

English Nature

Presented by: - Philip Collins, Team Manager, Devon Team English Nature

Background

The role of English Nature is to conserve and enhance the wildlife and geology of England. It is also the Government's statutory adviser on nature conservation.

Key Issues Highlighted: -

1. Asset

Devon's natural environment is a key asset to Devon, providing important benefits to the regional economy, way of life, better opportunities for recreation and tourism and a catalyst for economic regeneration.

2. English Nature Transport Position Statement

- Recognise the need greater investment in transport – especially rail.
- Seek Environmentally sustainable solutions which include opportunities for wildlife and geological gain
- Prepared to assist decision-makers e.g. local Authorities and Highways Agency.

3. Strengths of the Existing DLTP (2006-2011)

- Its emphasis on sustainability
- Integrated transport schemes
- Range of initiatives aimed at rural communities
- Split into County, Regional Zones and Local Programs enabling a more responsive approach.
- Presence of an environmental appraisal.
- Progress with delivery – esp in cycle trips and innovation in the delivery of public transport in rural areas.

4. Weaknesses in the DLTP (2001-2006)

- Failure to demonstrate how an analysis of the transport problems in the County led to the selection of objectives.
- Weakness in the links between:- Areas strategies and modal strategies.
Economic growth and environmental protection.
- Lack of attempt to identify the negative impacts of transport on areas such as biodiversity, landscape and water pollution.
- Differential between rural and urban targets required.
- Better analysis of transport issues and their environment associated issues.

Generic weakness in Travel Plans identified by Atkins 2001 in the area of:

- Public transport interchanges
- De-trunking
- Sustainable distribution
- Private Sector Travel Plans
- Poor performance against environmental criteria (encouraging travel plans private sector, climate change, ability to recognise special needs and requirements of the countryside)

Recommendations for Next DLTP (2006-2011)

The Second DLTP should:

- 1. Recognise any transport changes have an impact on the environment.**
- 2. Adopt clear objectives and 'SMART' (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timed) targets.**
- 3. Provide enhanced monitoring and reporting in particular to traffic growth and modal shift.**
- 4. Provide specific environmental objectives and targets – committed to avoiding damage to designated sites.**
- 5. Create better links between area and modal strategies.**
- 6. Be more 'joined up' with Regional Strategies.**

DEVON LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN – 2006-2011

7. Be aware of the potential cumulative environmental effects of emerging transport proposals and plans E.G emerging regional transport strategy and the expansion of Exeter Airport.

8. Sustainable Solutions.

Includes further investment in small scale Schemes, demand Management and increased emphasis on soft measures to reduce traffic growth – e.g. green travel plans, car clubs etc.

9. Consultation and SEA

The next LTP will be subject to SEA it is recommended that:

- Early consultation with the statutory environmental bodies is vital
- Cumulative effects of all transport plans and proposals need to be assessed.
- Alternative to infrastructure must be tested within the SEA.

10. Objectives

Ensure environmental objectives are not secondary to environmental economic gain

11. Sustainable development

Principle should underline whole plan

12. Monitoring

Baseline data is required to assess impact of transport on the environment – currently the County poorly funds data collection.

Handouts

Philip Collins circulated the following paper: -

Devon Local Transport Plan Panel hearings 29 April 2004 - English Nature Role and Functions

Further information available from English Nature includes:

- Guidance for practitioners on the treatment of bio-diversity in SEA (Joint English Nature/ Environment agency / CCW and RSPB).
- Transport 2000's Tourism without Traffic.
- EN Position Statement on Environmentally Sustainable Transport – Can be found on www.english-nature.org.uk.

Panel Discussion: -

- There is a potential resource in using organisations such as the Met office and the University for monitoring however the appropriate level of monitoring needs to be achieved.
- Like to see a greater transfer to rail (passenger and freight) requiring more frequent services and reopening of stations (however EN is aware of the economic constraints of this).
- There is no evidence on the extent of congestion from rural tourism. EN would like to see the LTP addressing the potential impacts of tourism.
- English Nature believes that the environmental Impacts of the duelling of the A303 will be significantly larger than upgrading the A358.
- Excessive speeds have a high toll on wildlife (1/6 of pop of badgers die on the roads) there is potential of reducing the impact by imposing lower speed limits in the rural area.
- One of the main priorities for the next LTP will need to address tourism and its growth. Devon needs to get the appropriate balance between this growth and the environment.