Chapter 11: Prioritising sustainable travel and providing the transport and communications facilities we need

Introduction

East Devon is a largely rural district and travel patterns generally reflect this, with relatively low levels of walking, cycling and public transport, and higher levels of car ownership, than the national average. Nevertheless, there is a difference between urban and rural areas in East Devon. There are many villages and hamlets with limited jobs and services, where a degree of car travel is a necessity, but there are also a range of settlements that offer jobs, facilities, and services, suitable for day-to-day life, which can be accessed using sustainable travel modes.

The spatial strategy in chapter 3 reflects national policy by focussing significant development at locations which are, or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes.

New cycle and walkways facilitate sustainable travel.

Promoting sustainable transport in new development has multiple benefits – these include less traffic congestion, lower carbon dioxide emissions, better air quality, and improved physical and mental health. In addition, where sustainable travel is not prioritised, those without access to a car (which can include young people, older people, those with disabilities, low-income households) can suffer from social exclusion and difficulty in accessing jobs, shops, leisure, education and other activities.

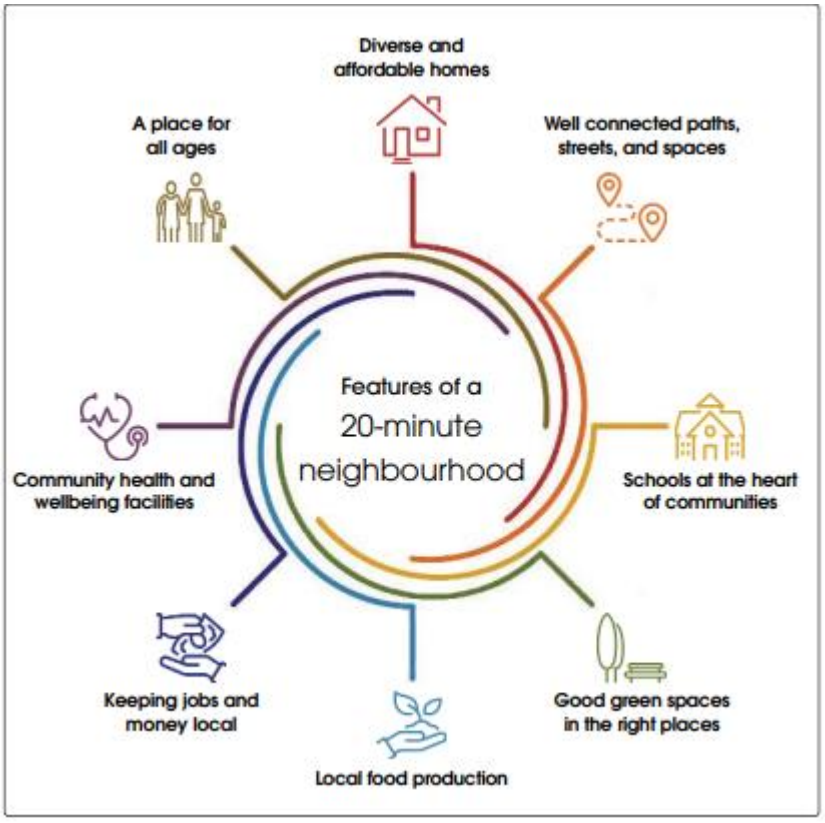
Walking, Cycling and Public transport

Exmouth, Honiton, Seaton and Ottery St Mary all have bespoke bus services that travel around these towns, and there are several high frequency bus routes linking East Devon settlements to Exeter. East Devon has many train stations for its size (nine in total), across two lines, and usage has increased significantly over the last 20 years. There are also some high-quality active travel corridors, notably the popular Exe Estuary Trail.

Most people will choose to walk only if their destination is less than 1.6 km (a mile away), with 800m (half a mile) being a typical distance.[20] Nevertheless, distance is just one of several factors to consider – others include topography, surveillance, directness, attractiveness of the environment, and the intended destination. Given the rural nature of much of East Devon, it is not realistic to require all new development to be within 800m of a range of uses, but this should be the aim at the larger settlements and within larger scale developments. The National Model Design Code makes clear that walking and cycling should be the first choice for short local journeys, particularly those of five miles or less. 43% of journeys in the south west are under two miles – these shorter journeys offer the greatest potential for people to get out of their car and walk or cycle instead.[21] Wheeling includes people who use wheelchairs and mobility scooters who may not identify with walking.

Sustainable travel 'mobility hubs' can encourage walking, cycling and public transport by providing facilities such as secure cycle storage, bike hire, electric vehicle charging, car sharing spaces, and bus stops in the same location. These hubs can be located at key locations such as train stations, bus stations/stops, and Park and Ride sites.

The concept of "20-minute neighbourhoods" has been gaining momentum for several years. Interest in this idea has grown as the COVID-19 pandemic meant people spent more time locally working at home, using public open space, and walking and cycling. The Spatial Strategy and other policies in this Plan such as those relating to housing and employment delivery, community facilities, and open space provision, will all support the delivery of 20-minute neighbourhoods.



Features of 20-minute neighbourhood[22]

As a predominantly rural district, East Devon has a substantial public rights of way network, that policy should protect and enhance.

65. Strategic Policy TR01: Prioritising walking, wheeling, cycling, and public transport

Walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport must be the natural first choice for short local journeys, or as part of a longer journey. Walking and cycling routes must be prioritised in new development – such routes should be coherent, direct, safe, comfortable and attractive. Where appropriate, cycle paths should be segregated from pedestrians to reduce the potential for conflict (for example, where high usage levels are anticipated).
New development should facilitate access to high quality public transport through its location, layout, and, where necessary, contributions to public transport services and/or facilities (for example; bus services, bus stops, bus priority measures, rail infrastructure).

Where appropriate, development should provide, or otherwise make contributions to, an easy interchange between active and shared transport modes through the delivery of mobility hubs.
Development which would result in the loss, or reduce the convenience or attractiveness of an existing or proposed footpath, cycleway or bridleway, will not be permitted unless an acceptable alternative route is provided.

Protecting transport sites and routes

Where there is robust evidence, the Local Plan should identify and protect sites and routes which could be critical in developing infrastructure to widen transport choice and realise opportunities for large scale development.[23] Such sites and routes could include park and ride/change sites, train stations and/or routes, bus priority measures, and walking/cycling routes. The focus will be on protecting sites and routes that promote sustainable travel, consistent with national policy, but there may also be a need to protect land for road schemes that widen transport choice and realise opportunities for large scale development.

66. Strategic Policy TR02: Protecting transport sites and routes

The council will support the delivery of sites and routes that are critical in developing infrastructure to widen transport choice and realise opportunities for large scale development. The following proposed transport sites and routes will be safeguarded from other development that will preclude their delivery.

a) Strategic cycle network schemes:

1) Clyst Valley Trail

2) Sidford to Sidbury

3) Cranbrook to Exeter (E3)

b) Public transport:

1) Railway passing loops as necessary at Axminster; Honiton; and Whimple to Cranbrook.

2) Bus priority route at A3052/A376 to M5 Junction 30.

3) Park and Ride areas of search at A3052 near Clyst St Mary.

c) Road schemes:

1) Alterations/improvements to Clyst St Mary roundabout (A3052/A376)

2) Improved capacity and resilience between M5 J29 to J31, including enhancements to local routes from Clyst Road to A376 to reduce local traffic on M5 J30

3) The route of Axminster Relief Road

Travel plans, Transport Statements and Transport Assessments

The spatial strategy and preferred policies that prioritise sustainable transport should limit the need to travel and offer a genuine choice of transport modes. Nevertheless, new development will still generate car travel, particularly given the rural nature of much of East Devon, so it is important to include policies to address the impacts of development on the transport network. For example, western parts of East Devon in particular experience congestion at peak times, including at M5 junctions 29 and 30, the A3052 corridor, and the A376 northwards from Exmouth, resulting in queuing and delay. Although outside of East Devon, the main road links in the eastern parts of Exeter suffer from congestion which affects those living and working in East Devon, particularly at peak times.

National policy states that all development that will generate significant amounts of movement should provide a travel plan and be supported by a transport statement or transport assessment so that the likely impacts of proposals can be assessed.[24] Travel plans are long-term management strategies for integrating proposals for sustainable travel into the planning process. Transport assessments are thorough assessments of the transport implications of development, whilst transport statements are a lighter-touch approach where there are limited transport impacts.

67. Policy TR03: Travel Plans, Transport Statements, Transport Assessments

Where development is likely to generate significant amounts of vehicle movements, planning permission will not be granted unless they are supported by a transport statement or transport assessment, and subsequent travel plan, that identifies measures to secure new sustainable travel arrangements, taking into account:

- The scale of the development; and
- The availability of public transport, walking and cycling opportunities; and
- Proximity to environmental designations; and
- Cumulative impacts of other development in the area; and
- Whether there are particular types of impacts that require further evaluation.

Parking Standards

The NPPF sets out five issues to take into account if setting local parking standards:

- The accessibility of the development
- The type, mix and use of development
- The availability of and opportunities for public transport
- Local car ownership levels
- The need to ensure an adequate provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles.

The proposed residential parking standards consider the fact that, while there are many settlements with good access to jobs, facilities, and services, East Devon is largely rural, and car ownership levels are higher than the national average.

In order to promote cycling, new residential development should provide bicycle parking spaces.

In the UK, total emissions from surface transport in 2019 were more than one-fifth of the total UK Greenhouse Gas emissions. Cars and vans account for 77.9% of surface transport emissions.[25] In East Devon, total CO2 emissions from road transport in 2019 were more than one-third of East Devon total CO2 emissions.

The government has set out the percentage of new zero emission cars manufacturers will be required to produce each year up to 2030, This requires

80% of new cars and 70% of new vans sold in Great Britain to be zero emission by 2030, increasing to 100% by 2035[26]. Thus, the numbers of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles and electric vehicles are expecting a significate increase in the next decade. EDDC will contribute to the reduction of emissions and support a low carbon future through smarter choices, including electric vehicle infrastructure. In situations where a comprehensive parking standard is necessary, EDDC should prepare a Supplementary Planning Document to include design guidelines and provisions for parking related issues.

68. Policy TR04: Parking standards

Residential car parking standards

Parking in new residential development should provide the following minimum parking provision, unless evidence shows that a different provision is more appropriate based on its accessibility, for example, In town centres where there is access to public car parks and/or very good public transport links:

	Car Parking	**Cycle Parking (Secure and Undercover)**
Residential Dwelling	Average of 1.7 spaces per dwelling (rounded up to the nearest whole number in individual applications).	1 space per Bedroom

Car parking spaces must be of an adequate size to accommodate vehicle parking and have sufficient width to the sides for pedestrian access and egress of vehicles taking account of the location of the parking space and whether or not spaces also serve as access to a property and adjacent obstructions.

Garage spaces will not count toward the overall quantum of car parking spaces.

Employment development parking standards

The expected level of parking for the new employment development is defined by the following standard.
(Figures provided in the table should be viewed as the expected standard, each development will be considered on an individual basis taking account of local circumstances.)

Type/Use	Car Parking	Short Stay Cycle Parking (obvious, easily accessed and close to destination)	Long Stay Cycle Parking (secure and ideally covered)
Class B2/E(g)	1 per 30 sqm	1 per 1,000m²	1 per 500m²

Class B8	1 per 200 sqm	1 per 1,000m²	1 per 500m²
Class E(a) Non-food retail and general retail	1 per 20 sqm	1 per 6 staff	1per 200 sqm
Class E(a) supermarket/ Food retail	1 per 14 sqm	1 per 6 staff	1 per 200 sqm
Class E(b)/ Sui Generis Hot food takeaways (including drive throughs)	1 per 25 sqm	2 per establishment	1 per 8 staff
Class C1	1 per bedroom	1 space per 10 bedrooms	1 space per 10 staff

Justification for policy

For the Residential parking standard, the methodology for calculating the provision is based on guidance set out in Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Residential Car Parking Research (May 2007) and East Devon car ownership data from the census 2021. The calculation has considered the local car ownership and the visitor space needs. The result shows a minimum standard of 1.7 parking spaces. For example, a development of 100 dwellings, 170 parking spaces should be provided. In town centres where there is access to public car parks and/or on-street parking, lower levels of parking may be sufficient. In exceptional cases where there are also very good public transport links, car parking spaces may not be deemed necessary.

The new employment development should adhere to the standard parking provision outlined. Applications that propose parking levels different from this standard should be justified by robust evidence in a Transport Assessment, Transport Statement, or Travel Plan. These deviations will be reviewed individually, taking into account local circumstances.

Electric Vehicle Charging Points

All new developments will be required to provide Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging points in accordance with the Building Regulations 2010 (Part S of Schedule 1)[27] and any other relevant latest Government guidance, including Devon Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy[28].

Aerodromes and Safeguarding

The Civil Aviation Authority has identified a safeguarded area around Exeter International Airport and Dunkeswell Airport in East Devon. In addition, a further safeguarded area around a MoD facility in Mid Devon affects the Northern part of the plan area. In these areas, the Council will consult with the Civil Aviation Authority and airport operators on planning applications for

developments that could compromise operation and safety of the airfield, in accordance with guidance set out in ODPM Circular 1/2003. This could include built development involving high structures, buildings which may interfere with radio signals, or development which may create a bird strike hazard.

Public Safety Zones have been identified by the Department for Transport on land adjoining the runways to Exeter International Airport. A Public Safety Zone is an area within which the annual risk of fatality to a permanent present individual due to an aircraft accident is not less than 1 in 100,000. Within this area there is a smaller zone, where the individual fatality risk is 1 in 10,000.

71. Policy TR05: Aerodrome Safeguarded Areas and Public Safety Zones

Within aerodrome safeguarded areas and the Public Safety Zones for Exeter International Airport, planning permission will not be granted for development that would prejudice the safe operation of protected aerodromes or give rise to public safety concerns.

There is a general presumption against new or replacement development or changes of use of existing buildings within Public Safety Zones. In particular, no new or replacement dwellings, mobile homes, caravan sites or other residential buildings should be permitted within a Public Safety Zone. Other forms of development may be acceptable, provided they do not reasonably expect to increase the number of people living, working or congregating in the area.

Development that could have an adverse impact on the operation or safety or navigational systems at the Airport must provide suitable mitigation (for example, funding for system upgrades).

Communications

The NPPF guides local authorities to facilitate the development of a high-quality communications infrastructure in support of economic growth and social well-being. The NPPF makes clear that planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technologies (such as 5G). Further, the NPPF sets out how these policies should be balanced with other considerations, including conserving and enhancing both the natural and historic environment.

Digital Connectivity

East Devon faces challenges in delivering communications infrastructure in a rural area. East Devon is part of the Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) programme. CDS comes under the Government's Superfast Broadband

Programme to deliver next-generation broadband infrastructure to areas where the commercial market has failed to invest.
According to Ofcom, in 2024 92.53%[29] of the addresses in East Devon have super-fast broadband coverage and 66.05%[30] have ultra-fast broadband coverage, in comparison the mean for all English district local authorities are 96.61% and 73.24%

72. Strategic policy TR06: Digital Connectivity

Planning permission for new development will not be granted unless the scheme will have access to superfast broadband and high-quality communications. Superfast broadband is looked upon as the fifth utility and is identified as an essential requirement.
All new ducting to serve new developments must be installed with capacity for more than one provider and other provisions to enable the delivery of multi-operator fibre to the premises and sufficient mobile connectivity.

Developers are encouraged to have early discussions with strategic providers or Connecting Devon and Cornwall for major development and continuing to support the expansion of full-fibre broadband connections in the district.

Justification for policy

Paragraph 114 of the NPPF, planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G) and full fibre broadband connections.

The Building etc. (Amendment) (England) (No. 2) Regulations 2022[31] came into force on 26 December 2022. These regulations introduce gigabit broadband infrastructure and connectivity requirements for the construction of new homes in England.

East Devon District Council would support further digital connectivity and high-quality communications improvements in the district by liaising with delivery partners and operators in the area and supporting the community engagement of their programmes.

Wireless connectivity and telecoms infrastructure

Fast and reliable wireless connectivity and telecoms infrastructure supports the use of smart technology where people live, work, and travel. Businesses rely on robust communications infrastructure to connect with their customers, suppliers, employees, and to ensure operational processes function efficiently. Wireless connectivity is reliant on a robust telecoms infrastructure

including freestanding or building-based masts and antennas, ground based cabinets and compounds.
There are three types of planning permission that cover the installation of wireless and telecoms infrastructure in England:

- permitted development with the requirement to notify;
- permitted development with the requirement for prior approval;
- planning permission that requires a planning application to be submitted to the relevant planning authority.

Where proposals require an assessment of the siting and appearance of development, the authority will rely on the policies of the Local Plan and on any local design codes or guidance to inform determination.

The provision of telecoms infrastructure is guided by The Code of Practice for Wireless Network Development in England (2022)[32]. The Code of Practice covers all forms of wireless infrastructure development, including telecommunications masts and cabinets.

Applicants will be required to demonstrate how proposals accord with the principles of good practice established under The Code of Practice for Wireless Network Development in England (2022).

73. Policy TR07: Wireless connectivity and telecoms infrastructure

Proposals will only be permitted where they accord with the principles of good practice for wireless network development, including, but not limited to:

- Site sharing and use of existing infrastructure or buildings to house new development
- Consultation with the local planning authority, local communities and other stakeholders
- Considered siting and design, avoiding harm to landscape character, heritage, environment, and bio-diversity
- Compliance with guidance laid out in the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) public exposure levels guidance

Proposals within National Landscapes or at sensitive locations must provide a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and, where appropriate, a Heritage Impact Assessment.

A condition will be imposed to ensure the removal of equipment, supporting apparatus, and the restoration of the site to its former condition, or to a standard to be agreed with the Authority, as soon as reasonably practicable after it is no longer required for electronic communications purposes.
Where appropriate, future permitted development rights will be restricted by condition to prevent harm to landscape character, heritage, environment, and bio-diversity.

Justification for Policy

Section 10 of the NPPF sets out planning guidance for communications development in England, and states that advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being.

The Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review (FTIR) and the National Infrastructure Strategy set out the government's long-term strategy for meeting its digital connectivity targets and delivering high quality, reliable digital infrastructure that works across the UK.

The Code of Practice for Wireless Network Development in England (2022) covers all forms of wireless infrastructure development, including mobile masts and cabinets. Led by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the Code of Practice was developed in collaboration with representatives of the mobile network industry, other government departments and public bodies, local planning authorities, and protected landscapes bodies. The Code of Practice replaces the previous Code of Best Practice on Mobile Network Development, which was published in 2016, and serves as guidance for Local Plan Policy.