

Meeting: Overview and Scrutiny Board **Date:** 14 November 2024

Wards affected: All

Report Title: Local Transport Plan 4 Consultation

When does the decision need to be implemented? 30 November 2024

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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report sets out the Local Transport Plan consultation document and seeks views and comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Board for submission as part of the consultation process which ends on 30th November 2024. The Plan is presented in Appendix 1 with a summary document in Appendix 2.
- 1.2 Local Transport Plans are statutory documents, required under the Local Transport Act 2008, for the Local Transport Authorities to produce. In 2011, Torbay Council adopted the Devon and Torbay Local Transport Plan 3 (2011-2026). This consultation is the initial step in updating that policy document.

2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

- 2.1 The proposals in this report help us to deliver several of the ambitions in the Community and Corporate Plan.
- 2.2 We want to see a healthy, happy and prosperous Torbay.
- 2.3 The Local Transport Plan 4 will support this, and it closely aligns with its vision it has for sustainable growth with accessible and inclusive transport improving travel choice and benefit the health and wellbeing of everyone.
- 2.4 The objectives also help to support the delivery of several priorities and outcomes across the strategic themes, including (but not limited to):
 - Draw investment into our towns and breathe life into our town centres, ensuring our town centres are safe and welcoming for all – through greater places for people

- Provide safe environments for our young people to thrive in – through road safety and greater places for people
- Improve wellbeing and reduce social isolation – through easier travel and being the place to be naturally active
- Improve the delivery of housing and increase the amount of full-time employment opportunities within Torbay – through unlocking development and providing a reliable and resilient transport network; and
- Improve transport links to and within Torbay – through easier travel

2.5 The reason for the decision is to support Devon and Torbay to undertake post consultation reflections and updates as necessary on the Local Transport Plan 4, to develop the strategy document with policies that support the growth of Torbay and enhance the transport opportunities for the community, businesses and visitors.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

1. That the Overview and Scrutiny Board reviews the Local Transport Plan 4 consultation document and makes recommendations to Torbay Council/Devon County Council's Cabinet.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Local Transport Plan 4 For Consultation

Appendix 2: Local Transport Plan 4 Summary For Consultation

Appendix 3: Strategic Environmental Assessment

Background Documents

This list is not exhaustive. There are further policy documents produced by Government and the Sub-National Transport Body (Peninsula Transport) which are also relevant, as well as some local policy and evidence base documents, particularly in relation to climate, economy and public health.

- Local Transport Plan 3 (2011-2026) <https://www.torbay.gov.uk/local-transport-plan>
- Local Transport Action Plan (2021-2026) <https://www.torbay.gov.uk/local-transport-action-plan/>
- Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (2021) <https://www.torbay.gov.uk/lcwip>
- Bus Service Improvement Plan (2021 and 2024) <https://www.torbay.gov.uk/bus-network-improvements>
- Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy (2021) <https://www.torbay.gov.uk/highway-infrastructure-ams/>
- Transport Asset Management Plan (2021) <https://www.torbay.gov.uk/transport-asset-management-plan/>
- Road Safety Strategy / Casualty Reduction Report <https://www.torbay.gov.uk/road-safety-strategy/>; <https://www.torbay.gov.uk/road-casualties/>
- Devon Carbon Plan (2022) <https://devonclimateemergency.org.uk/view-devon-carbon-plan-full/>

Supporting Information

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Local Transport Plans are statutory documents, required under the Local Transport Act 2008, for the Local Transport Authorities such as Torbay Council to produce. In 2011, Torbay worked in partnership with Devon to adopt a joint Devon and Torbay Local Transport Plan 3 (2011-2026)
- 1.2 They set out the overarching ambitions for the local transport network with policies for the promotion of safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport, alongside proposals for the implementation of these policies. There is understanding that these will often be presented in separate documents, a Strategy and an Action Plan.
- 1.3 The existing Local Transport Plan will come to an end in 2026 and initially the 'trigger' for an early review was in the Levelling Up White Paper and documents that followed, which indicated that there was an expectation on Councils to update their plans before the end of the parliament and that new guidance would be issued to support that work. However, the guidance has not formally emerged and a date was not confirmed by when the update was needed.
- 1.4 At the time of the initial announcement, Devon and Torbay had discussed how to take forward an update and Devon County Council had begun looking at a revision sooner than Torbay. Discussions then followed regarding devolution and the inclusion of transport in that agreement became clearer. This will be a Combined County Authority with responsibility for strategic transport and the requirement to have a Local Transport Plan in place will be a duty for the CCA and no longer sit with Torbay Council. There is a commitment within the draft devolution agreement for an updated LTP to have been progressed by March 2025 (not adopted) and given the timescales involved it is necessary for the authorities working together (rather than as one in a CCA) to begin that process with the initial evidence base, drafting and engagement work.
- 1.5 This updated proposal sets out a clear vision and objectives for a place-based strategy from 2025-2040.
- 1.6 The vision is:

Transport will facilitate sustainable growth and support reaching net zero carbon by 2050 at the latest. Well-integrated, accessible and inclusive transport will improve travel choice and benefit the health and wellbeing of everyone.
- 1.7 Alongside the vision, six objectives for transport have been identified:
 - **Decarbonisation:** Reaching net-zero by 2050 at the latest by reducing the need to travel, increasing digital access and shifting trips to sustainable transport.
 - **Reliable and Resilient:** Protecting and enhancing the strategic road and rail links that connect Devon and Torbay to the rest of the country.

- **Easier Travel:** Providing well-integrated, inclusive and reliable transport options for all residents and visitors in both rural and urban communities.
- **Unlock Development:** Supporting clean growth by providing new transport choices within and to new developments and using technology to improve existing infrastructure.
- **Greater Places for People:** Enhancing the attractiveness of streets by reducing negative impacts from vehicles, regenerating the public realm and facilitating safe active travel movements.
- **The Place to be Naturally Active:** Expanding the multi-use trail network, delivering a network of quieter lanes and improving facilities and safety in urban areas to enable people to be more active and experience our outstanding natural environment.

1.8 There are four place types identified, recognising the differing needs, transport experiences, and environments across Devon and Torbay. It is likely that what is appropriate and beneficial in one area, may have less successful outcomes in another. These places are:

- **Torbay:** Majority of travel starts and ends within Torbay. Seasonal fluctuations are significant. While many trips are over short distances, the majority are made by car.
- **Exeter:** Largest single settlement with large catchment for work, education and retail. The majority of Exeter residents do not drive to work.
- **Growth Areas:** Larger market towns and areas of significant new development. Public Transport and cycle networks exist – but highest levels of car travel.
- **Rural and Market & Coastal Towns:** Longer distances to schools, work or shops. Residents are more reliant on the car for travel and/or digital access. Towns provide hubs for services and access to public transport.

1.9 There are two further nonspecific sections included, one being **Strategic Connections** (those wider links beyond Devon and Torbay), and the other being **Our Network** (noting the maintenance and road safety factors that are applicable across the area).

1.10 The Strategy also contains indicative actions for the respective sections of the Plan. It is recognised that actions and delivery to justify the strategic elements are important and this list is expected to need refinement post consultation to ensure it is up to date and fully matches the ambitions. Currently, the actions listed are drawn from other, existing policy documents and action plans. There will be other actions delivered within the life of the document.

1.11 The Plan has been developed to align with local, regional and national policy. It puts supporting clean economic growth, responding to the climate emergency and improving the health and wellbeing for all residents and visitors at its heart.

1.12 An updated Local Transport Plan will enable the transport authority to fulfil its statutory obligations as the Local Transport Authority and place Devon and Torbay in the strongest position to make a compelling strategic case for future transport infrastructure investment.

1.13 Following a public consultation, responses will be analysed and considered, with post-consultation amendments to the Plan made where appropriate, including any updated national policy or guidance changes.

- 1.14 The final decision maker on the Plan post consultation is to be determined depending on the progression of the devolution discussions and arrangements for the CCA.

2. Options under consideration

- 2.1 An alternative option was to not consult at this time and to wait until further guidance is published from Government, but there is no information currently on whether that will be forthcoming. Devon County Council may have chosen to proceed separately with the plan, removing the linkages and joint sections with Torbay that are currently within the document. This would mean that the commitment to a joint transport strategy by March 2025, as set out in the devolution agreement, would have been at risk and would likely have led to a disjointed plan for transport across the area, rather than the joined-up approach currently proposed, despite the authorities coming together as a single Local Transport body.
- 2.2 A second alternative option would have been to similarly pause the current work, and instead wait until the existing plan expires in 2026 and to review whether a separate Torbay or joint Devon and Torbay plan at that time was appropriate.
- 2.3 By 2026, in any case, an updated strategic plan for transport covering the area would be required. There have previously been indications that updated Local Transport Plans will be used to guide funding awards to Council's – currently this is through an annual capital settlement to deliver the objectives of the Local Transport Plan, but with a longer-term plan there may be scope for longer term funding packages.

3. Financial Opportunities and Implications

- 3.1 As referenced in Section 2, there is funding associated with the Local Transport Plan in the form of Integrated Transport Block capital which is currently an annual grant.
- 3.2 This funding enables the Council to deliver capital transport projects across all modes that support the objectives of the plan (either wholly funding or utilise as match funding for larger schemes with additional external grants).
- 3.3 It is therefore important to have the plan in place to ensure Torbay, as a place, benefits from improved transport infrastructure.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 Having a Local Transport Plan in place is a statutory requirement under the Local Transport Act 2008. The plan must set out the objectives and ambitions for transport in the area.

5. Engagement and Consultation

- 5.1 There has been some preliminary engagement with stakeholders on the drafting of the Local Transport Plan presented. However, much of the content of the plan, the objectives and ambitions, as well as schemes promoted, result from previous work on local strategies recently adopted. The role of the LTP is to bring those proposals, policies, and ambitions together in a single place to cohesively present the expectation of transport in supporting wider responses to policy.
- 5.2 Following the initial engagement with Stakeholders, officers Torbay and Devon updated the document prior to presenting to Cabinet, taking on board some of the key points, concerns and opportunities.
- 5.3 The document was approved for consultation by Torbay Council Cabinet on 17 September 2024. An initial officer engagement session was held with Torbay officers, and this was an item on the Road Network and Travel Working Party on 10 October 2024.
- 5.4 The engagement is running from the beginning of October through to the end of November.
- 5.5 The feedback will be hosted by Devon County Council, to more easily capture and record in a single place and to avoid duplication of responses and confusion for respondents.

6. Purchasing or Hiring of Goods and/or Services

- 6.1 There has been and will continue to be some utilisation of the existing Transport and Engineering Professional Services Contract for support in evidence gathering, drafting and engagement.

7. Tackling Climate Change

- 7.1 The vision states how transport will facilitate sustainable growth and support reaching net zero carbon by 2050 at the latest. One of the six objectives is Decarbonisation but it should be recognised that the other objectives also support that work.
- 7.2 It is recognised within the Plan that there is a need for the transport industry to take action and support the achievement of net zero by 2050 at the latest. This, the Plan proposes, will be achieved in a number of ways, including a greater use of sustainable modes of transport and a higher number of sustainably fuelled vehicles, including electric cars.
- 7.3 There are significant opportunities recognised in this Plan and in the Climate policies for Torbay, led by the evidence base, to deliver changes to transport that increase choice and provide the infrastructure needed to support more people to travel by sustainable modes, whether that be by rail, bus, cycle, walking or electric vehicles.

8. Associated Risks

- 8.1 The key risk in not progressing this is ensuring an up-to-date transport strategy is in place to meet the statutory requirements of the devolution discussions with regards to transport, within the time frame needed.
- 8.2 There is a risk concerning this plan going ahead of updated guidance but there would be opportunity to review that position post consultation, and accompany that review with the feedback received which would likely lead to a more positive outcome.

9. Equality Impacts - Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups

- 9.1 All residents will benefit from the enhanced travel choices, from improved health and activity levels, improved road safety and more efficient transport networks that Local Transport Plan 4 will deliver. These improvements will enable increased access to a range of opportunities, including employment, education, leisure and community facilities.
- 9.2 Over 23% of Torbay households do not have access to a private vehicle, there is an older than national average age profile and almost 24% of all residents are disabled – advancing equality of opportunity and encouraging participation in society and community activities, enabled by better transport.
- 9.3 To achieve carbon reduction targets and improve public health it will be necessary to improve accessibility and the attractiveness of sustainable alternatives to encourage mode shift, which may disproportionately impact those who are reliant on private vehicles for transport. For such individual schemes, consultation and Impact Assessments will be carried out to seek views and consider the impact on people with protected characteristics.
- 9.4 A Rapid Health Impact Assessment has also been undertaken. This highlights a number of strengths and opportunities linking the draft Local Transport Plan with factors such as air quality, noise, physical activity, economy and employment, safety and connections with communities. These will be reflected upon and changes considered within the final LTP. It also identifies vulnerable groups to consider within the LTP, including children and young people, older people, people with disabilities, people with existing health conditions, unemployed people and low income groups and socially excluded or isolated groups. These groups will be included within the public consultation.
- 9.5 Devon (including Torbay) is a large area with varied landscapes, townscapes and demographics. The population is spread between busy urban hubs, market and seaside towns, villages and across wild and ancient national parks.
- 9.6 This diversity means that transport patterns, needs, and infrastructure are not uniform across the area. The Local Transport Plan 4 identifies four place types, including Torbay. The impacts assessed are only in relation to Torbay. Devon County Council have produced an impact assessment of their own to consider impacts within their area.

9.7 The strategy sets out the overarching vision and objectives but subsequent decisions on the action plans and schemes, as well as other specific plans (such as the Bus Service Improvement Plan) will be subject to further EIA consideration.

	Positive Impact	Negative Impact & Mitigating Actions	Neutral Impact
Older or younger people	The LTP's objective of moving away from less sustainable modes in favour of more sustainable modes, will support age groups that are less likely to have access to their own private vehicle, such as under 17s who cannot access the private car without relying on someone else with a driver's licence, thus empowering young people and giving them more opportunities. Older people will benefit from being able to stay naturally healthy for longer and reducing isolation with easier journeys across modes, specifically buses enabling them to have access to the facilities they need.		
People with caring Responsibilities			No specific benefits though improvements to transport will improve the experience, choice and opportunities for all. Also see impacts for those with a disability and older people which might also apply.
People with a disability	People with mobility impairments and certain illnesses may benefit their health	People with mobility impairments and certain illnesses may have greater difficulty	

	<p>outcomes through active travel with better facilities to allow them to walk or cycle (or wheel including wheelchairs) with more ease. Some may also benefit from improved public transport services, enabling better access to facilities and employment.</p>	<p>walking long distances or cycling, and people who are not comfortable on public transport, may be more reliant on private cars than others. Therefore, these groups may be more impacted by reductions in the convenience of private car usage in favour of more sustainable modes.</p>	
Women or men			<p>No specific benefits though improvements to transport will improve the experience, choice and opportunities for all. Benefits may become apparent through specific actions.</p>
People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) (Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)			<p>No specific benefits though improvements to transport will improve the experience, choice and opportunities for all. Benefits may become apparent through specific actions.</p>
Religion or belief (including lack of belief)			<p>No specific benefits though improvements to transport will improve the experience, choice and opportunities for all.</p>
People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual			<p>No specific benefits though improvements to transport will improve the experience, choice and opportunities for all.</p>

People who are transgendered			No specific benefits though improvements to transport will improve the experience, choice and opportunities for all.
People who are in a marriage or civil partnership			No specific benefits though improvements to transport will improve the experience, choice and opportunities for all.
Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave			No specific benefits though improvements to transport will improve the experience, choice and opportunities for all. Benefits may become apparent through specific actions.
Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)	The LTP's objective of moving away from less sustainable modes in favour of more sustainable modes, will support those groups that are less likely to have access to their own private vehicle. The objectives of the LTP also support enhanced access to active and public transport which will be of benefit. Additional benefits are likely to emerge from specific projects and plans considered separately.		
Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay)	See HIA comments above table.		

10. Cumulative Council Impact

- 10.1 Proposals in the transport strategy will impact on many of the wider outcomes of the Council.
- 10.2 Specific actions, or plans for specific modes (such as Bus Service Improvement Plan and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan), can have a greater benefits on day to day services and the community or businesses they support. However the role of this strategy is to set those overarching objectives to enable the hooks and delivery of benefits particularly around the economy, climate, and health and wellbeing of the community.

11. Cumulative Community Impacts

- 11.1 Similarly to Section 10, proposals in the transport strategy will impact on many of the Council's partners, the community and other stakeholders.