



EXETER: DELIVERING THE GOODS

A FREIGHT QUALITY PARTNERSHIP

Introduction

This leaflet introduces the work of the Exeter Freight Quality Partnership. It includes an Action Plan for delivering improvements for the sustainable distribution of freight in and around the Exeter area.



Deliveries in Exeter

Freight Quality Partnerships build on the 'Delivering the Goods' initiative on urban distribution led by the Local Government Association and the Freight Transport Association and follow advice contained in the Government's Transport White Paper. The aim of the Exeter Partnership is to encourage sustainable distribution by working together to develop environmentally sensitive, economic and efficient ways of delivering goods in Exeter and establishing best practice.

The Exeter Freight Quality Partnership is made up of representatives from Devon County Council, Exeter City Council, the Freight Transport Association, the Road Haulage Association, local businesses, the police, environmental groups and English Welsh and Scottish Railway.

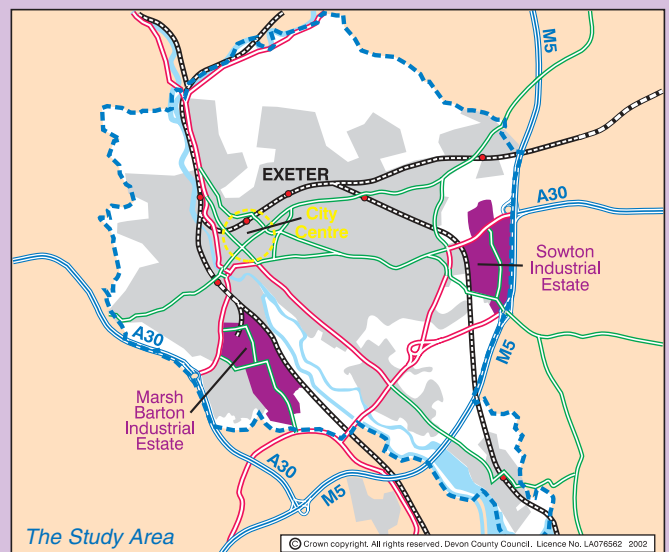
Exeter's transport networks

Exeter is an historic cathedral city, a regional capital and Devon's county town. It is at the heart of Devon's social and economic life and is a strategic transportation hub, which is central to the future prosperity of the whole region. The City offers a blend of old and new with first class shopping facilities, river walks and a thriving business sector including industrial estates and business centres.

Exeter is served by the M5 motorway, the A38 Devon Expressway and the A30 trunk roads as well as the A376, A377, A379, A396, A3015 and the A3052. The main road network provides good access to both London and the Midlands. Radial routes feed the city centre and the commercial areas and some of these incorporate shared bus and HGV priority lanes.

The need to encourage pedestrians and cyclists is recognised and pedestrian priority areas and a network of cycle routes have been introduced and will be further developed.

The main railway lines to and from London and to and from the Midlands/North run through the area and there are branch lines serving Exmouth and Barnstaple. Exeter International Airport provides national and international air transport services.



The Study Area

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Planning and employment background

Exeter is a major employment centre with a population of about 111,000. There are some 67,000 jobs in Exeter with over 40% filled by workers crossing the city boundary from the surrounding towns and rural areas. Exeter offers shopping facilities to a catchment area of as many as 500,000 people and as a major tourist centre, it attracts nearly one million visitors a year. The strategic transport role of this part of Devon is recognised in the Devon Local Transport Plan 2001 – 2006 and by the designation of the Exeter Zone.



Loading restrictions apply in Exeter City Centre

Exeter City Council published the Exeter Local Plan First Review Second Deposit in Spring 2002 for a statutory period of public consultation. This document looks forward to 2011 and provides a fresh opportunity to address sustainable transport issues and the movement of freight. It has regard to most recent Government advice in PPG13, the Devon Local Transport Plan and the Devon Structure Plan First Review. The overriding aim of the Local Plan First Review is, through sustainable development, to secure the prosperity of the city and to enhance the quality of life of its citizens. It seeks to provide a wide range of development opportunities particularly for employment, housing, shopping and leisure, but without damaging the environmental assets that, to a large extent, generate the opportunities and pressures for growth. At the heart of the Plan is a sustainable development strategy that seeks to concentrate new development in the urban area by maximizing the re-use of previously developed land and the conversion and re-use of existing buildings wherever possible. Proposals for the City Centre include the extension of the pedestrian priority area and limiting the delivery of goods outside core shopping hours. The introduction of transhipment facilities is also supported.

Exeter is designated as a Regional Centre in the Devon Structure Plan First Review and as a Principal Urban Area in the South West Regional Planning Guidance. The County and City Council's town centre management policies allow for the central urban areas to conserve their historic character and be as pedestrian friendly as possible, in order to encourage business, trade and visitors.

Freight Industry perceptions

In response to a recent driver survey carried out throughout the Exeter area lorry operators have highlighted delays caused by traffic congestion as a problem and specific locations have been identified. Congestion results from high traffic flows together with some historic and restricted road networks.

Problems caused by inconsiderate parking of cars were also noted. This can result in obstruction to delivery areas and loading bays and the movement of vehicles into and out of premises. Parking by the holders of blue/orange badges can sometimes cause problems. These problems of congestion and parking obstructions affect areas in the city centre and on the industrial estates.



Clear signing on industrial estates assists delivery drivers

The opportunity for out of hours or night time deliveries and collections is limited by customer requirements or constraints such as availability of staff and security to receive goods other than within the normal working day. It is essential that the timing of deliveries, particularly temperature controlled and perishable products, is coordinated with the availability of retail staff to receive the goods. There also needs to be direct access to the delivery destinations.

There is the possibility of some shift from road to rail freight as Exeter is on the main railway network. However, it is important to remember that any improvements need to be linked to a good road network. With the demand for 'just in time' deliveries for goods and services the majority of freight will continue to be delivered by road.

Motorists unfamiliar with the city and surrounding areas need good clear and consistent signs directing traffic onto the most suitable routes.



Sowton Industrial Estate

Environmental considerations

Exeter is primarily urban in character and is important in historic and cultural terms. The objectives are to conserve the character particularly of the historic core, whilst at the same time ensuring that the core remains vibrant as a commercial and shopping centre. This inevitably requires convenient access for freight vehicles.

A further problem is the volume of traffic on the radial routes leading into the city centre. A particular problem is the A377 running parallel and to the east of the River Exe. This not only serves St. David's Station and its goods depot but also carries traffic between North Devon and the strategic road system.

Other traffic problem areas are the Marsh Barton Industrial Estate where there is retail activity and through traffic movements and the Sowton Industrial Estate, especially at peak times.



There is a mix of traffic on the Marsh Barton Industrial Estate

Most of the congestion within the city centre results from the volumes of private cars. Whilst it may be argued that, marginally, freight traffic contributes to the congestion, it is perhaps more realistic to point to the delays which congestion causes for commercial vehicles needed to serve the City.

A lorry ban covering most of Exeter prevents lorries from passing through the city unless requiring access to premises within the ban area, or travelling on certain routes. This reduces the amount of freight traffic entering the city and the Partnership has agreed that this a valuable constraint, which should be retained.

It needs to be recognised that large vehicles can have an intimidatory effect on vulnerable road users including pedestrians and cyclists.



Facilities for vulnerable road users are important

There are a number of measures which could reduce the impact of freight vehicles particularly in the City Centre and at the same time assisting in enabling them to have reasonable access: -

- Restricting delivery times to early in the day at times mutually convenient to recipients of goods, suppliers and residents. This could be coupled with the increased use of load consolidation
- Transshipment of goods by off-loading from a large lorry to smaller vehicles, appreciating that the choice might be between one HGV or several smaller vehicles
- Extension of pedestrian or pedestrian priority areas which do not unreasonably restrict the delivery of goods
- The development of the proposed intermodal freight facility
- The encouragement of Park and Ride to reduce the numbers of cars entering the city and the adoption of car parking policy that discourages unnecessary car use

Freight by rail

The core rail routes serving Exeter are to and from London, the Midlands and the North and onwards to Plymouth and Cornwall.

Freight is transported by rail to and from Exeter at the Exeter Riverside rail freight terminal. EWS controls this site but it is available for any rail freight operator to use and can and does handle a range of freight, including construction materials and timber for the benefit of the local and regional economy. Account needs to be taken of the vehicle access to the site being through a built up area and of the movement of pedestrians and cyclists.

There is a proposal in the Devon Structure Plan First Review for the development of a new intermodal freight facility in the Exeter area. The East Devon Local Plan First Deposit proposes a site on the eastern side of Exeter with good access to the M5 motorway, A38 and A30 road networks. The proposed site is on the Exeter to Waterloo rail line with access to the main rail network via Exeter St. David's and the site is also well placed for integrating links with air freight.



Freight by rail

Exeter business and residents surveys

Surveys of businesses and residents in Exeter were undertaken in 2001 to obtain views on the distribution of goods and the impact of lorries. The 267 responses from the businesses cover a cross section from the main shopping centre, the industrial estates, offices and service industries. A sample of residents was surveyed through Exeter City Council's wavelength panel and 760 responses were received. Responses to the surveys highlight issues such as: -



Businesses were consulted on delivery arrangements

- 78% of the businesses that responded have daily deliveries. Of these 68% receive between one and five deliveries a day and 11% receive over twenty deliveries a day. 41% have over 10 different suppliers
- Vehicles used are light vans 22%, transit vans 32%, lorries 30% and articulated lorries 16%
- A large majority of businesses are against out of hours deliveries because of staffing problems; increased costs resulting from opening later/earlier; security difficulties; the problem of checking incoming goods and noise
- 20% of the businesses said they would consider shared deliveries and 6% could make light deliveries by bicycle
- Requests were made for improved loading facilities, more loading bays, increased enforcement of parking restrictions and for improved traffic flow on the main industrial estates
- Residents identified three main problems with lorries: size of vehicles (44%), blocking of access/footways/parking (44%) and pollution(33%)
- 53% of residents thought that problems with lorries might be solved with night time deliveries. Other popular solutions were using other means of transporting freight (44%) or time restrictions on lorries (43%)

Looking for solutions

The management of the movement of goods in Exeter is an ongoing process. A number of measures have been agreed for early implementation by the Partnership as a first priority in order to overcome problems and reduce environmental impact and these are detailed below. An Action Plan is contained within this report.

The Partnership will continue to meet to monitor progress on the Action Plan and address new issues as they arise.

Driver Information

- Agree strategic signing to the main industrial estates on the M5 and A30(E) trunk road
- Provide maps identifying suitable access routes which customers could also use to show their whereabouts
- Review the provision of information boards at industrial estates and motorway service areas

Delivery/Loading Arrangements and Enforcement

- Additional enforcement of illegal parking both on the highway and in delivery/loading and service areas
- Proposals for the city centre dealing with loading/unloading problems including loading bays, service areas, illegal parking, amendments to hours of deliveries and pedestrian priority areas as set out in the Exeter Local Plan
- Investigate better provision for overnight lorry parking
- Extension of bus/HGV priority lanes on main routes

Sustainable Development

- Assist maximising freight by rail and air with industry and EWS
- Evaluate pilot schemes on the Marsh Barton Industrial Estate for shared deliveries and collections and to assist deliveries made by bicycle. Assess possible transshipment arrangements
- Investigate and encourage local distribution networks for local food produce and manufactured goods with the aim of reducing freight mileage
- Works/publicity to improve safety of vulnerable road users including pedestrians and cyclists
- Research best practice elsewhere

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