

# Local Development Framework Briefing Papers Walking



## **Devon County Council's advice to Local Planning Authorities.**

*This is one of a series of briefing papers prepared by Devon County Council to assist the preparation of Local Development Documents.*

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***Local Planning Authorities are requested to take the following matters into account in preparing their Local Development Frameworks and other documents:***

- 1. Walking Strategy and Strategic Priorities - The Core Strategy should recognise that walking as a mode of travel should be afforded a high priority and is an important element of the development framework by setting out the walking strategy and strategic priorities the LDF as a whole and the main towns.***
- 2. Walking Network - Identify the main network of existing and proposed walking (and cycle) routes within the main towns, between settlements and adjacent rural areas which provide a safe and convenient means of pedestrian access to facilities such as homes, shops, schools, employment, recreation and leisure areas***
- 3. 'Walkable' and 'Liveable' development - Ensure that new development proposals are 'walkable' and 'liveable' and make provision for pedestrian and cycle networks***
- 4. Encourage walking – Encourage walking for short trips by implementation of residential, employer and school travel plans***
- 5. Key Diagram / Proposal Map should map / illustrate existing and proposed network of strategic walking (and cycle) routes***

### **Partnership Working**

***Devon County Council wishes to work in partnership with District Councils, in further developing the above policy areas with colleagues and other organisations and would wish to be involved in any discussion relating to them.***

## 1. Introduction

Walking has a significant role to play in developing a successful transport system; it is an integral part of everyday life and offers access to other modes of travel, such as trains and buses and can be a component of a longer journey. Furthermore, regular participation in physical activity (like walking) is associated with improved fitness and reduced mortality rates for both older and younger adults.

Local Planning Authorities have the opportunity, through the LDF process, to influence travel demand choices and encourage walking by removing the barriers that are preventing people from walking. These barriers are both real and perceived and include physical conditions and infrastructure as well as the current social and cultural climate. By removing these barriers and implementing better walking links, improving safety for pedestrians and allowing streets and new developments to be more 'walkable' will lead to increased accessibility and social inclusion, less congestion, better health and better air quality standards on our streets.

This briefing paper reflects the County Council's strategic transportation interests in securing the provision for the safe use of the most sustainable and environmentally acceptable modes of travel.

The scope of this briefing paper is to ensure that LDF's :

- Set out a walking strategy and strategic walking priorities for their area.
- Identify the network for existing and proposed routes in the main towns and rural areas
- To ensure that new developments are walkable and liveable
- Encourage walking for shorter trips.

## 2. The vision / strategy for the future

Both national and regional planning guidance stresses the need to develop an integrated transportation system that would reduce the need to travel and encourage choice between modes.

Devon's vision and objectives for a Sustainable Transport Network is:

**To develop an integrated and sustainable transport system, in conjunction with the land use strategy, able to meet the environmental, economic, and social needs of Devon whilst reducing the need to travel through the following objectives:**

1. **Reduce the need to travel, especially by private vehicles.**
2. **Promote the use of alternatives to car travel such as public transport, walking and cycling.**
3. **Guide new development to locations that can be served by a choice of transport modes.**
4. **Increase accessibility for those not having access to private transport.**
5. **Avoid the dispersal of new development provision - in order to reduce the need to travel and maximise accessibility to facilities and services.**

## 3. Key issues to be addressed

The preparation and implementation of a walking strategy for Devon is a critical element in the broader vision for a transportation strategy. Positive encouragement of walking as a mode of travel should be afforded a high priority and is an important element of the development framework. Pedestrian needs are important and should be evaluated and promoted in any new developments and through regeneration and revitalisation schemes. Issues that need to be addressed therefore include:

**Economic vitality** and competition between towns and other commercial centres; supporting and improve the viability existing local shopping centres, through promoting walking routes and links.

**Design issues** in new developments and regeneration schemes, designing new housing developments so that they include or are within a few minutes walk of shops, post offices, banks, schools, pubs and other everyday facilities and setting of guidelines for developments on maximum walking distances. Providing livable streets by good street design, developments should be designed for living. Speeds should be reduced in residential areas and on main walking routes and improve the design of road crossings, effectively putting the pedestrian first e.g Home Zones, Design new shops and offices so that their front entrances are directly off main streets, not a long walk across a car park. Public spaces also need to be designed and maintained to provide safe and attractive walking links.

**Integrating planning and transport;** keep public buildings such as hospitals, council offices, and courts in town centre locations accessible by foot and public transport. Also encouraging new development proposals (such as business parks) away from greenfield sites, to brown field areas, with good walking and sustainable transport links.

**Legibility of towns and cities;** Using well designed signs and route finding maps to promote walking for residents, visitors and tourists

**Promotion walking as a mode choice;** for short trips and for parts of trips by encouraging walking to school and to work and improving walking links with public transport services and between interchanges .

**Promotion of walking;** recruiting local support for pedestrian-friendly policies, and encourage walking through TRAVELWISE campaigns to promote health , accessibility and social inclusion.

**Maintenance;** Walking routes should be maintained, integrating maintenance with design and access strategies. High quality walking routes should be provided and developed wherever possible these routes along with current routes should be maintained to a high standard, ensuring safety and access.

**Safety;** using planning enforcement to maintain a quality environment through limiting illegal damage such as graffiti and fly-tipping.

**Supporting rural economies;** encouraging long-distance rural walking and tourism. Devon has about 3,700 km of public footpaths and 1,100 km of bridleways. *The importance of this resource is covered in a separate LDF Briefing Paper on Public Right of Way.*

#### **4. DCC Proposals / Options to be taken into account in preparing LDF's**

The positive encouragement of walking as a mode of travel should be afforded a high priority and important element of local development documents through;

a) **Walking Strategy and Strategic Priorities** - The Core Strategy should set out the walking strategy and strategic priorities the LDF as a whole and the main towns in order to:

- Reduce congestion and air quality problems caused by car use for non essential short journeys
- Promote walking for short trips through the implementation of school and employer travel plans
- Ensure the walkability and livability of new developments and regeneration schemes
- Provide pedestrian priority in new developments, and wherever possible on the highway.
- Provide safe walking routes, which are well maintained and lit to a high standard

b) **Identify the strategic (primary) network of existing and proposed walking (and cycle) routes** within the main towns, between settlements and adjacent rural areas which provide a safe and convenient means of pedestrian access to facilities such as homes, shops, schools, employment, recreation and leisure areas.

c) **Ensure that new development proposals are walkable and livable and make provision for pedestrian and cycle networks** by

- Integrating land use with the integrated transport options thereby reducing the need to travel
- Using urban design principles to make developments and streets more attractive to pedestrians
- Ensuring that the development is well related to the defined network of pedestrian (and cycle) routes and improves rather than hinders accessibility by sustainable means.

d) **Encourage walking for short trips** by;

- Providing safe, well maintained facilities and infrastructure for pedestrians
- Where possible providing dedicated safe walking routes
- Implementation of residents, employers and school travel plans

e) **Key Diagram / Proposal Map** should map / illustrate existing and proposed network of strategic walking (and cycle) routes.

## 5. **Partnership Working**

Devon County Council wishes to work in partnership with District Councils, in further developing the above policy areas with colleagues and other organisations and would wish to be involved in any discussion relating to them.

## **References:**

DfT (2005) Walking in Great Britain [www.dft.gov.uk](http://www.dft.gov.uk)  
DfT (2005) Smarter Choices  
ODPM (2001) PPG 13  
The Ramblers Association - [www.ramblers.org.uk](http://www.ramblers.org.uk)  
National Statistics Online - Walking in Great Britain - [www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk)

## **Current related Devon Structure Plan Policy;**

Policy TR2 - Coordination of transport and land use planning  
Policy TR3 - Managing travel demand  
Policy TR5 – Hierarchy of Modes and Transport Assessment  
Policy TR7- Walking and Cycling  
Policy TO6 – Long Distance Recreational Footpaths and Cycle Routes

## **Statistics**

Walking is a popular mode of transport with few people unable to walk.

25% of all journeys are made entirely on foot in Great Britain.

On average, a person travels 307km/192 miles a year on foot, less than 3% of the overall distance travelled (National Statistics National Travel Survey). It is most popular over short distances, with the average length of a walk journey being 1km/0.6 miles, 78% of all journeys under 1 mile/1.6km made entirely on foot (National Statistics), only 6% of journeys are over 2 miles/3.2km. It is evident that people walk more in cities.

The most popular reason for walking is to go shopping (23%), followed by personal business or accompanying another person (21%) and leisure or social purposes (20%) (DfT 2003).

Walking has to be the main transport choice 27% of British households do not have access to a car or van (National Statistics) and the availability of a car does not mean that all members of the household have access to it, especially children and the elderly.

As a mode of transport, walking as a transport choice has been in steep decline for many years. Statistics from the DfT show that the number of walking trips fell by a fifth in the last 10 years. Women made 27 per cent of their trips on foot in 2004, compared with 23 per cent for men.

Total distance walked per person per year fell from 390km/244 miles to 302km/189 miles between 1986 and 2001 and Car ownership has increased from 30% of households in 1961 to 70% in 1998. This decline in walking journeys is largely accounted for by trips that have transferred to the car. (DfT 2003, National Statistics National Travel Survey and Social Trends).

The above trends are likely to continue and will add to congestion on certain routes to and within Devon, which has become more severe in recent times. The effects of this congestion include; unreliability of the road network (leading to economic problems), air quality problems, social exclusion and accessibility problems, environmental problems and severance.

Particular congestion 'hotspots' in Devon are the economic important centres of Exeter, Barnstaple and Newton Abbot and also in Kingsbridge and Totnes.