Devon County Council

Exeter Transport Strategy

(2020-2030)

Strategy Document

Consultation Draft

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InnovaSUMP
Interreg Europe

European Union
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Development Fund

Devon County Council
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Background - Local Transport Plan 3 (2011-2026)

1.1. Exeter is a thriving economic centre for the county and is a desirable location to live. With 5 rail lines serving the city and on the convergence of the M5 and the A30 Strategic Road Network, it is also the gateway for transport into the SW Peninsula.

1.2. The city has been growing rapidly. This economic success and growing influence at a sub-regional level has increased travel demand into the city. Continuation of this growth presents challenges for the transport system which, unless addressed, could result in increased congestion, pollution and unreliable journeys.

1.3. The current transport strategy for Exeter is set out in the Local Transport Plan 3 (2011-2026), and comprises five key elements:

- Improve access to the city
- Enable and support smarter travel
- Deliver the east of Exeter development
- Deliver major developments within Exeter
- Protect Exeter as a gateway

1.4. The County Council has made good progress in helping deliver approximately £80 million of new transport infrastructure for the Exeter and East Devon Growth Point area since 2011. This has included motorway junction improvements, road widening schemes, strategic cycling infrastructure, new bus services and two new rail stations.

Recent Projects, clockwise: Newcourt station, Tithebarn Link Road, Tithebarn Bridge and Bridge Road Widening

Project	Opened
Redhayes Bridge	2011
Alphington Road Outbound Widening	2012
London Inn Square	2012
M5 Junction 29 Upgrade	2013
Clyst Honiton Bypass	2013
Exeter Central Station Forecourt	2014
Newcourt Rail station	2015
Cranbrook Rail Station	2015
M5 J30 Southbound off slip widening	2015
Tithebarn Link Road – Phase 1	2015
A38/A380 Splatford Split	2016
Co Bikes- on street electric bike hire	2016
Completion of Exe Estuary Trail	2017
A379 Sandy Park Junction Upgrade	2017
Tithebarn Link Road Phase 2 and bridge	2018
Bridge Road Widening	2018
Exeter E4 Cycle Route – Phase 1	2018
East of Exeter new Bus Services	2018

Overview of Key Transport Projects Delivered 2011-2018

1.5. The table above provides an overview of some of the major transport schemes that have been opened in the last few years.

1.6. A significant part of the existing strategy has now been delivered and with changing technology and a better understanding of travel habits, there is a need to refresh the transport strategy to better reflect current trends, priorities and the needs of communities.

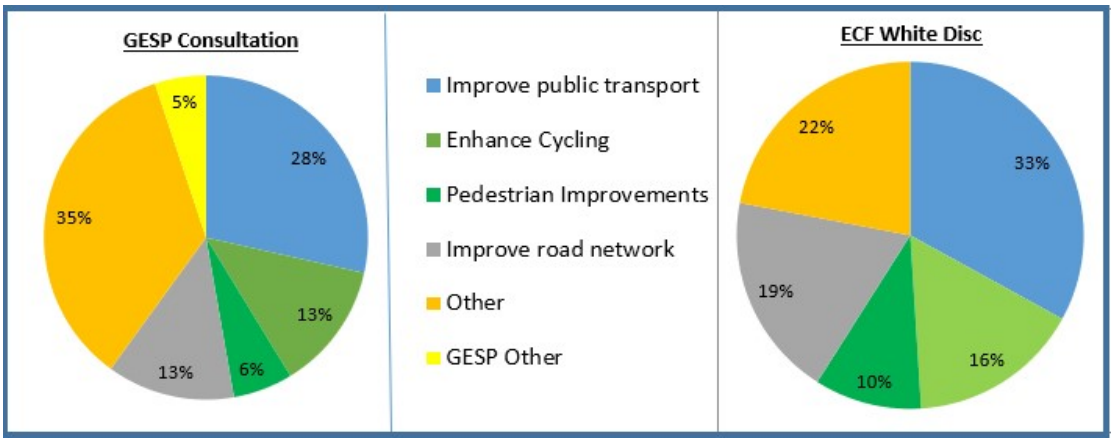
1.7. There has been a lot of work to identify travel trends, patterns and best value interventions over the last 18 months. This has led to the development of a draft strategy that we are now sharing for public consultation.

Background – Previous Consultations

1.8. A number of consultation exercises have been carried out in recent years to gauge public opinion and priorities for transport improvements. For instance, the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan started with an Issues consultation where residents could comment on the content of the plan and provide local input. Exeter City Futures also invited residents to share their vision of Exeter.

1.9. The main comments raised in the consultations are listed and summarised in the graph below.

- Improved Public Transport was the primary aspiration, particularly enhanced rail and more Park and Rides sites.
- Cycling was the most mentioned individual mode.
- Congestion highlighted as the biggest issue, followed by air quality.
- More support for active modes than for improvements to road network.
- Mixed views on car parking, with broadly equal support for increasing supply/reducing cost as reducing supply/increasing cost.



Summary of Transport Requests from GESP and ECF White Disc Consultations

1.10. Both these initial consultations highlighted that improved transport options were important to the public. We have used these findings as a basis for informing the emerging Transport Strategy.

Background - Transport Planning is Evolving

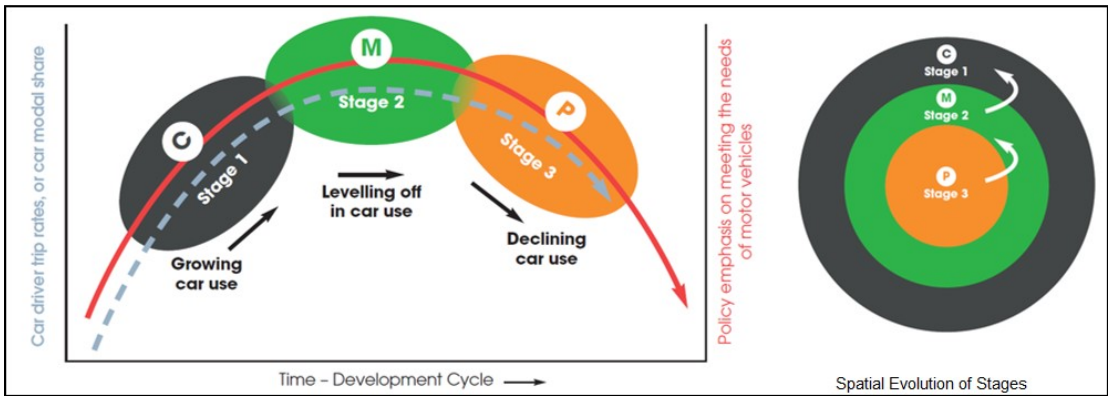
1.11. It is important to recognise that as cities grow and factors changes, urban transport policy is continually evolving.

1.12. These changes have been pronounced by three distinct policy perspectives. Initially, policies have been car-centric with road building and car parking at their heart. As networks have filled, and the impacts of congestion become clear, policy has shifted towards multi modal travel as the means to provide extra transport capacity to enable continued growth.

1.13. The third policy phase is a people-centric approach to planning and design. In a competitive market place where cities want to attract the best talent, they are now seeking a more people focussed approach. Central to this is a greater sense of place and better quality of life.

1.14. As policy has evolved over time, car usage from urban areas has decreased. This trend is observed in Exeter, with the most recent Census highlighting a fall in driving levels to the extent that the majority of residents of Exeter do not drive to work and there are some of the highest levels of walking of any UK city.

1.15. These trends, alongside the spatial nature of the transport stages arising from different policy perspectives are shown below.



Car Usage through each stage / Spatial Evolution of Stages

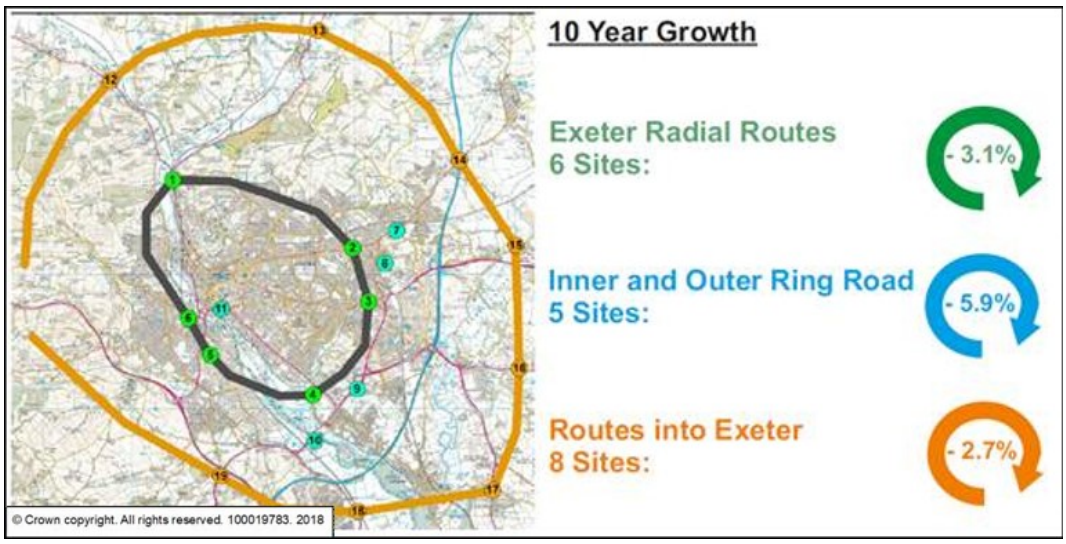
1.16. Travel characteristics vary across the city and can be seen spatially. For example, the level of accessibility around the city centre is comparatively higher with walking, cycling and public transport dominant mode choices (i.e. Stage 3), whereas the outer edges / suburbs may be more dependent on cars (i.e. Stage 1).

1.17. Further stages of mobility are likely to occur beyond Stage 3. For example, Stage 4 could be a step towards an Integrated City where a greater use of and integration of technologies into everyday activities results in significant changes in transport usage.

Evidence, Challenges and Opportunities

1.18. The Exeter **Travel to Work Area** (TTWA) has grown considerably in recent years and is now the second largest geographical TTWA in the country (behind Cambridge). The growth in Exeter jobs from 2001 to 2011 has been filled by labour from outside the city, which is reflected by the rising levels of inward commuting, 48% in the last Census.

1.19. Between 2001 and 2011 there has been an increase of 7,500 people travelling into Exeter from outside the city for work, and significant jobs and housing growth in Exeter and surrounding area. Despite this, traffic levels on key routes into the city have not increased. Although congestion levels are difficult to measure, data suggests that conditions are unchanged in the AM peak hour but congestion has risen slightly in the PM peak hours.



Change in Traffic on routes in and around Exeter 2005 - 2015

1.20. Additional travel demand into the city has instead been accommodated by the residents of Exeter shifting to sustainable travel modes. As a result, the balance of travel for Exeter residents has shifted to a point where the **majority of Exeter residents now travel to work by sustainable modes.**

1.21. Travel behaviour of commuters living and working in Exeter differs significantly from commuters living outside the city, with 80% of trips into the city from the latter being made by car. In rural areas where there is limited alternative to car, the car dominance is even more prominent with over 90% travelling to the city by car.

1.22. Exeter residents still represent the largest part of Exeter's labour pool (52%) and, despite the compact nature of the city, Exeter residents account for 35% of car-based commute trips to a destination in the city. This therefore represents the single largest population area to target any measures to promote modal shift.

1.23. Reflecting the closer proximity to employment sites for Exeter residents, they are also those with the most travel choices and are most likely to change modes.

TTW Demand into Exeter 2011 - Car Mode Split by area

1.24. Exeter already has excellent coverage by public transport and compared to other cities of comparable size, only Oxford (17%) has significantly higher public transport mode splits for commuting than Exeter (11%). That said there are journey time reliability issues on core routes which reduces the attractiveness of public transport.

1.25. For cycling however, despite strong growth in usage following the Cycle Demonstration Town project from 2006-2010, Exeter's TTW cycle mode split (6%) trails behind a number of other locations including Norwich (9%), York (12%), Oxford (17%) and Cambridge (30%).

1.26. Alongside this, the **spatial distribution of jobs** and services in and around the city is changing. The 20,000 jobs now in the Sowton area equals the number in the city centre, but accounts for double the number of car movements.

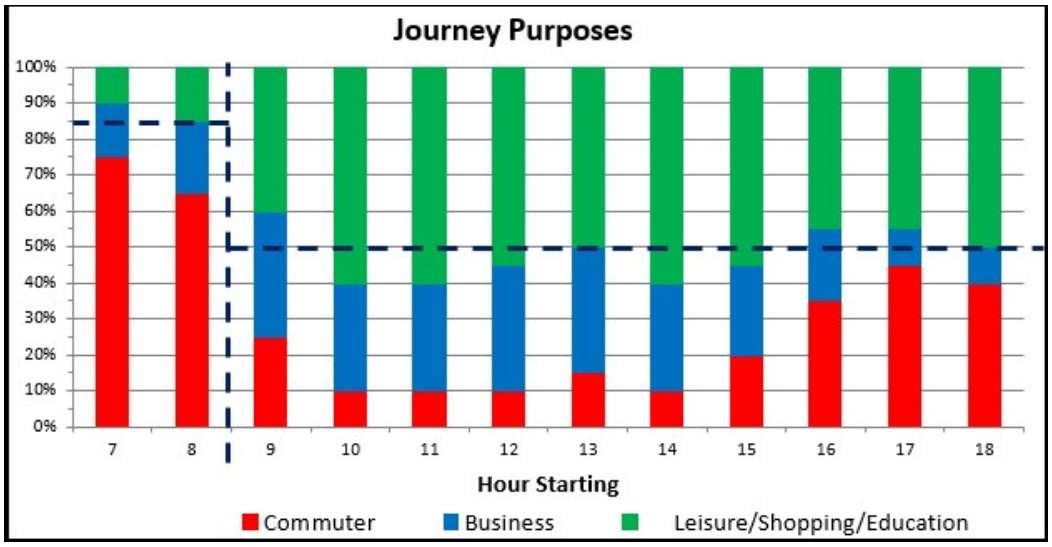
1.27. Outside of Exeter, the towns of Newton Abbot, Tiverton, Cullompton and Honiton will experience significant growth and the new town of Cranbrook will grow to a size similar to Tiverton during the current Local Plan periods. **Additional travel demand within these towns and towards Exeter** will need to be accommodated sustainably.

1.28. Future employment growth also includes significant new sites in East Devon , including Skypark/Science Park/IMFT, and further expansion along the M5 corridor. These areas lack the range of amenities and attractions of the city centre, and consequently are much more challenging to serve with high quality commercial public transport services. Walking/cycling distances are also generally longer and routes more complex.

1.29. Outside the peak commuting period business trips make a substantial contribution to car travel throughout the day, many of these are captive to the car or commercial vehicle.

1.30. **Shopping and leisure trips** are also significant contributors to congestion. Although the morning peak is dominated by work based trips, the more congested PM peak is an almost 50:50 mix of work and shopping/leisure trips.

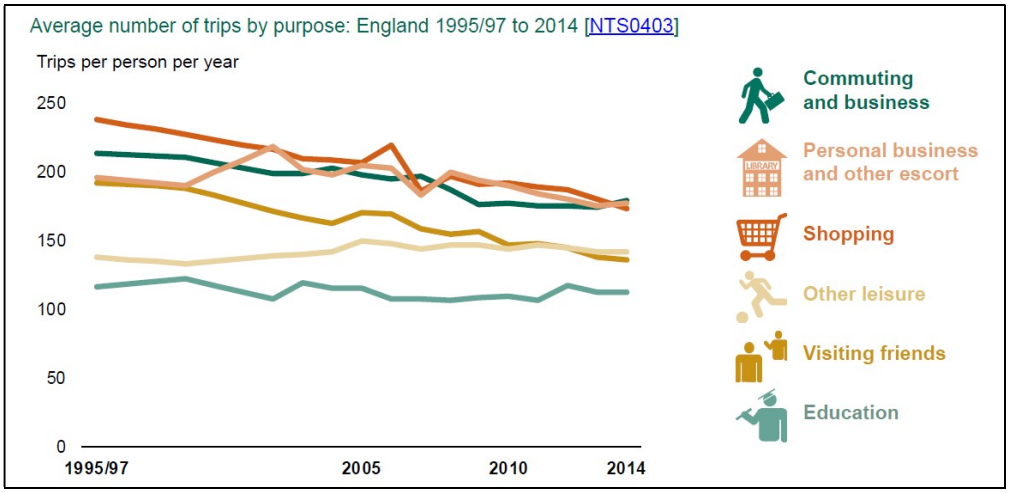
1.31. Shopping and leisure trips are integral to the success of the city and although the city centre is changing, it will continue to be a popular destination. These trips are more sensitive to changes than business and commuting trips. Therefore measures that can shift the timing and mode of these trips to both minimise impact on the network and support the city centre economy, represents one of the most significant opportunities for any future transport strategy.



Journey Purpose on Exeter Radial routes (7AM - 7PM)

1.32. Although car ownership has been rising, **car usage is falling**. The reduced usage moves towards a point where owning a second (or third) car becomes less critical. This provides a great opportunity to **promote shared mobility,** such as car clubs / bike hire and other non-car travel modes.

1.33. **Digital connectivity** has also fundamentally changed the way we travel. Each individual now makes 15% fewer trips than they did in 1995. This trend is expected to continue and suggests there is a need for a new approach to plan for the changing needs and expectations of society.



Changing Trip Rates

1.34. Technology will offer new opportunities for journey planning, ticketing and a chance to **utilise time spent travelling that will make public transport trips more attractive**.

1.35. **Technology will also unlock new ways to manage the network**, such as real time wireless methods of corridor control, which could provide additional capacity and reliability on highway routes. The critical question for the strategy is how best to embrace innovation and invention in an inherently risky and complex highway environment.

1.36. By the end of the current Local Plan period, the adjacent Strategic Road Network is expected to be at capacity and the numbers employed in Exeter is likely to **increase by another 25-30%** over the next 20-25 years.

1.37. With existing transport networks already at capacity in peak periods, additional capacity will be required to support rising travel demand and economic activity. Alongside this, urban centre regeneration schemes must strive to reduce the dominance of vehicular traffic and provide an environment where amenities and services are located within a reasonable walking and cycling distance.

1.38. This strategy also recognises the importance of protecting the performance of the Local Highway Network. Some additional capacity will be provided on key inter-urban routes with the aim of improving route choice around Exeter and enhancing the wider resilience of the network.

1.39. However, the city is built upon a historic road network, has limited crossings of the River Exe and has limited scope for additional widening / capacity improvements and therefore **building extra highway capacity is probably not possible within the city**.

1.40. Instead, providing **capacity for future growth will depend on effective sustainable alternatives** to remove discretionary car trips from the local and Strategic Road Network and more **sophisticated management of existing transport corridors**.

1.41. Air quality and community cohesion is much higher up the health and political agenda and the Government are actively pursuing a reduction in vehicle emissions. There are a few key areas where possible interventions will be identified to assist in addressing a series of local problems and improving health and the environment for people.

Exeter Transport Strategy

1.42. The new Exeter Transport Strategy will build upon the growth led focus in the Local Transport Plan and include a greater focus on improved travel choices, people and technology.

1.43. The core elements of the strategy will be to address constraints on sustainable transport networks, providing the basis of a connected City Region, deliver interventions that contribute to improved quality of life and utilise the opportunities that technological advancements have created to integrate information and engage with people about the travel choices they make.

1.44. The proposals aim to provide an ambitious, but ultimately realistic, transport strategy that is embodied in the following 3 key themes:

- **Greater Connectivity**
- **Greater Places for People**
- **Greater Innovation**

1.45. The transport strategy in Exeter will facilitate the continued expansion of the city region by providing a sustainable and reliable transport system, allowing people and goods to move around the network efficiently, thereby supporting sustainable growth and providing better quality of life to residents.

1.46. Central to this will be creating a comprehensive, accessible and coherent cycle and pedestrian network that connects key economic hubs to transport interchanges and residential areas - **50% of trips within the city will be made on foot or by bike**.

1.47. This represents the most achievable way of freeing up capacity to facilitate the increase of car-based inward commuters from outside the city and complements the Sport England Local Delivery Pilot and Exeter's aspiration to become the **most active city in the country**.

1.48. This will be complemented by new high quality strategic cycle links creating **a city region strategic leisure network** to encourage short to medium distance trips from existing settlements into Exeter and the Exe Estuary Trail.

1.49. To support a focus on place and reduce dominance of vehicles in urban areas, additional vehicle routes and capacity will need to be provided in key locations to ensure adequate provision is maintained for those who have to use vehicles for business and work.

1.50. **Park & Ride sites on all key corridors** will increase transport capacity into the city and provide a realistic sustainable travel option for those trips from rural areas into the city that can't feasibly be served by traditional public transport services.

1.51. The potential of **Park & Ride to also provide frequent cross city connections** as well as from the city centre out to the industrial areas at Marsh Barton and Sowton / East of Exeter will also be promoted.

1.52. There will be **enhanced bus corridors** and better connections with key employment hubs. Within the city, particular focus will be given to **enhancing Heavitree Road** to achieve more reliable journey times, an improved environment for pedestrians and cyclists and to reduce pollution.

1.53. The County Council will explore options to deliver a modern, **cleaner bus fleet with on board WiFi** allowing more productive travel and reduced transport costs with a greater influence on the routes being run.

1.54. Alongside this will be continued improvement of '**Devon Metro'** rail services improving the connectivity within the city region so that the towns of Cranbrook, Crediton, Dawlish, Dawlish Warren, Exmouth, Honiton, Newton Abbot and Teignmouth are served by at least half hourly rail frequency. New rail connectivity to Mid Devon will also be investigated.

1.55. In combination, the enhanced rail, bus and active travel links between key settlements and Exeter form the basis of a **Connected City Region network**.

1.56. The strategy must ensure that the transport network protects and **enhances strategic road, rail and air connectivity** into the city and South West Peninsula so that it retains momentum and continues to offer an attractive place for sustainable growth.

1.57. In addition to hard infrastructure, new **transport innovations** and interventions will be encouraged, with active testing of smart measures being piloted on the network. The thriving data analytics community in Exeter will partner the local authorities to better understand travel behaviour and travel patterns to deliver complementary solutions.

1.58. Central to this will be introducing a new **single ticketing platform**, giving convenient and attractive multi modal travel and a cost-effective alternative to multiple car ownership.

1.59. The network will benefit from **smarter operation and management**. Such initiatives could include **innovative car parking strategies** in the city centre, which encourages longer stays in the evening and off-peak, whilst discouraging car travel at peak times.

1.60. More detail on the specific measures to achieve this strategy are set out in greater detail on the following pages.

Greater Connectivity – Enhanced Travel Choices

1. Connected City Region

Aim: Increase the attractiveness of public transport through improved passenger facilities and better journey time frequency and reliability.

- Continued delivery of the Devon Metro including at least half hourly frequency on rail lines into Exeter.
- Enhance bus services between Exeter and surrounding towns to provide 15 minute frequency on key inter-urban routes into the city, including Cranbrook, Crediton, Cullompton and Newton Abbot.
- New strategic walking and cycle trails connecting surrounding towns into existing Exe Estuary trail and Exeter cycle network.
- Upgrade of facilities and interchange at main Transport hubs.

2. Nationally Connected

Aim: Retain and enhance strategic road, rail and air connectivity with the rest of the country and overseas.

Interventions:

- Enhance capacity, resilience and relieve pressure on M5 J29 – J31 / Splatford Split.
- Improved resilience, capacity and journey times on rail mainlines as well as 'working office' capabilities on new rolling stock.
- Enhance A3052 / A376 corridor towards M5 J30 and Exeter.

3. Park & Ride on all main corridors

Aim: Provide Park & Ride on all key corridors and double the number of spaces that serve the city.

- Park & Ride / Change interchange facility serving main corridors of Alphington Road, A377 to Crediton, B3181 to Broadclyst and A376/A3052.
- Increase cross-city Park and Ride services to improve linkages to employment on the edges of the city.

Greater Places for People - Healthier Active City

4. Active Exeter

Aim: 50% of work trips originating in Exeter to be made on foot or by cycle.

- Comprehensive citywide Exeter cycle network linking all key destinations, delivering safe routes that can be enjoyed by all.
- Enhance key pedestrian corridors, including new river and main road crossings and improved access to transport interchanges.
- Improved access to cycle, including city-wide bike hire scheme and greater access to storage facilities.
- Modal filters on residential streets to remove through traffic and create quieter and safer environments for pedestrians and cyclists.

5. People Based Places

Aim: Shift to more people-focused design interventions to improve the health and wellbeing of citizens and vitality of the city centre.

- Reduce dominance of cars in urban centres, linked to public realm and redevelopment of city centre to support inward investment.
- Deliver corridor enhancements to improve pedestrian / cycle safety, bus reliability, reduce pollution and support key neighbourhood centres.
- Incentivise uptake of greener technology and reduce transport pollution to remove Air Quality exceedances in the city.
- New Street Design standards giving greater emphasis to sustainable travel users and creating a more attractive environment.

6. Attractive Urban Bus Networks

Aim: Work with operators to achieve a modern, reliable and low carbon network of bus routes.

- Refine and optimise bus routes with enhanced bus priority and consideration of “Red Routes on key corridors including Heavitree Road, Pinhoe Road and Cowick Street.
- Roll out of modern, cleaner vehicles with WiFi to enable productive travel on buses as well as on trains.
- Improved IT systems to improve real time information, journey time reliability and payment methods.

Greater Innovation – Manage Travel Intelligently

7. Seamless Multimodal Travel

Aim: Introduce a new single ticketing platform and shared mobility to boost the convenience of non-car travel into and around the city.

- Single ticketing platform for multi-modal travel in Exeter, providing a new transport subscription service.
- Expansion of car clubs, bike hire schemes and support new development policy requirement in Exeter and adjacent districts.
- Support creation of Travel Planning and mapping apps.

8. Maximise the Efficiency of Existing Network

Aim: To use technological advancements to better understand the operation of the network and adapt its control to best manage traffic effectively.

- Network review to optimise operation or even remove signal controls to improve capacity, safety, resilience and air quality.
- Develop real time technology to provide app-based solutions that provide users better predictive information about travel times.
- Review parking charges for off-peak travel to encourage longer stays in city centre and discourage peak period travel.
- Ongoing employer, school and residential travel planning programs to encourage sustainable travel choices.

9. Innovation and Invention

Aim: to test changes using local and global expertise to develop and launch new transport innovations.

- Data sharing to allow partners (i.e. the University of Exeter and Exeter City Futures) to develop innovative solutions to transport challenges.
- Allow testing of new measures and methods on the county network.
- Utilise new sophisticated forms of network control.
- Support roll out of alternative vehicle propulsion, such as electric charging.