel to St John's Road on west side up to Y junction. Continue up to 'tumulus' opposite Wright's Lane and then onto Common.

B.1 'Phear park area**

This is a vital 'hub' for the network, linking the radial routes A.1,A.2,A.3, A.4, A.5 with the town centre and the Community College.

B.1.1 Construct cyclepath from Buzzard route, around east edge of golf course to go onto service road to club/snack bar houses.

B.1.2 Construct cyclepaths from Bapton and Withycombe Brook Routes A.4 and A.5 into Phear Park, meeting at main entrance to Phear Park.

B.1.3 Construct safe crossing of Withycombe Village Road to Park Road and then preferably construct raised cyclepath in streambed from WVR to Exeter Road. Likely to be costly, but a very important link for the NCN route. Short term/cheaper but inferior alternative would be to mark cyclepath along Park Road (consider making this no access from Exeter Road end), possibly going into Bridge Road and then either bridge over stream to raised cyclepath in streambed and out onto Exeter Road (junction Lyndhurst Road), or path through car-park at end of Bridge Road and present path to Exeter Road.

B.2 'Carter Avenue triangle/ Marine Way' **

B.2.1 Construct a triangle of cyclepaths around borders of green area enclosing King George V field, to continue the NCN Estuaryside route.

B.2.2 Construct cyclepath on west of Marine Way to connect NCN route and Phear park area respectively with station and Strand area of Town Centre.

B.2.3 Construct cyclepaths on east side of Marine Way from crossing of Exeter Road to pass around back of Hometor House and into Woodville back Road, Halsdon Road.

B.2.4 Widen path from Halsdon Road to Parade past end of New Street to allow cycle/pedestrian use.

There is a potential alternative route from the estuary along Mudbank road, past the substation at Highland Garage, over Exeter Road and into the streambed opposite footpath 14. This direct but radical alternative needs an open-minded evaluation as an alternative.

B.3. 'Lower Exeter Road' area*

A connection from Halsdon Road to the Strand pub/ station area is important (see B.2.4), but the presence of many facilities on Exeter Road means that the length of lower Exeter Road will be in demand by cycle users. If construction of cycleways are not possible then accident reduction schemes/ road narrowing would be important to make this safer.

B.4'Strand to Esplanade' **

Cyclepath from SW corner of Strand through edge of Manor Gardens, east of Tourist Bureau and safe crossing into Bath Rd and Esplanade, or around remodelled Chapel Hill roundabout.

B.5 'Exeter Road via Rolle Street to Manor Gardens'

The best route here depends on the future configuration and usage of roads in this area;

If for example Sheppards Row could be connected to the Imperial Road/ Marine Way junction then the Parade could become safe enough to be the main route.

If the main car park at London Inn was replaced by a car park closer to the Estuaryside (for example, using the area in front of Strand Pub after relocating some workshops etc) then flow of traffic in Town Centre could be considerably reduced.

Otherwise for example:

B.5.1 Mark cyclepath near Glenorchy Church Hall (Mona Island), left into Albion Street, 'contraflow' into Union Street. Alternative would be Meeting St – George St – Union St.

B.5.2 Continue along Church Street to Junction with Rolle Street, then either High Street or Tower Street to join with path B.4 from Strand to Esplanade near Manor Gardens. (Alternative: South Street, Bicton Street and cross to Little Bicton Place.

B.6 'Town centre to Rolle Campus' *

Mark cyclepath from Church Street up Fore Street and Gussiford Lane. Cross Salterton Road and then into Fairfield Road to Rolle Campus. This could be continued on to Douglas Avenue, Trefusis Terrace and then down Carlton Hill to provide extra safe access to A.3.

B.7 'Sports centre to Strand' **

Ideal route here would be along Manchester Road. We understand that this was rejected as an option in this recently pedestrianised route, but it could be still used with clear 'cyclists please dismount' signs. Alternative is to mark cyclepath from transport interchange/Sports Centre area into Manchester road, turn right to Manchester Street and then allow two-way cycle traffic along Victoria Road up to south west end of Strand.

B.8 NCN to town centre direct route

Although the routes B.1, B.2 provide a link from the NCN route A.1, it would be a considerable improvement to provide a route that goes from the present end on Marpool Hill into town. This would need safe crossing at scout hut to Fairview Terrace (up revamped steps), left into Fairview Back Road, into Ryll Grove, Windsor Square, Clarence Road, Meeting Street to Exeter Road and the routes B.3, B.5 and along New North Road to join the route B.2.3.

B.9 Yacht basin

The access to Estuary and Yacht basin could be provided by a route along Shelly Road and over the docks bridge to Belshers slipway.

B.10 'Queen's Drive'

Extend Esplanade cycle track to start of 'World Heritage Coastline'. Maybe move the road north and remove the roundabout at the end; this seems to be of little use at present.

B.11 from Bath road, behind Pavilion and to upgraded Madeira walk.

C.1 Main Road cyclepaths

It would be very helpful in the long run to provide cyclepaths on the main routes through town that avoid large detours or gradients on alternative routes. In particular Exeter Road north of junction with Lyndhurst Rd, Hulham Road from junction with Exeter Road and Salterton Road from end of Rolle Street. In several places pavements are easily wide enough to accommodate a cycle path. Most important to provide for cycle safety at junctions such as Hulham Road/Exeter Road and Rolle St/Salterton Road where there is little alternative to cyclist using these. Note that Buzzard Route presently marked up Hulham Road. This could be relocated to Bapton Valley Park.

C.2 Footpath upgrades

Possible footpaths that could be very helpful for a network of cycle routes could be especially Spiders Lane (to access the school) and possibly Long Lane and Limekiln Lane. A useful crosslink would be to go from A.3, Elm Lane via Buckingham Close and Jarvis Close to the NCN A.1.

C.3 Dinan Way

It would be very helpful in the long term to provide cycle alternative to Dinan Way so that a large section of Brixington has safe access to the Radial Routes. As a minimum we would ask the possibility of a route along here to be safeguarded against loss to developments.

C.4 Claremont Grove

If Boarden Barn can be closed to traffic: Up Fore Street, Boarden Barn, Long Causeway, Highview Gardens then Vale Road. Alternative: a small stretch on Salterton Road from Gussiford Lane, in to Highfield Lane, Raddenstile Lane to Claremont Grove (access to Heath Centre and Hospital) and on to Gorfin Hall. This also provides access to Dolphin and St Josephs schools.

C.5 Link to Liverton Business Park.

A route from A.1 to A.5 near Liverton Copse would involve gradients that are rather steep but could connect to routes that are already in existence along Salterton Road at this point.

C.6 Link Bapton Valley/Estuaryside. It would be relatively easy to provide a safe route from the estuaryside near Danby House up Halson Avenue, through lane to Exeter Road, over at safe crossing (already in place), lane to Keverel Drive, Phillips Avenue, Hulham Road (safe crossing needed), Bapton Close.

C.7 Links to Schools. The network outlined would provide access to all schools in Exmouth as well as to Health centres and Hospital; possibly with short links not detailed above.