

**Notes of meeting of Teign Estuary Trail Stakeholder Group on 19 July 2024
10.30am – 12 noon, Forde House**

Present:

Lauren Allington, DCC

Jordan Facey, DCC (online)

Cllr Jackie Hook, TDC

Cllr Andrew MacGregor, TDC

Josh Manning, DCC

Cllr Henry Merritt, Bishopsteignton Parish Council (Chair)

Cllr Ron Peart, DCC, TDC and Kingsteignton Town Council

John Penaligon, DCC Contractor (online)

Judith Sharples, Teign Estuary Trail Campaign Group (note-taker)

Estelle Skinner, TDC

Cllr Nick Yabsley, Newton Abbot Town Council

Apologies:

Cllr Kate Benham, Bishopsteignton Parish Council

Neil Blaney, TDC

Arron Carpenter, DCC

Hannah Clark, DCC

Cllr Stuart Hughes, DCC

Cllr Richard Keeling, TDC

Martin Wrigley, MP Newton Abbot

1. Welcome and introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending. Attendees introduced themselves.

2. Update on tourism benefits work

Estelle Skinner summarised the work undertaken by the consultants Urban Foresight so far which included a walking tour of the area and a workshop for local businesses in March. The output of their work will be a report on the tourism opportunities arising from the Trail with case studies. This will inform the outline business case. The report is expected soon with the work due to be completed by the end of August 2024.

3. Update on Outline Business Case

Estelle provide an update on the work being undertaken by Jacobs consultants. £50k of the £1m CIL allocated by TDC is being spent on the outline business case (including the tourism opportunities work). The remaining £950k will be released if the analysis of the costs and benefits shows that at least £2 of benefits will be achieved for every £1 spent. This will be challenging given the high cost of the scheme and the difficulties of monetising all of the benefits. The outline business case includes a strategic case for investment in the Trail. Town and parish councils, the campaign group the MP, and other key stakeholders will also be asked to provide letters of support.

Cllr Peart said that there would undoubtedly be health benefits which should be included in the analysis. Josh Manning advised that health-related benefits would be quantified and are normally one of the most significant benefits of schemes like this.

Judith Sharples said that she had read that the average return on investment for active travel infrastructure was about £5.50 for every £1 spent and queried why the return on investment for the TET was likely to be a lot lower than this. Estelle said this was due to the high cost of the scheme which includes board walk sections and a bridge over Flow Lane, as well as biodiversity net gain costs. Judith queried whether there was a need to revisit the costs which included 10 years' inflation as inflation forecasts may have changed since the costs were calculated in 2022.

Josh Manning advised that the costs would be kept under review and adjusted as further design work is undertaken.

Estelle advised that the work on the outline business case is due to be completed by the end of August 2024. Cllr MacGregor queried whether stakeholders would have the opportunity to comment before the report is finalised. Estelle said she would consult Jacobs as the work involves a lot of technical calculations. It was agreed that stakeholders should be informed of the factors that have been included in the cost benefit analysis and would have the opportunity to comment within a short timeframe. Cllr Merritt said that he thought the full report should be shared with those attending the meeting.

4. Funding – brief update

Estelle advised that there were no specific government funding opportunities at present. Cllr Peart queried whether any funding was available from Sustrans. Estelle advised that TDC and DCC remain in contact with Sustrans but there is no funding at present. Cllr Peart also queried whether funding could be sought to enable the project to be delivered in phases rather than waiting for all funding to be secured before delivery commences. It was confirmed that a phased approach to funding and delivery was likely to be adopted.

It was noted that DCC and TDC funding allocations to secure the land and undertake further design work are likely to be treated as match funding in bids to possible future government funding pots. Cllr Merritt said town and parish councils could also be asked to make a small financial contribution from their CIL allocations. Estelle will

ask about this when she makes contact about providing a letter of support for the outline business case.

It was noted that a robust outline business case, together with evidence of strong community support, would put the councils in a stronger position to secure government funding in future.

5. Land agreements – brief update

John Penaligon advised that he remained in contact with landowners and a key meeting is likely to take place soon.

Judith Sharples referred to the approach proposed by Martin Wrigley at the previous meeting. He had suggested that, if individual parcels of land are acquired, permissive paths could be created as an interim measure to give the public extended access to the countryside whilst waiting for suitable external funding. It is understood that he subsequently discussed this approach with Meg Booth who expressed her support if this could be achieved. Jordan Facey advised that there would be technical challenges in creating a permissive path along the route in advance of the construction of the Trail itself. This is because of current gradients, the need for a bridge, and the marshy conditions in various sections.

Cllr Yabsley queried whether all the land had been purchased in one go when the Exe Trail had been constructed. John advised that a phased approach had been adopted with the option of securing some land using compulsory purchase powers if necessary. As land was purchased, the scheme gained momentum and compulsory purchase of land was not ultimately required.

6. Further design process – brief update

Josh Manning advised that he has asked Jordan Facey to cost up the further design work needed for Phase 2 and Phase 3, as it is hoped that this can progress once the outline business case work has been completed. It was noted that a condition of the planning approval is that construction work commences by December 2031. Josh Manning advised that DCC will ensure that work does commence by this deadline.

7. DCC update on upcoming countywide LCWIP, LTP4 and devolution deal

Josh Manning advised that Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plans were introduced by the government in 2017 and any schemes not included in an LCWIP are likely to be at the back of the queue for government funding. The LCWIPs produced so far in Devon focus on the main urban areas including the Heart of Teignbridge. DCC also recognise the need for further investment in multi-use trails which connect both urban and rural communities and this will be the focus of the new countywide LCWIP currently being developed. £60k has been allocated for this work which will be an opportunity to update the DCC Multi-Use Trails strategy produced in 2015. The document identifies the top 10 priorities, one of which is the Teign Estuary Trail. Consultation on the document is scheduled for October 2024.

Lauren Allington advised that the LCWIP will form part of the new Local Transport Plan (LTP4). The new plan will cover the DCC area and Torbay and will have a 15

year timeframe. The new Combined County Authority (the creation of which is still subject to an Order in Parliament) will be asked to approve the new LTP in March 2025 and the plan would become operative from April 2025 . The existing LTP is for the period up to 2026.

Public consultation on LTP4 will be carried out at the same time as consultation on the countywide LCWIP. 8 consultation sessions are being arranged including one in Newton Abbot library on the afternoon of 10th October. Cllr Hook said an evening session should also be held to enable people who work during the day to attend. Josh Manning said he would look into this but there are capacity challenges and additional online sessions would be arranged.

The LCWIPs and LTP will be important documents which are likely to form the basis of negotiations with central government on future funding allocations for transport schemes. The inclusion of the Teign Estuary Trail as an investment priority in these documents should therefore put the councils in a stronger position to secure government funding in future.

8. Any other business

Judith Sharples queried what was happening in relation to the plans that have been drawn up for a new multi-use path between Teignmouth and Dawlish. At one time it had been hoped that funding from Sustrans could be secured for this section. Josh Manning advised that the Teignmouth to Dawlish section would be included in the countywide LCWIP and the importance of connecting the Teign Estuary Trail to the Exe Trail was recognised.

9. Date of next meeting

This was arranged for 25 October 2024, 9.30am at Forde House. It was agreed that the MP for Newton Abbot should remain included in the stakeholders to be invited, as a key stakeholder.