



East Devon District Council

**Green Travel Strategy
and Action Plan
2024-2030**

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1. Introduction

1.1 What is a Green Travel Plan

This is East Devon District Council's Green Travel Plan.

Whilst we recognise that there is still a place for single user private cars within this plan, we now want to encourage staff, members, and visitors to use alternative, sustainable transport methods including walking, cycling, using public transport or car-sharing wherever this is possible.

[BREEAM](#) provides our assessment methodology and it considers environmental, social, and economic sustainability performance. A travel plan is defined as a strategy for managing all travel and transport within an organisation, principally to increase choice and reduce reliance on the car by seeking to improve access to a site or development by sustainable modes of transport.

The Green Travel Plan does not apply to 'non-Council' related activities. However, our Climate Change Action Plan has identified areas where the Council can support green travel in the wider community.

1.2 Aims

The Green Travel Plan aims to result in less traffic congestion, reduced emissions, better local air quality and more active people. We will achieve this through:

- Discouraging single occupancy vehicle trips
- Increasing the proportion of walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing trips
- Continuing to progress the Fleet Decarbonisation Plan, we currently have a 33% decarbonised fleet
- Continuing to progress the EV charging strategy
- Continue to promote the Happy Healthy Here policy and it's wellbeing initiatives
- Investigate secure bike parking options and whether this service will benefit EDDC staff and residents

1.3 Objectives

To:

- Promote travel solutions that respond to the local challenges and opportunities
- Raise awareness, understanding and accessibility of travel options, and local amenities, allowing for affordable access to services
- Encourage more sustainable transport of people and goods, to and around our sites

- Account for the travel needs of future occupants
- Reduce congestion and improve safety on the site and local roads
- Increase attractiveness of the site to potential users

1.4 Why have a Green Travel Plan

The benefits of sustainable travel include less congestion on the road network, reduced pollution, and a healthier population. East Devon District Council is a major employer locally and, therefore, we have a responsibility to set an example by promoting and influencing sustainable travel whenever and wherever possible. Large numbers of employees means that the Council has a relatively large travel carbon ‘footprint’. Although overall it is only a small percentage of the council’s total carbon emissions, it is our responsibility to reduce carbon emissions as much as possible. This can be addressed in part by influencing how employees travel to and from work and how they travel around the district on Council business. Our Worksmart+ agreement has meant that there has been a 66% reduction in carbon emissions from commuting [11].

Carbon footprint: the total greenhouse gas emissions caused directly and indirectly by a person, organisation, event or product [2]



Walking briskly for 10 minutes counts as exercise and even at that level we can see some health benefits compared to doing nothing at all [4]. Encouraging our staff, members and visitors to choose sustainable travel options, whether by walking, cycling or other means, would not only provide benefits now, but is also likely to act as a role model for future generations.

1.5 National context

Provisional estimates show motor vehicles accounted for 321.9 billion vehicle miles in Great Britain for the year ending September 2022. This is a 12.6% increase compared to the year ending September 2021 [5].

In 2022, average trips increased for both car drivers and passengers to 337 trips per person and 165 trips per person respectively, however, these remained below pre-pandemic levels ([8].

When looking at the number of trips cycled per person the trend has remained broadly similar between 2002 to 2021 [9].

When compared to the year ending September 2021, car traffic increased by 13.5% to 239.8 billion vehicle miles [10].

Heavy dependency on car use leads to traffic congestion, pollution, and physical inactivity, which impose high direct and indirect costs on society [6].

Nearly all walks recorded in the NTS were under 5 miles in 2022 (99.8%) [7].

4 out of 10 (41%) adults aged 40 to 60 in England walk less than 10 minutes continuously each month at a brisk pace [3].

The Government's [National Planning Policy Framework](#) sets out planning policies for England and how these should be applied. The Framework highlights the importance of promoting and facilitating sustainable travel and providing high quality public transport facilities in developments. It states the importance of organisation travel plans as a key tool in mitigating the transport impacts of development.

2. Local context

The levels of car ownership reflect the rural nature of the district. At the last census it was recorded that 84.1% of households owned at least one vehicle; with the national figure being 74.4% [1]. In the most recent Knowing East Devon report from 2018, the number of registered vehicles in East Devon stood at 104,900 the highest number of all of the Devon district areas and a 15% rise on the number registered in 2010 ([Knowing East Devon 2013](#)).

East Devon has a mixture of urban and rural networks with the district served by limited public transport. The main centres of population are Axminster, Budleigh Salterton, Cranbrook, Exmouth, Honiton, Ottery St Mary, Seaton and Sidmouth.

This plan aims to contribute to reducing traffic, reducing air pollution, and increasing levels of physical activity.

2.1 How the Green Travel Plan supports Council goals

The Green Travel Plan has potential to support all four of the Council's strategic priorities for 2024-2028 (Better Homes and Communities for all; A Greener East Devon; A Resilient Economy, Quality Services).

Blackdown House aspires to [BREEAM](#) "Very Good" accreditation. BREEAM rated developments are more sustainable environments that enhance the wellbeing of the people who live and work in them, help protect natural resources and make for more attractive property investments.

The plan builds upon the Council's Worksmart approach which has already introduced cultural change, encouraging us all to work more flexibly at times and from locations that best meet the needs of the tasks, our customers, ourselves, our team and our organisation. A series of principles and protocols and supporting technology are already in place meaning that our new way of working has led to a 66% reduction in carbon emissions from commuting [11]. In addition, the "Happy, Healthy, Here" initiatives means

that staff can have up to two 30 minute paid for breaks per week to do exercise or engage in other council initiatives such as going to talks.

2.2 Council premises and staff

East Devon District Council currently employs staff in the following sites:

Exmouth Camperdown Terrace
Exmouth Town Hall
Honiton East Devon Business Centre
Honiton Blackdown House
Honiton Thelma Hulbert Gallery
Sidmouth Lymbourne House
Sidmouth Manor Pavilion
Sidmouth Manstone Depot

In 2023, 534 staff worked at EDDC. These staff, 60 elected members along with contractors and many visitors generate a significant number of journeys using the surrounding transport network.

2.3 Business travel

As a local authority with statutory duties covering a large and, in many places, rural geographical area, business travel is often essential. In April 2018, 150 staff were classified as essential car users and 72 as casual car users. An important element of our plan is to encourage our staff and members to ask themselves:

- Is my journey necessary?
- Could a meeting be held in another way e.g., telephone or video conferencing?
- What mode of travel is most appropriate for the destination, distance, or time of travel?

There is already some support for staff choosing alternative modes for business journeys. For instance, staff using their own bicycle during business are eligible to claim 20p per mile in travel expenses. Additionally, a salary sacrifice scheme for an electric vehicle is currently being investigated.

The council has its own white fleet. In November 2023, the fleet consists of 102 vehicles including 32 EV's. £206,009 was spent on fleet fuel during 2022/23.

3. Achieving the Green Travel Plan

3.1 Practical considerations

The purpose of our travel plan is to promote sustainable and active travel options where practicable. Typically, effective but unpopular solutions such as parking restrictions and

parking charges would be combined with popular but expensive solutions such as bus subsidies, to ensure that any negative impacts will be balanced by the benefits [1].

Public Transport

Achieving green travel is much more complex in East Devon than it might be in cities where short distances facilitate walking and cycling options combined with reliable and frequent public transport choices. Many of our towns are not connected by rail and are served only infrequently by buses, with distances often too great to be walked or cycled efficiently by most people. Therefore, we must be realistic in terms of what can be achieved. To achieve our aims, we must explore how to accommodate a range of travel options for staff and other users of our buildings.

Solutions

We should actively promote the availability of safe walking and cycling routes to those staff who already live within a few miles of Blackdown House. We should also promote the availability of hourly rail services between Honiton and Exeter, Cranbrook and Axminster. We can certainly draw attention to bus travel options between Honiton Sidmouth, Seaton and Colyton, Cranbrook and Ottery, although we do need to acknowledge that some of these are significantly limited at present. Public transport between Exmouth and Honiton remains a challenge with the only viable options going via Exeter, leaving car sharing as the option most likely to succeed with these commuters.

Car Sharing

To encourage car sharing as an alternative to single user car journeys on the commute to Blackdown House we will be promoting the use of social media groups to join-up potential car sharers.

We currently provide a total of 130 car parking spaces at Blackdown House, including 7 disabled bays and 6 EV charging bays.

3.2 Timetable for actions

The Travel Plan sets out to address feedback identified in the Staff Travel Survey 2018.

The Plan covers two phases:

- to facilitate the move of part of the workforce into Blackdown House, and
- to work towards longer-term targets for the next five years

ACTION PLAN: Phase 2

	Actions 2024 – 2030	Deadline
1	Repeat the staff survey to review the level of single user car journeys, use of public transport and other active travel options in our daily commute	2025/26
2	Review the availability of public transport alternatives and work with service providers to explore the feasibility of new or altered routes and timetables that would better meet the needs of our staff, Members and visitors	2025/26
3	Promote cycle-purchase scheme managed through Payroll to current staff and new starters	2025/26
4	Review the uptake of pedal assist electric bicycles by staff and explore incentives to increase their popularity	2025/26
5	Review the level of use of our bicycle parking and equipment storage facilities and consider whether further changes are appropriate to encourage cycling.	2025/26
6	Review the use of shower and changing facilities to ensure that they are able to meet demand	2025/26
7	Liaise with DCC and EDDC's Countryside and Streetscene teams on the development and promotion of new safe cycling and walking routes around East Devon	2025/26
11	Review the Council's white fleet and consider whether suitable alternatives are available.	Ongoing
12	Encourage contractors to adopt sustainable approaches including an expectation of green travel consideration and low-emission vehicles in tendering processes	2025/26
13	Continue to review this plan annually	2025/26
14	Include questions in annual staff survey (starting early 2024) on how far they live from work and how they travel to work	2025/26
15	Cycle to work scheme max allowance review with potential to increase, with the potential to include eCargo bikes	2025/26
16	EV salary sacrifice scheme exploration and intro (if approved)	2025/26
17	Charging for work EV points – on EDDC premises and whether we can do anything at employee homes	2025/26

18	Happy Healthy Here time for active commute (walk/bike/run)	2025/26
19	Green travel intranet site to include cycle and bus routes	2025/26

4. Managing the Green Travel Plan

4.1 Communicating and raising awareness of the Plan

- Promote the use of WhatsApp car sharing commuter groups, staff awareness seminars, intranet and a direct e-mail campaign
- Update and maintain travel information pages on intranet and public-facing travel information pages for visitors, including an active travel page on the intranet
- Include relevant items on alternative travel options and incentives in Team Brief (e.g., the ULEV hire vehicle, pedal assist electric bicycle trials and purchase via the cycle purchase scheme, accessing discounted public transport deals)
- Work with Human Resources to co-ordinate promotion of incentives as part of staff benefits campaigns, like Happy Healthy Here
- Provide a regular stock of walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing information and leaflets e.g., via intranet
- Provide new employees with information on their journey options.

4.2 Monitoring and review

Travel questions within the annual staff survey will take place to monitor the effects of this plan. It is hoped that this will show a positive change in travel patterns following the implementation of the plan.

Add the Green Travel Plan to the Green Team review agenda.

4.3 Roles and responsibilities

This policy will be jointly owned by the Director of Housing, Health, and Environment?

5. Supporting documentation

Green travel plans from the following organisations have been consulted to inform East Devon's Green Travel Plan:

Devon County Council
 Teignbridge District Council
 Gloucester City Council

Met Office
Exeter University
Bristol University

We would like to record our thanks to these organisations who have made their plans available either in person or via their webpages.

6. Staff Travel Survey 2018 results

A clear understanding of current travel behaviour was required to develop an effective travel plan. The Staff Travel Survey available through 'Travel Devon' was used to establish baseline figures, enabling assessment of existing travel patterns and opinions of staff towards cycling and walking, and identifying constraints and opportunities.

The travel survey was undertaken over a four-week period across March and April 2018. Staff were invited to respond either to the Exmouth or Honiton survey based on which site they would work most frequently. Questions were the same for each site. The overall response rate by 16.04.18 was **53%**, with 290 staff completing the survey.

Key findings:

- 89% of staff travelling to Blackdown House and 88% of staff travelling to Exmouth Town Hall travelled to work by car
 - o 6% and 19% respectively, lived within two miles
- The most common reasons selected for car travel:
 1. It is needed for business travel during work time
 2. It is quicker than other alternatives
 3. There are no viable alternatives
 4. Flexibility
- In a previous staff survey from 2014, 52% of staff occasionally or never worked from home and 73% of the 290 surveyed thought that homeworking should be used more. The introduction of the Worksmart+ agreement where staff can be more flexible in the ways that they work and where they work from, has meant that staff have been able to work from home more often which has reduced staff commuting emissions by 66%.

From 2024, the annual staff survey will include questions on how far staff live from work and how they travel to work. This will provide a deeper insight into staff commuting, with that insight building year on year. From this, the most impactful public transport and active travel initiatives can be created and promoted to staff.

7. References

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Updated by Alex Mitchell 11.06.24