

District & County Councillor's Monthly Report Cllr. Jacqi Hodgson - Date of Report: 10th April 2018
County Councillor for Totnes & Dartington
(incl. Harberton, Harbertonford, Staverton and Landscope & part of Berry Pomeroy)

Key Issues: DCC

DCC Cabinet in March considered the Department for Transport (DoT Consultation on Proposals for the Creation of a Major Road Network. The report of the DCC Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment provided a proposed consultation response to the DoT proposals for the creation of a Major Road Network. It also outlined the desirability for the formation of a South West Peninsula Sub-National Transport Body (STB) which would be subject to future legislation.

As part of the Transport Investment Strategy, published in 2017, the Government committed to creating a Major Road Network (MRN) across England. The need for a MRN was identified in the Rees Jeffreys Road Fund Report, highlighting there were a set of economically important roads that deserved a similar level of attention to the Strategic Road Network (SRN) (in Devon the SRN is the M5, A30, A38 and A35). A 12-week consultation period was being held between 23 December 2017 and 19 March 2018 which outlined the Government's proposals and sought views on its core principles, the definition of the network, investment planning, and eligibility and investment assessment. The Consultation also set out that the MRN would form a consistent, coherent network, alongside the SRN, to allow better coordination of road investment, provide funding certainty to roads in the network through use of the National Roads Fund (funded by Vehicle Excise Duty), and raise standards and performance across the new network and provide clear roles for local and regional partners, who would support the Government to develop and deliver MRN schemes. The document also set out a preference for Sub-National Transport Bodies (STBs) to be formed which would have an important role in the MRN investment planning.

The response from DCC proposes additional links that would benefit from inclusion in the MRN which were currently omitted under the criteria, which included the A386, particularly between Plymouth and Sourton Cross and Sourton Cross and Bideford, the A376, A382, Sherford Road between Elburton Road and Deep Lane junction, the A39 between Minehead and Barnstaple and the A388.

The response also highlighted that in terms of investment planning, there were roles proposed for local, regional and national bodies which would need to be defined clearly to avoid confusion. Furthermore, in terms of the 'Eligibility & Investment Assessment', where the proposed funding thresholds were for schemes between £20million and £50million, with some schemes with a strong case being eligible for up to £100million, it was suggested that it would be preferable to lower the minimum cost threshold.

Of interest to the Totnes area (see extract from map below) is the inclusion of the A385 through Totnes as part of the MRN and DCC's proposal for an additional link road from the A381 at Newton Abbot to the A38; this could relieve some of the current through traffic and congestion in Totnes. These DoT proposals will carry some funding in particular for measures to relieve congestion on the MRN and applications could be made to that budget to provide some of the long awaited Totnes on the Move projects that are part of the Town Council's Transportation strategy.

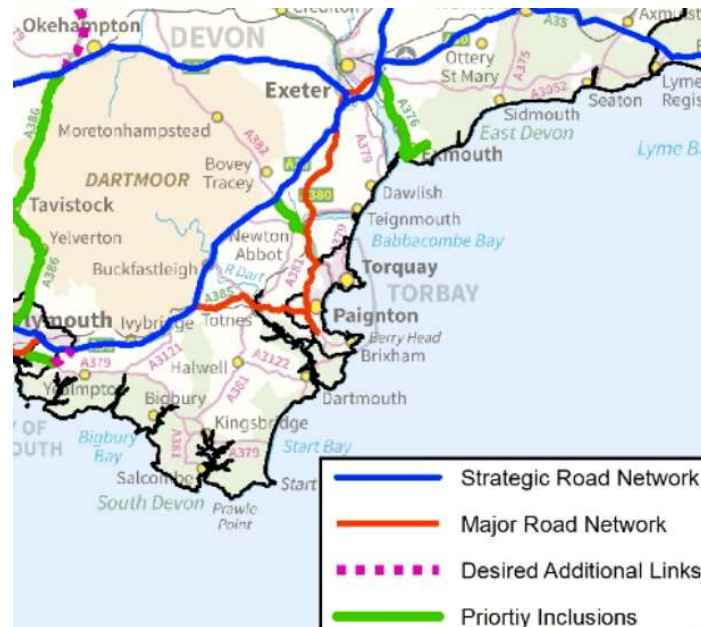
Further to which the Cabinet RESOLVED

(a) that the Cabinet agree to continue to investigate and develop Devon County Council's involvement and role in the proposed Sub-National Transport Body for the South West Peninsula; and

(b) that the draft Devon County Council consultation response (at Appendix I to the Report) to the Department for Transport proposals for the creation of a Major Road Network be approved.

DoT proposals and full response to consultation available at this link:

<http://democracy.devon.gov.uk/documents/s15121/DfT%20Consultation%20on%20Proposals%20for%20the%20Creation%20of%20a%20Major%20Road%20Network.pdf>



Extract from Figure 2: Proposed amendments to MRN

Highways after the recent storms:

Further to the continued stormy, snow-laden and inclement weather conditions due to the storms in the past month, DCC worked around the clock to ensure public safety, with gritting and removal of ice etc from roads during the storm and blizzards. Safety warnings and information and links for updates were circulated to Members. I further circulated this to all the Clerks and Councillors in my Division.

Collapsed wall in Maudlin Rd: A large section of the old stone and rubble wall in Maudlin Road, Totnes collapsed and fell into the road on March 10th; the road has remained blocked and closed to traffic ever since. Although DCC deny responsibility for the clearance and repairs to the wall, they initially agreed to schedule repair works and clear the debris from the road without delay on a “without prejudice” basis (i.e. not accepting liability so that the wall can be made safe and the road reopened asap. However DCC are now in dispute about liability and to date the road remains closed with no date for reopening in sight.

Flooding on major roads: The persistent problem of flooding on the highways at many places in this division has been exacerbated by recent weather and heavy rains. I have reported in to DCC a number of well-known flooded areas including the area opposite the Christmas Tree Farm and the bus stop near to Redworth junction in Totnes on the A385 which has been a problem for years (which I have reported in as urgent). The public can report in flooded areas on the highways (and post photographs) at this link https://new.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/report-a-problem/map/map_src/sw/

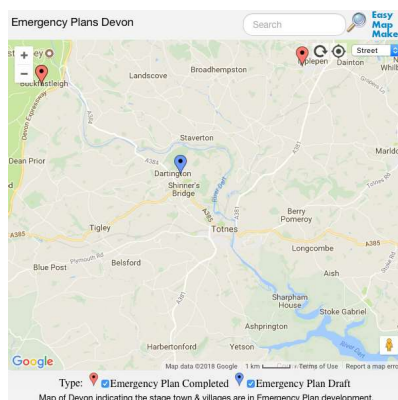
The housing development at Great Court Farm continues to cause problems with flooding on Weston Lane and I have passed on to DCC reports and concerns that the public highway is collapsing, that major potholes are in need of repair and this road is in urgent need of attention to make it safe for pedestrians, cyclists and other road users. While the road within the area of the development during construction is the duty of the developer to maintain, it seems that little enforcement is happening and the wider area, whilst being damaged by construction vehicles, is the responsibility of DCC Highways.

Further to the severe damage on the A379 at Slapton, the Government has announced that it will provide £2.5m of financial assistance to ensure that this important road link will be rebuilt and repaired.

During the recent periods of extreme weather I became increasingly aware of the importance and need for easily accessible local information about the location of grit and salt bins, who can be contacted to help clear snow and ice from footpaths and roads and where regular information updates can be sourced. I raised this at the Totnes & District Traffic & Transport forum last week:

It would be helpful if Town and Parish Councils had an easily navigated emergency information page on their websites which included local information as well as signposting people to further information. Devon Communities Together (DCT) has some useful information on its webpages and offers Communities resilience Grants of £250 - £1,000. <https://www.devoncommunities.org.uk/emergency-plans-in-devon> Regrettably very few local parishes have prepared and posted an emergency plan. The map from DCT below indicates those currently listed in this DCC Division. DCT also has grants for emergency flood resilience of up to £1,500 – info at this link <https://www.devoncommunities.org.uk/emergency-flood-resilience-grant>

I'd suggest that while recent weather events are fresh in our minds, Parish Councils update or produce Emergency Plans for their parish and where needed invite nominations for local volunteers snow wardens.



Plastic Clever Dart Project (Both Cllr Green and I are involved in this project). SHDC AONB Estuaries Officer Nigel Mortimer is making progress with this project and a group has now formed to bring forward some of these proposals:

A plastic clever leaflet for Salcombe/Dartmouth/Totnes.... Plus BIG BLUE LOGO (see attached, to be adapted for different towns) will encourage the following behaviour changes: Plastic clever mindset is, part of Kids Against Plastic: Being 'plastic clever' is all about thinking responsibly about disposable single-use plastics.



Be a plastic clever family.
At school
Be a plastic clever business:
Plastic Clever Cafes and Restaurants:

60% plastic generated every year is single-use and stays on our planet forever. OR 8 million tonnes of plastic from land reaches the sea every year.

Attendance at meetings etc. as elected public representative:

Thurs 15 th March	Berry Pomeroy (deferred) Parish Council meeting
Mon 19 th March	Informal meeting with rep from cycling group to discuss highways
Tues 20 th March	Resumption of JLP Public Examination. Matter 9 Environment & Matter 10 Other Development Policies (I spoke on this raising the issue of Gypsies, travellers and the need to include others living in caravans etc on the roadside).
Weds 21 st March	JLP Public Examination. Matter 8e Housing. I observed DCC DM Committee. The draft South Hams Special Area of Conservation – Joint SPD was approved for public consultation (from mid-April to the end of May – see below)

Dartington Hall Trust: Open event to outline proposals for the Plantation site

Thurs 22nd March	Demonstration at County Hall against NHS cuts and changes to delivery of services DCC Health & Scrutiny Committee: I observed Make Votes Matter: well attended Totnes meeting to discuss a fairer voting system
Fri 23rd March	Informal meeting with DRA reps to discuss proposals for improvements to their facilities
Sat 24th March	Devon for Europe Rally in Exeter to press for further referendum on terms of Brexit
Mon 26th March	South Devon Refugee Support Network meeting Totnes Rural Area Youth Engagement (TRAYE) project Steering Group meeting.
Tues 27th March	JLP Examiners accompanied site visit to proposed Dartington sites. I attended as one of the three invited community representatives.
Weds 28th March	DCC briefing and workshop on Syrian Refugee resettlement programme. Totnes & District Traffic & Transport Forum: Discussed weather related highways issues and items for forthcoming South Hams HATOC
Weds 4th April	Staverton PC Meeting
Thurs 5th April	Berry Pomeroy PC Meeting
Friday 6th April	Raising of the Suffrage Flag at DCC Meeting with TRAYE Youth worker
Mon. 8th April	Totnes TC meeting

Public Consultation:

National Consultation on Gypsy & Traveller Sites: on powers for dealing with unauthorised developments and encampments. The consultation document can be found here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/697354/Consultation - unauthorised encampments.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/697354/Consultation_-_unauthorised_encampments.pdf).

NALC will be responding to the consultation on behalf of the local councils that DALC represent. DALC are inviting local representatives to send in responses to a series of questions on this topic (please email me if you would like this list of questions).

Draft Supplementary Document (SPD) Monday 16th April to 5pm Wednesday 30th May 2018. I was unable to find it on DCC website, but it is currently available on SHDC website at this link

<http://mg.swdevon.gov.uk/documents/b3237/Executive%20-%20Item%208%20-%20Appendix%201%20SPD%20Consultation%20with%20better%20quality%20Map%20Included%2015th-Mar-2018%2010.pdf?T=9>

For Information: Grants for electric vehicle charging points are available:

<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/transport-travel/electric-vehicles/street-residential-chargepoint-scheme>