

Notes of meeting of Teign Estuary Trail Stakeholder Group on 23 May 2025

9. 30am, Forde House

Attendees

Lauren Allington, Transport Planner DCC

Bill Bailey, TET Campaign Group

Neil Blaney, Director of Place TDC

Kate Benham, TET Campaign Group

Arron Carpenter Engineer DCC (via Teams)

Cllr David Cox, DCC, TDC and Teignmouth TC

Jordan Facey, Engineer DCC (via Teams)

Cllr Jackie Hook, TDC Executive Member for Environment, Climate & Sustainability

Adam Luscombe, Service Manager Torbay Council (via Teams)

Cllr Andrew Macgregor, TDC Bishopsteignton

Henry Merritt, Bishopsteignton PC, Chair

John Penaligon, land agent for DCC (via Teams)

Judith Sharples, TET Campaign Group and note taker

Estelle Skinner, Green Infrastructure TDC

Cllr Gary Taylor, TDC Executive Member for Planning & Building Control

Cllr Martin Wrigley, MP and TDC

Cllr Nicholas Yabsley, Newton Abbot TC

Apologies

Mark Amphlett, Chair of Newton Abbot Chamber of Trade & Commerce

Jess Rowe, Sustrans Regional Project Manager Cornwall & Devon

Introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone and attendees introduced themselves.

Notes of last meeting on 22 November 2024 and matters arising

The notes were agreed. Judith Sharples queried the outcome of Cllr Wrigley's discussion with ABP regarding the option of the Trail being routed through

Teignmouth docks. Cllr Wrigley advised that ABP had safety concerns but he would continue to discuss this option and would welcome ideas on how safety concerns could be addressed. Note that this route would rely on provision over the estuary, for which feasibility has not yet been carried out.

Progress with Phase 3 design work and next steps

It was clarified that Phase 3 is the section from the Passage House Hotel to Bishopsteignton including the footpath that meets the main road opposite Metro Motors.

Arron and Jordan provided an update on work, they have been preparing for ground investigation work, which is essential to enable further design work. A GI company will need to be commissioned to undertake ground investigation work, targeting late summer and into autumn. The surveys will be done in discussion with landowners. DCC also has powers under the Housing & Planning Act to carry out this work.

It was noted that the detailed design work is still estimated to take 3 years to complete and will include repeating some of the surveys that were carried out as part of the planning application process due to the time that has elapsed since then.

It was noted that it is a condition of the planning permission that construction work must commence by December 2031.

Lauren advised that external funding for construction costs could be sought while the detailed design work is still underway. However, the success of any funding bid will be increased by progressing designs and land negotiations (there is often a short spend date for project delivery).

It was noted that DCC has allocated £900k (subject to cabinet approval for years 26/27, 27/28 and 28/29). The Devon County Council cabinet must approve the proposed spending of the Transport Capital Programme budget each year at its budget meeting in October. Approval is attained for that financial year and the following financial year. TDC has allocated £550k for the Phase 3 design work and to support land acquisition (and also spent £50k on the outline business case). TDC also allocated £400k for Phase 2 but this is not shown in the 3 year capital programme as the work on Phase 2 is unlikely to commence within the next 3 years.

Landowner negotiations

John reported that there was a new landowner for part of the Phase 3 land. Work to progress discussions with landowners will continue. If agreements cannot be reached, an application for a CPO could be made.

Recent funding streams and project focus

It was noted that DCC had recently been allocated a further £3.9m and Sustrans a further £30m from Active Travel England for walking and cycling infrastructure. Judith had asked DCC councillors and officers whether any of this funding could be used to fund sections of the TET that could potentially be quicker to deliver such as the link between Dawlish and Teignmouth or the road side path from Bishopsteignton to Morrisons (Phase 1). Lauren advised that DCC had discussed this with Sustrans and it was unlikely that any of their funding could be used for the TET as schemes would need to be delivered by March 2027.

Judith said she understood that the Dawlish to Teignmouth section had been deemed to be 'shovel ready' 10 years ago when funding of £1.6m had been sought from the Coastal Communities Fund. Arron advised that Devon's original plan for this section had been reviewed by Sustrans and Sustrans had developed an alternative plan in full accordance with LTN 1/20 guidance, which would be more expensive and more challenging to deliver.

Cllr Wrigley said that he had not been informed of this alternative plan when he was the Dawlish county councillor and asked for relevant Cllrs to be briefed. Judith said she thought this information was inconsistent with information previously provided by Hannah Clark. Further information to be provided at next stakeholder meeting, to ensure clarity.

Judith said that LTN 1/20 was focused on the design of cycle schemes in urban areas and she understood that Active Travel England was developing equivalent guidance for schemes in rural areas which may be more relevant for the TET. Judith had suggested that DCC could offer to work in partnership with Active Travel England to use the Dawlish to Teignmouth section as a test case for the new guidance. Cllr Wrigley supported this approach and offered to help to take it forward. However, progressing another section concurrently would depend on available DCC resource. Lauren to feedback on this at next meeting.

Estelle expressed concern that if work is undertaken to pursue other sections of the TET there was a risk that the resources and focus on Phase 3 would be diluted. At the TET stakeholder workshop session in November 2023, the group agreed that the top priority should be Phase 3.

Update from Torbay

Adam said that there was support for the TET in Torbay along with an improved cycle path from Newton Abbot to Torquay. Torbay will be using Active Travel England funding to make improvements to the cycle route from the hospital to the sea front including replacing a set of steps with a ramp. There are also plans to improve the coastal cycle route from Torquay to Paignton.

Update on Devon Countywide LCWIP and Devon & Torbay Local Transport Plan 4

Lauren advised that the DCC Cabinet had approved the countywide LCWIP in March and the TET is one of three short-term priorities in this plan. The TET is also identified as a high-profile project in LTP4 which has now been endorsed by DCC and Torbay Cabinets and is due to be considered for adoption at the July meeting of the Devon & Torbay Combined County Authority (CCA).

DCC election and local government reorganisation

Lauren reported that a new Cabinet of Devon County Council had been appointed at yesterday's full Council meeting. It is not yet clear whether cycling and walking infrastructure will be part of the remit of the Highways or Climate Change portfolio.

Neil advised that it will probably be at least a year before any proposals for local government reorganisation in Devon are finalised. The government's current timetable is to replace county and district councils with new unitary councils by April 2028, with shadow authorities in place by April 2027. Councils were asked to submit interim plans in March 2025 and final plans in November 2025.

The possibility of the Devon & Torbay CCA being replaced by a new Mayoral Combined County Authority which could potentially include Plymouth and Cornwall was noted.

Date of next meeting

24 October 2025, 9.30 am to 11 am, Forde House (or can also join via Teams).