

Report to: Strategic Planning Committee



Date of Meeting 2 April 2024

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

Clyst Valley & New Communities LCWIP Consultation

Report summary:

Devon County Council are undertaking a consultation on a draft Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for an area of East Devon stretching from the Killerton estate in the north, down to Woodbury and east to Whimble and Aylesbeare. This geographic area picks up the strategic growth areas of East Devon that are located in the west of the district, including the proposed site of a second new community as proposed in the emerging Local Plan.

The draft LCWIP identifies existing and proposed routes for walking and cycling that it is considered will be necessary to provide people with the best opportunities to walk and cycle as a genuine alternative to private transport for both leisure and commuting purposes. This committee report sets out a proposed response by this council to the consultation.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes No

Policy Framework Yes No

Recommendation:

That committee endorse the proposed response to the Clyst Valley & New Communities LCWIP consultation and approves its submission to Devon County Council.

Reason for recommendation:

To provide feedback to Devon County Council in respect of walking and cycling infrastructure in the strategic growth areas in the west of the district.

Officer: Ed Freeman, Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management,
efreeman@eastdevon.gov.uk, 01395 517519

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergency Response
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Communications and Democracy
- Economy
- Finance and Assets
- Strategic Planning

- Sustainable Homes and Communities
- Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: Low Risk;

Links to background information [Clyst Valley and New Communities Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan - Have Your Say \(devon.gov.uk\)](#)

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- Better homes and communities for all
 - A greener East Devon
 - A resilient economy
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1. Background

- 1.1. Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) were introduced by the government in 2017 and are documents that in Devon are produced by Devon County Council. The aim of an LCWIP is to identify strategic cycling and walking improvements required at a local level and planned over a 10-20 year period. They form a vital part of the Government's strategy to increase the number of trips made on foot or by cycle. Critically, going forward, LCWIPs are an important part of local authorities making the case for future active travel funding, whether through securing grants or in negotiations with developers.
- 1.2. The significant growth that has taken place in the western part of the district, around Cranbrook and abutting the administrative boundaries with Exeter has benefitted from upgrades to the local walking and cycling infrastructure, notably with the provision of the Redhays bridge crossing the M5 and shared walking and cycling provision out to Cranbrook. With further strategic developments in the West End of the district planned in both the existing development plan and the emerging Local Plan, it was considered appropriate to develop an LCWIP for this part of the district. As a stakeholder, officers from East Devon have engaged with DCC over the production of the LCWIP but it remains a County commissioned publication upon which we have been consulted.
- 1.3. The public consultation on the LCWIP is running for a 6-week period, closing on 7 April 2024. DCC have facilitated virtual briefing sessions for interested members of the public and have hosted a consultation event in Cranbrook at the end of March.

2. Consultation document

- 2.1. The geographical coverage of the LCWIP has been drawn to take account of key developments and future growth areas but also employment sites and visitor attractions. Accordingly, it includes Cranbrook, developments at Westclyst and Tithebarn as well as the Exeter and East Devon Enterprise Zone sites and Exeter Airport. On top of these existing development sites the major proposed allocation associated with a second new community and other smaller allocations east of Exeter are included. It should be noted that the draft LCWIP was finalised prior to SPC identifying option 1 for the new community as their

preferred option. Finally, the boundary also includes the Clyst Valley Regional Park and land associated with the Killerton estate as well as outlying villages such as Broadclyst, Whimble, and Woodbury. Figure 1 overleaf shows the boundary.

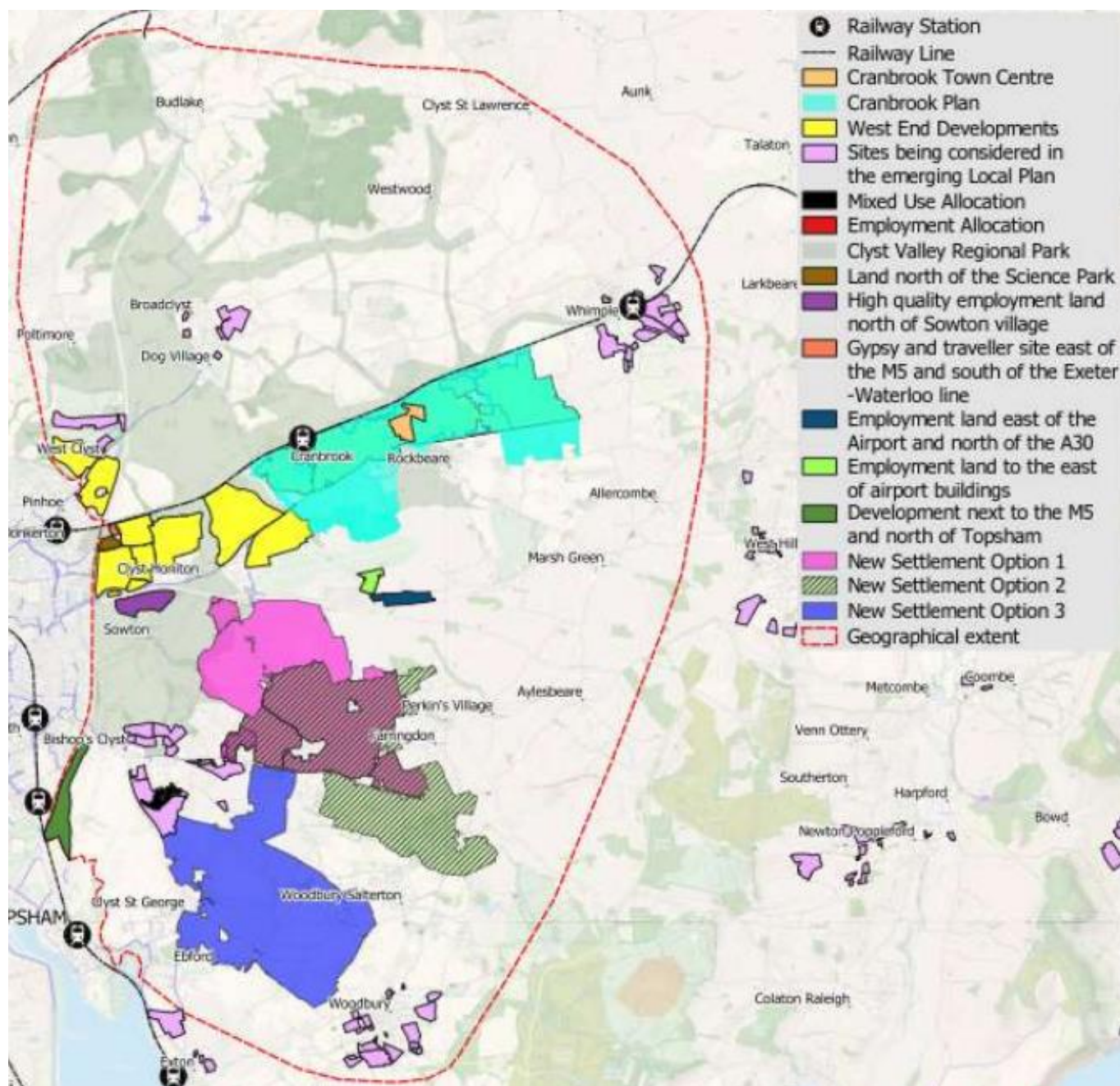
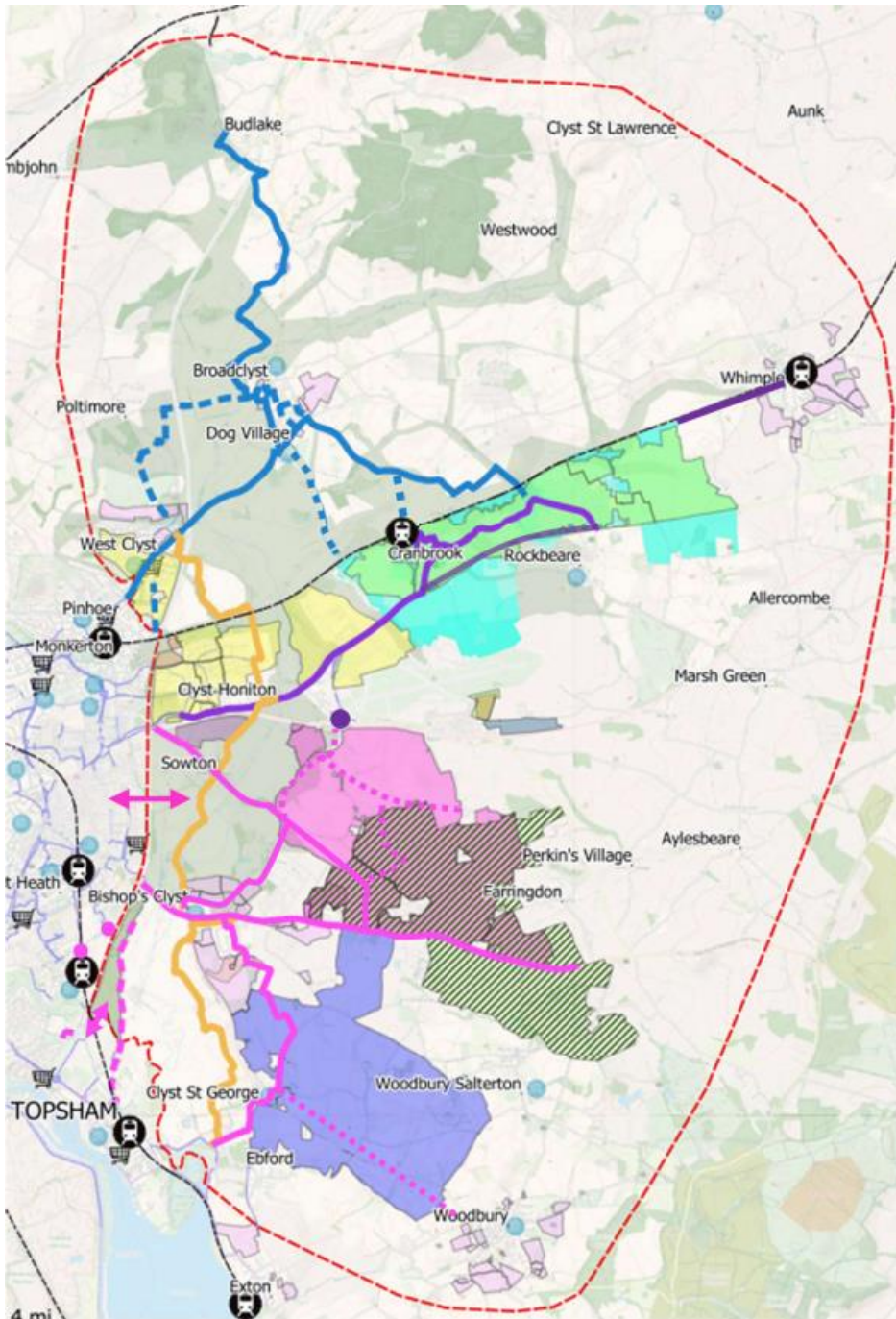


Figure 1 – Map showing the geographical extent of the proposed LCWIP

- 2.2. There are currently low levels of cycling in the study area, particularly when compared to urban areas in England. This may be influenced by the rural, unlit nature of many routes that make them less attractive to use. In addition, hills in some areas are a significant barrier to increased cycling for some people. There is currently a fairly fragmented existing cycle network in the area, with inconsistent provision of dedicated cycle routes.
- 2.3. The LCWIP identifies a series of cycle route recommendations. This includes different options for cycle route provision for a second new community that were based upon the three original options. We will need to include details of the council's preferred option in our consultation response so that changes can be made to the proposals accordingly.



1. Clyst Valley Trail
2. Killerton & Broadclyst
3. Cranbrook
4. Local Plan 2020-2040 new settlement options

Figure 2 – Overview of cycle route recommendations

2.4. An Exeter LCWIP was adopted by Devon County Council's Cabinet in January 2024 and includes within it a number of cycle routes that in part fall within the East Devon boundaries. There is therefore overlap between the two areas, however what hasn't been carried over to the Clyst Villages and New Communities LCWIP are the cycle routes that are in East Devon's administrative areas identified in the Exeter LCWIP. It is felt that for consistency these should be carried over and the two LCWIP's need to be fully integrated with one another to support connected journeys.

- 2.5. The LCWIP guidance recommends that Core Walking Zones (CWZ) are identified. These normally consist of places that are close together with high levels of footfall, such as town centres. However, this LCWIP area does not lend itself to a CWZ because it is currently predominantly rural with small villages, and because larger settlements such as Cranbrook, are recent or do not exist yet and are therefore built to the latest design standards.
- 2.6. In terms of walking, the LCWIP is quite light in detail and focuses on the route from Westclyst to Broadclyst as the two places are only 1 mile apart and a large number of school children travel between the villages, but infrastructure does not meet current design standards. It recognises that for Cranbrook to have improved walking rates it needs to be more self-contained, with increased provision of local employment and amenities. A recommendation of a Cranbrook walking 'bugbears' project is also made in order to address smaller scale issues for people walking, using wheelchairs and mobility scooters in the town. In addition to these recommendations the LCWIP looks to incorporate walking improvements across all routes identified for cycling infrastructure, for example the Clyst Valley Trail which is a proposed multi-use trail associated with the Clyst Valley Regional Park. The walking plan that is included within the document shows the same routes as for the cycling plan included at figure 2.

3. Proposed council response to the consultation

- 3.1. In the box below is set out a proposed response to the Clyst Valley & New Communities LCWIP consultation by East Devon District Council. Subject to Strategic Planning Committee approval, this response will be submitted to Devon County Council.

We are encouraged to see the development of this LCWIP, which is an important document to support the strategic growth that is taking place in this part of East Devon or is proposed for allocation in the emerging Local Plan. We support the principle of the document, and the case for investment in walking and cycling in the Clyst Valley and the new communities being developed in the locality, particularly in relation to climate change, delivering growth in the economy, equality and social inclusion and the health and wellbeing of our residents and visitors.

Relationship with Exeter LCWIP

The Exeter LCWIP was adopted by Devon County Council in January 2024. The document focuses on the city boundaries but identifies two cycle routes where improvements are proposed within East Devon. It is important to recognise the relationship between Exeter and the new developments in East Devon and we understand the rationale for the overlap between the two LCWIPs. However, we do believe that there needs to be a consistency and integration between the two, whereby the routes that are in East Devon in the Exeter LCWIP are also shown in the Clyst Villages and New Communities LCWIP; this will support connected journeys. To replicate the routes will not undermine the Exeter LCWIP but will serve to demonstrate the importance of their delivery should an opportunity for securing funding arise.

The E3 (City Centre to Cranbrook) route is identified in the written text of the Exeter LCWIP as proposing a new off-road cycle route from Tithebarn Lane to Cranbrook but this is not reflected in the accompanying plan, albeit it is shown on the overarching network plan. The route is ranked as the second most important cycle improvement in the Exeter LCWIP but is omitted from the current consultation LCWIP. This route is imperative to provide an attractive route for less confident commuters as well as leisure users.

The E13 route (Clyst St Mary to Topsham via Clyst Road) is entirely within East Devon's boundaries and there is a proposed residential allocation adjacent to the route in the emerging East Devon Local Plan. We support improved walking and cycling provision in this location, although any works will also need to retain vehicular access suitable for the proposed allocation.

General comments

The growth in the LCWIP area has significantly increased employment as well as new housing and these sites are essential to the sub-regional economy. Despite improvements from Exeter to Cranbrook and the Skypark there is an overall lack of appropriate high-quality and attractive cycling and walking infrastructure to facilitate active transport uses and connections with public transport modes to and from employment sites. This is reflected in the small percentage of journeys by bike. In addition to the routes identified in the LCWIP we would like to see more included to support links between employment sites and Pinhoe and Cranbrook rail stations.

Significant destinations in the study area such as Killerton, Poltimore House, Westpoint Arena need to be supported through high quality cycle and walking infrastructure and could be better considered in the LCWIP.

There are a number of opportunities for low-cost quick wins to improve walking and cycling connectivity to the northeast of Exeter, benefitting local communities and key destinations such as Poltimore House. We would welcome the opportunity to identify costed projects in this area to enable quick delivery supported through funding bids.

We are conscious that DCC are simultaneously consulting on a LCWIP for Cullompton and Tiverton. There is the potential to identify onwards cycling connections between the two LCWIP study areas and this could include a link with the Clyst Valley Trail.

Clyst Valley Trail

The LCWIP prioritises east – west journeys into Exeter but fails to fully recognise the importance of the Clyst Valley Trail for journeys to and from key employment sites (e.g. Skypark, Science Park, Logistics Park, Pynes Hill and Sowton) from the villages in the Clyst Valley, Cranbrook, southern parts of Exeter and the communities along the Exe Estuary. The Clyst Valley Trail also has great potential for impacting leisure trips by connecting the Exe Estuary trail with communities on the eastern side of Exeter as well as Killerton and Ashclyst Forest and Westpoint Arena.

We would like consideration to be given to incorporating wayfinding of an interim Clyst Valley Trail. This would be a positive move to encourage use of the quieter routes following the Clyst Valley and connecting key destinations.

The high prioritisation of the route is supported but without an indicative cost, the LCWIP should state that the county and district councils will work together to develop a schedule of costed route sections that can be used to secure funding and expedite delivery of the trail.

Cranbrook

We would like to collaborate with the project team to better articulate the cycling and walking routes that are emerging through planning applications for the expansion of Cranbrook as we don't believe that they are all correctly shown at present.

Walking and cycling improvements should also recognise improvements that could benefit Broadclyst Station – e.g. linking to Cranbrook Station and the town's services and facilities.

The LCWIP recognises the current lack of employment opportunities within Cranbrook and that better self-containment should be achieved. This is something that the Council is advancing through investment in land and the development of a town centre masterplan as well as the Cranbrook Plan seeking mixed use expansion of the town. Nevertheless the LCWIP doesn't place a great deal of emphasis on what improvements can be made to improve access and create attractive and desirable routes to the closest employment areas to the town, for example at the Skypark and Exeter Airport Business Park. The area of the airport is also home to the Exeter College Future Skills Centre, the closest 16+ educational establishment to the town and so it is imperative that access improvements are identified. We feel that more could be done to articulate potential schemes to achieve these objectives.

Second new community

At a meeting of the Council's Strategic Planning Committee on 5 December 2023 the committee resolved that option 1 be the council's preferred approach for a new community. On this basis we recommend that the LCWIP is reviewed to reflect this and references to options 2 and 3, together with walking and cycling routes required only for those options are removed from the document.

The new community provides an opportunity for delivery of high-quality protected routes linking through the development and connecting it to surrounding villages, existing employment sites north of the A30, the Clyst Valley Trail, the Exe Estuary trail and routes into Exeter. These should be embedded into the LCWIP.

In line with the Strategic Planning Committee resolution of 5 December 2023 the council will be embarking on a master planning exercise for the second new community. This will provide greater detail of how the development will come forward and will build upon the LCWIP in terms of walking and cycling infrastructure.

Financial implications:

There are no direct financial implications resulting from the report

Legal implications:

There are no direct legal implications resulting from the report