

## **Highways**

The number of potholes reported by the public in this financial year to date is 28,801. As of 1st December 2023, there were 1,505 potholes awaiting repair with our contractor. Since the 1st April, the organisation has received 1,229 claims for damage to vehicles or personal injuries due to road defects. The combined value of these claims is just over £1.1m; to date £48k has been paid. At the same date last year, the service had received 38,851 public reports and there were 1,222 potholes awaiting repair with our contractor. The number of claims received was 966 and the combined value was £855k and had paid out £35k to date.

The volume of street works is high in Devon, but also remains a national challenge. Equally, the works promoters have responsibilities around consultation and notification of their works.

Zooming in on Devon, in 2023 there were a staggering 54,000 permit applications on our network (a 14% increase in just 2 years). There are specific challenges that come when these applications are for immediate/emergency works, but equally how the DCC team works to mitigate these difficulties (e.g. strong relationships with utility companies, manual control of traffic signals, links to public transport etc.).

The forecast is that these challenges will continue for the foreseeable future. For example, there will be significant works in both Newton Abbot and Barnstaple this year, and Exeter will follow in future years too.

The following webpage also provides helpful background [Work types and coordination - Roads and transport \(devon.gov.uk\)](https://www.devon.gov.uk/work-types-and-coordination-roads-and-transport)

## **Bus Strategy**

A comprehensive Bus Strategy has been produced by DCC, I have pulled out some of the pertinent points. The link to the full strategy can be found at the end of the report.

Our BSIP has the following aims:

- Grow bus patronage across Devon
- Facilitate a positive step change in bus provision across the area
- Create a bus network that meets the needs of all potential users
- Create a framework to regularly consult bus users, and use this information to influence bus service provision in the future
- Ensure information regarding bus services is of the highest quality and accessible to all
- Ensure the bus is considered equally alongside other modes of transport

To meet these aims we have set the following objectives:

- Achieve 95% punctuality on all bus services by 2025
- Significantly increase passenger numbers and modal shift towards bus travel across Devon
- Improve the provision of bus services in all communities, on evenings and weekends, and strategic links between centres of population and rail interchanges
- Implement a universal fare strategy in Devon and the South West, that reduces the cost of bus travel, and is simpler and easier for passengers to understand
- Identify and implement a significant increase in bus priority, making the bus an attractive alternative to the car
- Develop a sustainable bus network, that with the improvements detailed in this document, will become self-funding as far as possible in the future

Listen to the needs of passengers and key stakeholders and involve them in current and future planning of the bus service provision.

In Devon, approximately 80% of the local bus network is commercially operated. However, geographically, the 80/20 proportions are reversed – without DCC financial support, almost 80% of the county would be wholly or substantially without a bus service. This is shown on the following graphic which depicts the extent of the commercial and supported network, in comparison to just the commercial network:



Figure 2-2: 2024 Maps of DCC supported services (in red) and commercial services (in blue).

Access to Education Access to education forms the backbone of many local bus service movements and the revenue generated helps provide a better level of service throughout the day. Through this integrated approach DCC contributes £1.5million per annum to the network through season tickets on the network for entitled scholars. As part of proposed service improvements, we will continue to explore further opportunities for integration of school and college movements into the network. This will provide more passengers (and revenue) and offer greater travel choices for young people and other users of the bus network.

Devon has worked to ensure that most deep-rural areas of the County retain access to a minimal level of public transport provision. This has proved increasingly difficult as finding operators willing to run infrequent local bus services, or Fare Cars and in some cases it has not proved possible to continue a service because of the lack of an operator. Additionally, most of the deep-rural services improved as part of the BSIP programme have proved unsustainable due to very low passenger numbers and high costs. In order to ensure that a level of provision is maintained we intend to implement a new approach to try and increase availability of operators.

### Ring & Ride (Community Transport)

Funding from Devon County Council has meant a level of flexible provision has been maintained for frail elderly and disabled people via pre-bookable services provided by Community Transport Associations. It is intended to fund an expansion of this provision in order to incorporate areas of rural isolation where no other transport provision exists and guarantee that all areas have a shopping journey to the nearest town. Should we be successful with future funding bids, it is anticipated this work be linked to the feasibility study work we have done around Demand Responsive Transport (DRT)

### Service proposals

**38 Ivybridge - Exeter** Increase frequency to every 30 minutes between Buckfastleigh and Exeter When 30 minute frequency is sustainable introduce improved Sunday and evening services.

**88 Newton Abbot - Totnes** Increase Newton Abbot - Buckfastleigh to half-hourly and extend alternate journeys to Ivybridge When increased frequency becomes sustainable introduce Sunday service

**88 Buckfastleigh and Ashburton - Newton Abbot Station** Extend service 88 to Newton Abbot Station

What is Demand Responsive Transport? • Demand-Responsive Transport (DRT), also known as “on-demand transport,” features flexible routing and/or flexible scheduling of vehicles, typically booked through a smartphone application. • Services are designed to match demand (journey) and supply (driven vehicle) and extend the efficiency and accessibility of the transport network. • Possible pick-up/drop-off stops are restricted to maximise the efficiency of service, usually within a geofenced area, known as the “service zone.” Vehicle type can vary, but DRT is usually operated by a shuttle or minibus, typically with capacity for 6 - 15 passengers. • Conceptually, DRT blends the convenience of private transport (e.g. private cars or taxis) and public transport buses operating along fixed routes. Passenger fares are typically kept low (often equivalent to other public buses) and subsidised by a local government or public transport authority, as many services are offered in hard-to-serve areas and therefore do not serve a patronage high enough to operate commercially. • To limit vehicle detours and improve service efficiency, passengers are typically asked to walk to the intersection nearest their desired origin, or from the drop-off point to their desired destination. Passengers’ total walking distance is seldom more than 400 metre • When booking using the app, passengers will clearly see the geofenced service zone in which service is offered. Requesting a journey beyond this zone is not possible, so passengers always know where the DRT service is available. • Once the passenger submits a journey request, they are given a proposal that tells them when the vehicle will arrive and where to meet it. Typically, passengers will wait between 10 and 25 minutes for a trip, although this may vary depending on service design, as well as the level of demand and the number of vehicles available.

The full strategy can be viewed here: [Compressed BSIP 2024 - June 2024.pdf \(devon.gov.uk\)](#)