

GETTING ABOUT

1. Arrangements for safe, convenient and pleasant movement into and around the town are important to the success and well-being of the community. Quality services and facilities enable growth and expansion for the local economy and improved quality of life. Transport is an enabler and an essential means of connectivity.
2. Exmouth is fortunate in having a good infrastructure of rail and roads and opportunities to walk or cycle in green spaces, but the formulation of further policies and aspirations will give the opportunity for improvements to travel arrangements - to the benefit of residents, visitors and businesses. If we do not take the opportunity now, the anticipated increase in residents and visitors will create transport problems which are already becoming evident but are still avoidable.
3. This chapter looks at all aspects of transport, cyclist and pedestrian movement along with traffic arrangements and parking. Each will be discussed in detail and proposals for changes will be made.

RAIL

4. Exmouth is the southern terminus of the branch line from Exeter St David's, known as the Avocet Line. The line is part of the Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership (DCRP) and is supported by the Avocet Line Community Rail Forum together with an active Avocet Line Rail Users Group (ALRUG). This has resulted in a range of improvements and the increased success of the line.
5. The present weekday timetable is a basic two trains an hour service operated currently by diesel trains, many of some antiquity. Newer diesel trains are expected to be introduced in a forthcoming cascade of rolling stock from the Bristol area.
6. The route is operated by the Great Western Railway (GWR) part of First Group and the present franchise runs until April 2019, with a possible one-year extension from the Secretary of State for Transport. Patronage of the line has increased by over one million passenger journeys in the fifteen years between 2001 and 2016.
7. The nature of the journeys undertaken is varied and covers commuters,

students, shopping trips, leisure and tourists and has become an “inter urban” line more than the usual description of a “branch line”. Commuter passengers form part of the “travel to work” area as described in DCC’s Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3).

8. The GWR’s plans include:

Improved ticketing and arrangements for the purchase of tickets.

Collaborative working towards integrated train/bus maps and arrangements for passengers arriving and departing trains.

Major beneficial changes to the timetable from December 2018.

The line to become part of DCC’s Devon Metro scheme covering local rail services throughout the county with Exeter St David’s as the hub.

Action GAA1: To endorse the GWR improvement plans, as above, encouraging efforts for additional visitors to arrive by train.

BUSES

9. Bus routes serving Exmouth are a mix of commercial and DCC and ETC supported services. Stagecoach is the company with the largest number of routes with Country Bus and Dart Line operating the remainder. There are two direct routes between Exmouth and Exeter one being a high frequency service whilst the other is limited. Direct services also operate to Budleigh Salterton and Sidmouth. Exmouth also benefits from town services which include evenings and weekends.

10. The population of Exmouth has grown significantly in recent years and will continue to do so in response to EDDC’s Local Plan. The current pattern of routes within the town has not evolved to reflect this expansion.

11. Between Easter and the end of the school autumn half term holiday an open top service operates daily between the town centre and Sandy Bay Holiday Park. A land train, which has a circular service between the town centre and Orcombe Point, runs during the summer season. These services are well used and should be developed.

INTERCHANGE FACILITIES

12. From these rail and bus foundations Exmouth has a range of useful and usable public transport services. The connectivity though is far from complete, as evidenced in community consultations. The East Devon District Council (EDDC) Local Plan at Strategy 22 sought “the upgrading of public transport provision to and from Exeter, primarily through the provision of an integrated transport interchange” and Access, Movement and Parking Technical Report in the Exmouth Master Plan (2010). The best location for this facility was lost with the building of the M&S food store, although strenuous efforts continue to pursue this objective but what could now be achieved will probably be smaller. Such an interchange continues to be essential for passenger connectivity between all parts of the town and other routes with the core of the interchange being the railway station. To encourage greater use of public transport, the interchange has become even more vital with ever increasing traffic on the A376.

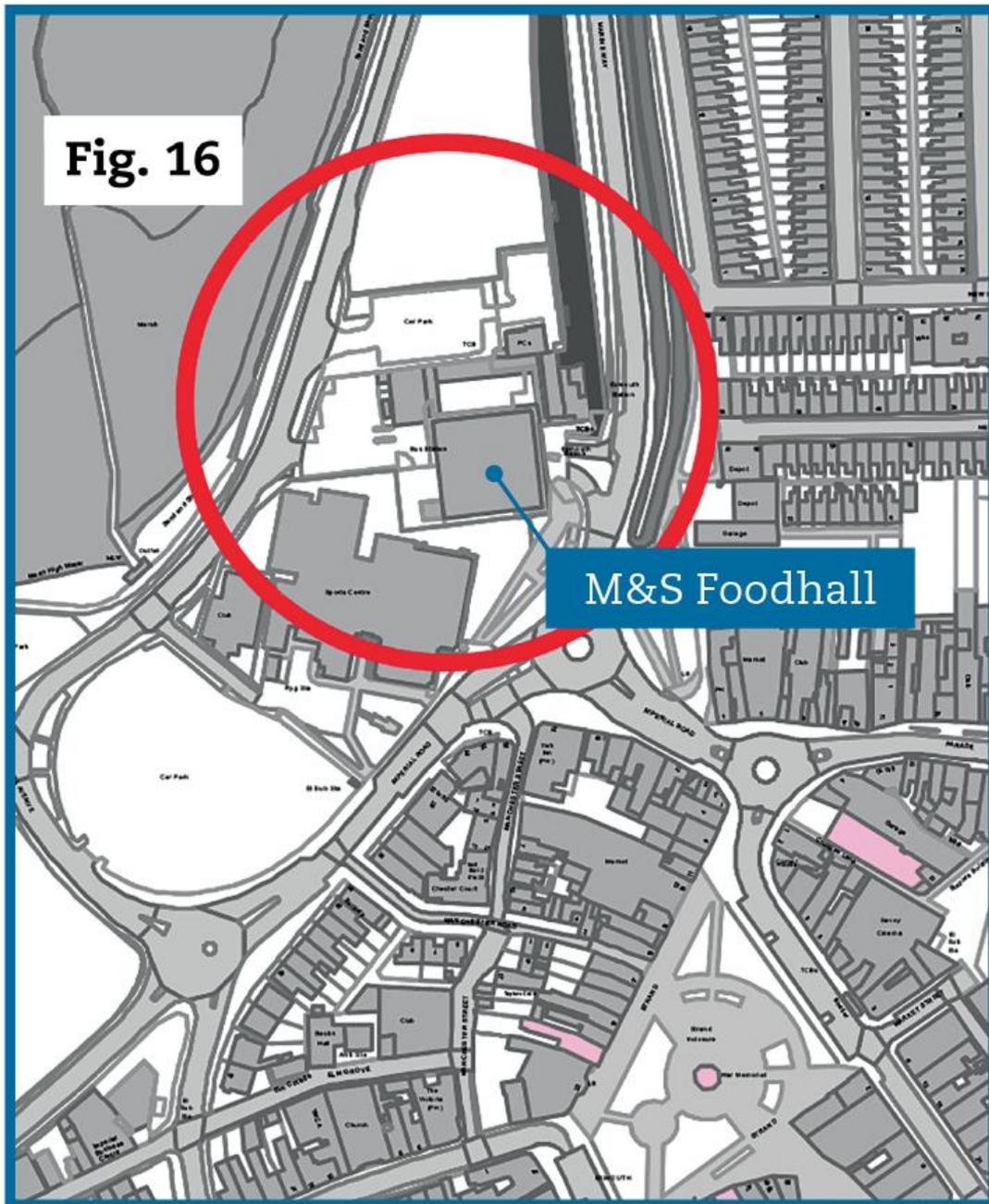
13. Exmouth bus services have suffered a variety of issues since the closure of the bus station. These are technical as well as administrative. There is a clear need for a permanent bus depot in the town which will reassure current passengers and encourage others to think “bus” before “car”. The community of Exmouth strongly supports the EDDC Local Plan Strategy 22 for the town to have an integrated transport interchange. The existing arrangements fail to provide an adequate link between bus, train and taxi. The problems are exacerbated for the disabled, those with young children or carrying heavy luggage. A three-pronged approach is proposed:

An integrated transport interchange provided in accordance with the EDDC Local Plan Strategy 22 (Fig 16)

Re-assessment of bus-routes and timetables within Exmouth

Further re-assessment following completion of the Dinan Way extension.

Action GAA 2: To secure reviews of bus routes in Exmouth.



TAXIS

14. The availability of taxis for short and long journeys is of great importance to the town. Demographics mean many people, including disabled residents, use taxis as a matter of routine. Exmouth hotels attract coach companies whose passengers are often elderly and with limited mobility, such visitors making use of local taxi's service. Local residents and visitors arriving by train are more likely to complete their journey by taxi in the absence of bus services adjacent to the railway station. There are around 70 taxis licensed to the town with 30 per shift available for hire. EDDC is the licensing authority and the rules and

regulations are currently under review.

15. It is not generally known that Exmouth taxis are licensed as Hackney Carriages and may be flagged down anywhere that is safe for them to stop.

16. There are five sites within the town centre where taxi stands are located

South side of The Strand

Railway station

KFC in Imperial Road

Magnolia Centre

Sea front

17. The Taxi Drivers Association has registered its concern that Exmouth has no plans to establish recharging points for electric cars, which will be essential for them and other drivers – both residents and visitors – as the drive to reduce pollution progresses and the number of electric cars increases. There is strong support for the installation of electric charging points at suitable locations around the town.

Action GAA3: To encourage and actively promote the provision of public electric charging points at garages, supermarkets and car parks.

COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

18. Exmouth has a long established, active and forward looking charitable Exmouth and District Community Transport Group. Its sphere of influence includes not only the town but nine nearby villages. For details see: www.exmouthringandride.org.uk

19. This vital organisation allows those members of the community who are not able to use scheduled rail and bus services to maintain their independence. The Group has four distinct types of support, which include a regular day and timetabled service, booked the day before. Some vehicles are available for private hire.

PEDESTRIANS

20. Within the shopping area of the town centre the Magnolia Centre is fully pedestrianised. The pedestrian area in The Strand was extended during the

last redevelopment and is now available for community events of all kinds. The town centre is compact and busy with buses, trains, the Leisure Centre, two primary schools, medical centres and churches within level walking distance.

21. There is some conflict between pedestrians, cyclists and motorised vehicles. The potential for stress to pedestrians and drivers, as well as for conflict at locations such as the two town centre schools at the start and end of the day, should not be underestimated. Congestion also occurs outside the other town schools during the same periods. This impedes pedestrian movement in all such areas during these busy periods.
22. Too little has been done in the town centre to manage the situation. Variations in road surfaces, improved marking of pedestrian crossing points and creating an environment giving pedestrians priority are measures that can be taken, as they have been in many other towns. There is considerable community support for further pedestrianization in the town centre. For this to be achieved careful consideration needs to be given to the implications for the flow of traffic within the whole town centre. Good community consultation will be essential to ensure acceptance. Further traffic calming measures may complement or, at some points, be an alternative to pedestrianization.
23. When the Strand Gardens were redeveloped one set of traffic lights (with pedestrian lights incorporated) was removed. Two informal crossings and a hump were installed in lieu as a traffic calming initiative, but these are not well differentiated. As a result, many pedestrians and drivers are unsure about how to cross them. The changes have achieved an improved traffic flow for most of the time, but they do not have universal support and many residents have asked for a crossing point.
24. Pedestrians would also benefit from a lighted crossing between Dinan Way and Brixington Lane. Where suitable, consideration could be given to replacement of Lollipop Attendants by pedestrian crossings.
25. Conflict does occur along the Esplanade and at the Leisure Centre where pedestrians and cyclist share the footway. At these points the width of the footway varies and in places is too narrow for both to share the space comfortably. Calls have been made for improvement or greater separation, thus removing pinch points, plus improved signage so that cyclists and pedestrians know where they should be.
26. The new Estuary footpath and cycleway between the A376 and the Estuary has

been welcomed but some points remain to be addressed, including the unsatisfactory link between the rail station and the sea-front.

27. The Starcross Ferry is well-used, but it is under serious pressure at times because of the large number of travellers. Improvements to the service would probably attract more customers and would be welcome to both pedestrians and cyclists.

28. A water taxi service established between Exmouth and Topsham, with a plan to expand operations in 2018, has been welcomed.

Objective: Support calls for the footways to be repaired in an around the Magnolia Centre and Town Centre. Improve the pinch points along the shared Esplanade footway.

Policy GA1: Development within the Magnolia Centre, Town Centre and the Esplanade shared footway should seek opportunities to improve footways and reduce pinch points, to improve access and safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

Action GAA4: Encourage pedestrian knowledge on the different types of crossings found in the town centre.

Action GAA5: Support calls for the provision of a formal pedestrian crossing points.

Action GAA6: Press for improvements to the Starcross Ferry Service.

Action GAA7: The ERA/ECA traffic management scheme for the Town Centre should be given further consideration.

TRAFFIC

29. Traffic flow to, from, through and around Exmouth has changed little of recent years, except for a significant increase in volume. The last major change was in the town centre with the regeneration of The Strand Gardens when it became two-way on the northern side and one way west to east on the southern side. The western and eastern roadways were incorporated into the public open area around the war memorial.

30. The A376 is the main route into the town. From Clyst St George to Exmouth it is a narrow twisting two-way road with few footways. DCC have stated the road will not be widened or upgraded. Normal peak hour traffic quickly builds and serious congestion results. Road works also frequently lead to delays. During the summer holidays and any major event or incident along the route

causes a rapid build-up of traffic leading to long tailbacks.

31. The traffic management scheme for the town centre submitted to DCC, EDDC and ETC by the Exmouth Residents Association and the Exmouth Community Association in 2011 should be reconsidered.
32. The long-awaited extension to Dinan Way, once completed, will give traffic the opportunity to avoid unsuitable streets and narrow lanes when travelling between the A376 and the eastern areas of Exmouth. This will additionally give a less congested route to the light industrial area of the town and towards Budleigh Salterton. Planning officers need to bear in mind that residents close to the road have specific concerns which can be addressed during the consultation process. Although the completion of this road will ease traffic within Exmouth once it has left the A376, it is recognised that this will not ease the traffic flow on the A376 between Lypstone and Clyst St Mary.
33. The completion of the route is included as a Targeted Capital Intervention in the DCC Local Transport Plan and in the EDDC Local Plan Strategy 22. Conditional planning consent has been granted for the scheme and DCC will move forward to acquire necessary land and funding. A delivery date has not been formally announced, but is expected to be in the next three years.
34. Sandy Bay Holiday Park/Devon Cliffs is a prosperous and successful site of chalets and caravans and an important element in the local economy. A reappraisal of the road layout leading to this large site should be considered and especially a link to the present end of Dinan Way at Salterton Road. When this is considered the options for improved links to Exeter Airport and the Enterprise Zone could feature.

Action GAA8: Endorse the completion of Dinan Way

Action GAA9: Consider a new road link between Sandy Bay and the completed Dinan Way.

Action GAA10: Traffic flow along Imperial Road either side of the pedestrian crossing between Manchester Road and the Imperial car park should be improved to prevent serious traffic congestion.

PARKING

35. Exmouth arrangements for the parking of cars, motorhomes and motor cycles can be divided into specific areas. These are the railway station area, town

centre, sea front, Orcombe Point and residential areas. Overall the town has, at present, sufficient parking space although conflict can occur and not all is used to its full potential. A parking survey was completed in 2004 and is referred to in the preparation of the Exmouth Master Plan Project in the March 2011 Access, Movement and Parking Technical Report.

36. The community has highlighted the confusion caused where DCC and EDDC have side by side parking responsibilities. This is exacerbated by two different pricing regimes in the same locality. It is also suggested that, at specific times/occasions, parking charges should be lowered to encourage the local economy by attracting a greater number of visitors.
37. While most residents wish to make visitors welcome there is concern about the arrangements for the parking of motor homes on the sea front. The steps proposed by the Town Council to make suitable arrangements for the overnight parking of motor homes are welcome and there is expectation in the community that these will be implemented without delay and effectively enforced.
38. Motor Home parking on residential roads is becoming a problem on some roads close to the town centre and other residential areas. These generally belong to local people and often remain static for long periods, whilst some move from road to road at intervals. A small number are known to be semi/permanently occupied.
39. Town centre parking may be considered in two categories. The first is the residential area close to the centre, where areas of high density housing were built prior to the car becoming the norm for most households. This has resulted in a considerable amount of on street parking. The Colony area suffers from heavy congestion. The second is The London Inn car park, which serves the centre shopping area, and the Imperial Road car park, which serves the Leisure Centre, medical centres and allied businesses as well as the Strand shopping area.
40. The Railway Station area has a small railway passenger only car park. To the north of the railway station is a large area of mixed parking with ownership divided between DCC and EDDC. Apart from a considerable area set aside for cars it also includes coach, bus and overnight lorry parking. Adjacent to the railway station the M&S food store has its own small car parking area.
41. There is an aspiration for a Park and Ride Service to be provided, but it is

uncertain whether a business plan for this would be viable, even if a suitable location is available.

42. Sea front parking at Mamhead Slipway. The re-opening of Mamhead is a key move towards re-establishing Exmouth's marine leisure offer. With the completion of the slipway renewal, the parking of cars and trailers in this area has changed. How policing of the new arrangements will work has yet to be seen.
43. Sea front parking at Orcombe Point, including Queens Drive, Marine Drive and Maer Road. This is an exceptionally popular parking area much of which looks out to sea, with the large but underused Maer Road car park nearby. This area includes two toilet blocks, a seasonal cafe at Foxholes, day-use chalets, the RNLI Life Boat facility and forms the eastern extremity of the Exmouth Esplanade. There is a realistic aspiration for a permanent cafe facility to be provided at the very eastern end of Queens Drive. The parking on Queens Drive attracts on road parking of all sizes of motor homes: a fact which causes Exmouth residents serious concerns. Although welcome as visitors, it is felt that large motor homes are a hindrance to pedestrians using the Esplanade in this area. The Exmouth community would prefer to see a proper facility for such vehicles. This could be by way of marking out a number of larger parking bays with parking signs to include the wording: motorhomes must park in an 'oversize bay'. The establishment in July 2017 of a joint working party comprising ETC, EDDC and DCC is welcome.
44. The Maer Road car park is owned by EDDC, is a short walk from the sea and is lightly used even at the height of summer. Car owners prefer to park on nearby roads without charge. However, an area of this car park could, perhaps be used to provide all the basic facilities motorhomes need during a visit to Exmouth.

Action GAA11: To support the need for a substantial and suitably designed facility for motorhomes visiting Exmouth.

Action GAA12: Encourage the rationalisation between the two councils' parking arrangements and charges, with larger bays to accommodate motorhomes.

ACCESS STRATEGY FOR EXMOUTH

45. In 2002 Cyclepath Exmouth, a volunteer group, produced a "Strategy for Cycle Routes in Exmouth" which was revised and updated in 2008. It was produced

in conjunction with East Devon District Council (EDDC) who, after public consultation, endorsed it for use in decision making and the production of the Local Development Framework. It has been taken into account when processing and determining planning applications. It is referred to in the Local Plan and is available on the EDDC website.

46. This document was primarily concerned with cycling infrastructure, whilst stressing that cycle paths and routes would also benefit walkers, the disabled and those with push chairs. The scope has now been widened so that this new document has a broader remit and has been renamed as an “Access Strategy” to avoid giving undue emphasis to cycling and is intended to be incorporated into the Exmouth Neighbourhood Plan, as well as the EDDC Local Plan.

Objectives:

Improve access for residents and improve awareness of what opportunities exist to walk or cycle rather than use cars or public transport.

Take advantage of the opportunities that new developments may bring to improve routes and provide good access for the new developments.

Provide a “wish list” identifying opportunities that could be implemented as and when funds are available or as new development is authorised.

Make the maximum use of existing pathways, quiet roads and good pavements by means of signage and the production of local maps.

Basic Requirement

47. A large-scale map needs to be produced showing all the many useful paths which exist in Exmouth, numbered and linked to a file with descriptions and useful data together with their status (public footpath, cycleway, shared use path, bridleway or unclassified pathway). It can then record information vital to the planning and improvement of routes, including links outside the area, particularly to Woodbury Common.

The Overall Plan

48. Exmouth is an unusual town in that it is bounded by the Exe Estuary and the sea front so that its centre of activity is in fact almost in the corner between the two. It is envisaged that what is needed is a spider’s web of routes that is

radial routes roughly radiating from the “centre” or Phear Park, which are linked from one to the other by a series of cross routes. The most important first step is the establishment of where the radial routes are needed. Some are complete and in use, some exist partially and some do not exist at all.

49. Fig 17 below shows diagrammatically what the web could look like. It shows existing official cycle paths, shared use paths and public footpaths but not any unclassified paths.



Radial Routes

50. These are:

R.1. From the station along the Estuary Trail

R.2. Bapton Valley route

R.3. Withycombe Valley route

R.4. Budleigh Railway Path

R.5. Maer/Littleham Valley route

R.6. Sea Front complete from Exmouth Docks to Orcombe Point.

There is a need to establish links from the town centre to Phear Park and also through the Strand to the sea front.

The opportunity to establish a circular route for cyclists, as well as walkers, by improving the Starcross/Exmouth Ferry needs to be pursued.

Links

51. The new National Trust path runs from Exe Estuary Trail to Exeter Road and could link to Summer Lane when Dinan Way is extended.
52. Sustrans Routes (and Tour de Manche): Sustrans Routes National Cycle Route NCN2 runs from Dover to St Austell and includes the Exe Estuary Trail (R.1) and the Budleigh Railway Path (R.4). In this area it is also part of the international Tour de Manche which runs from Plymouth to Poole and links via ferries to Roscoff and Cherbourg to the French coast where there is an equivalent route linking those two ports.

Code of conduct

53. A code of conduct is required to establish a way of securing the best use of the pathways. Where paths are shared, either officially or un-officially, cyclists should give way to pedestrians. Cycles should be fitted with a bell or similar warning device.

Objective: Fully support the existing strategy for cycle routes in Exmouth endorsed by EDDC. Support the implementation of additional tracks and links as suggested and investigate where need is already identified or where there is future opportunity.

Policy GA2: All new housing and employment development proposals should, where feasible, seek to connect with the existing cycle network, or

seek opportunities to further develop the network to ensure excellent connectivity. Such proposals should be mindful of the Cycle Routes in Exmouth strategy. Where appropriate, CIL money should contribute to the improvement of the cycle network across the Exmouth area.