

## **Local Transport Plan 4 Consultation – Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Board**

### **Report to Devon County Council/Torbay Council’s Cabinet as part of the consultation process**

#### **Background**

1. The Overview and Scrutiny Board met on 14 November 2024 to consider the draft Local Transport Plan (LTP) 4 Consultation document as set out in the submitted papers and presentation. The Local Transport Plan set out the key priorities for transport for the next 15 years, was a key policy document for the promotion of safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport across the Devon and Torbay, and would be supplemented by LTP action plans on how the policies would be implemented. The Divisional Director of Planning, Housing and Climate Emergency (David Edmondson), Principal Planning & Public Health Officer Strategy and Project Management (Andrew Gunther) also attended the meeting and responded to questions.
2. Members noted that the plan would:
  - align with the Peninsula Transport Board’s priorities;
  - be used to direct the Integrated Transport Blocks of funding from the Government for Devon County Council and Torbay Council, which would be pooled with other funding streams and would be used by the new Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority and would also help unlock other funding streams for the benefit of the two areas; and
  - inform the revised Torbay Local Plan.
3. Members asked questions in relation to would there be improved signage for roads and key buildings and heritage sites; what improvements would be made to electronic bus stops; lots of new housing estates were emerging, would suitable off road infrastructure for pedestrians, mobility scooters and cyclists be provided as part of the planning process; the vision was ‘well-integrated, accessible and inclusive transport will improve travel choice and benefit the health and wellbeing of everyone’ how would the Plan help residents for example in Barton and Watcombe access Torbay Hospital by bus when the previous 65 bus service was no longer in operation, and how would it support provision for the less profitable bus routes to ensure that people were not isolated in their communities and consider franchising; how did the Bus Service Improvement Plans link with the LTP and when would they be reviewed; did the Plan cover the location of the roads for highways maintenance and how much was the funding gap for this; how did the Plan

link to other key Council documents; had consideration been given to operating residential community buses; access to trains was important to Torbay's economy, particularly in Paignton with cuts to previous services, how could this be strengthened within the Plan and also address concerns on overcrowding and access to routes; what was the reason for the contraction in the number of people travelling to work in the area between 2001 and 2011; what action was being taken to ensure that the Edginswell Railway Station was completed and when did the Planning permission expire; where were potential sites for park and ride in Torbay and why was there no reference to a potential park and ride to ease congestion in Brixham; and what was being done to reduce the impact of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) on the roads and moving things differently.

4. Members were informed that the proposals included improving signage to help people find key routes and key attractions through Torbay and also to make it easier to encourage more active travel. This would include directions to car parks, foot and cycle routes as well as heritage trails.
5. In response to questions around buses, the Board was advised that there were currently six electronic screens on bus shelters across Torbay and work was being done on the flags at bus stops to improve them and make the routes clearer. Members were encouraged to let the Team know if there were any specific areas where they feel the signage needs improving to feed into this work. The current bus contract was for eight years and would be reviewed towards the end of that contract. Members were informed that the document included sufficient reference to good public transport network, including bus routes which would enable further work to be done to support buses in residential areas off of the main A and B roads. Members were informed that funding for the Bus Service Improvement Plan was imminent and there may be a date by which the Government requires the Plan to be updated, otherwise it was proposed to update it in Summer 2025. The bus fleet would start to be electrified from next year with 49 new buses being in place by 2026. It was noted that Stagecoach was keen to maximise solar voltaic panels on the rooves of the bus station. The Transport Advisory Group was looking at bus franchising opportunities. Park and ride options were being explored at Gallows Gate and a potential option around Nightingale Park which would also support staff and visitors to Torbay Hospital. Torbay was different to Exeter which were publicly run as the only park and ride in Torbay was in Churston and this was privately run.
6. In response to questions around highways, Members were advised that the Planning Officers try to access routes around proposed new housing estates to check access for all users and where this was not possible the developer would have to pay funding to provide this, the Inglewood Development was given as an example of this which included connections through Whiterock into existing infrastructure connecting schools and supermarkets etc. There was approximately £68m funding gap for highways maintenance with the Council reliant on additional Government funding to cover the shortfall and it was hoped that the new Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority would have the opportunity to bid for significant investment. Members were informed that the Plan was not the appropriate document to include details of the roads covered by highways maintenance as it covered both Devon County Council and Torbay Council areas. It did list main routes, other road and then

minor roads with priority identified locally. 20 MPH zones were being implemented but there had not been any additional funding coming through to implement further proposals, this linked to the priority for making greater places for people.

7. The Board was advised that active travel was acknowledged as a key element of the Plan and was addressed in many of the proposals. The weight given to active travel was a consideration for the decision-maker for each element. It was hoped that the LTP would help secure greater levels of funding to deliver more active travel routes. The Plan supported the Council's Community and Corporate Plan and would also be used to update the revised Local Plan to ensure a golden thread of priorities through all those Policy Framework documents.
8. In response to questions around railways, Members were advised that concerns had been raised previously in respect of overcrowding but were encouraged to report any incidents to the providers and that CrossCountry were aware of the issues with one of their Directors living locally but had not yet found a solution. They had new carriages which would help with capacity and the cancellations due to driver training should be reduced as the backlog of training had been completed. The Planning permission for the Edginswell Railway Station expires on 24 November 2026 and the Council had written to the Member of Parliament for Torbay outlining the situation and the need for an additional £7m to complete the scheme but was waiting for a decision around the funding. Issues of HGVs on roads had been discussed at a Peninsula level and the LTP provided opportunities to try to aggregate loads and working with the Freight Forum to support greater use of pallets to reduce the number of HGVs using the roads. It was anticipated that there would be Government funding to support this.

## 9. Conclusion

- 9.1 The Board reflected and debated the information provided to them, both verbal and written and formed the following recommendations to Devon County Council/Torbay Council's Cabinet. On being put to the vote, the motion was declared carried unanimously.

## 10. Recommendations

That the Cabinet be recommended:

- \*1. *that Cabinet Member for Pride in Place, Transport and Parking be requested to provide written assurance that there is sufficient links to highways maintenance within the Local Transport Plan 4; and*
2. that, subject to 1 above, the Torbay Overview and Scrutiny Board recommends to Torbay Council/Devon County Council's Cabinets that they support the priorities for Torbay in the Local Transport Plan 4 Consultation document and suggest the following:
  - a. to include under 'improving travel choice' the importance of improving bus connectivity in residential neighbourhoods away

from the main routes and consider options for residential bus services and bus franchising;

- b. to include securing the long term commitment for national rail services to Paignton;
- c. to include reference to the importance of the need for park and ride in Torbay, particularly to support Torbay Hospital and as a potential solution to parking in Brixham;
- d. to include the strategic importance and need for the Government to provide additional funding in order to realise the Edginswell Railway Station; and
- e. to highlight the opportunities to use the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority to secure additional funding not just for capital infrastructure but for highways maintenance across Devon and Torbay to meet the large backlog.

(\*note we are waiting a response from the Cabinet Member to determine if any additional suggestions need to be put forward from the Board regarding highways maintenance.)

## **Background Papers**

[Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Board on Thursday, 14 November 2024, 5.30 pm](#)