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Tram link to the heart of the city



Possible tram route from Budleigh to Exeter - Credit: Archant

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A frequent 'Exe Valley district line' service linking Exmouth and Budleigh to Exeter's economic heart could be the key to unlocking the town's economic potential.

Academic Dr Chris Irwin, an adviser to the European Transport Commissioner, has this week set out a bold vision of the future in which the public ditch their cars in favour of a light-railway or tram service centred around a 'world class' transport interchange.

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Such a service, he said, could be a reality by 2029 – providing a fast link to Exeter, which aspires to be a regional technology hub.

Dr Irwin was speaking at the Exmouth Transport Partnership (ETP) – a ‘blue skies’ think tank made up of councillors, council chiefs, transport providers and members of the public.

He spoke of a one-stop transport shop, with four trains an hour with services run from Budleigh, through Exmouth, taking in key Exeter City Centre stops and onto Exeter St Davids.

Dr Irwin said: “In 15 years you could have a rapid light transport system that takes you from Budleigh Salterton, Exmouth, up the East coast of the Exe, Queen Street in Exeter, before going down to the station.

“That transport corridor waiting to be delivered – it would be the district line of

He said that Exmouth was one of the most highly used stations, adding: “Lots of people come from around the region to Exmouth. That says a lot to me about the long-term future of that corridor.”

Geoff Morris, ETP member and chairman of the Exmouth Residents and Traders’ Association, said: “He talked about long-term strategic planning in Exmouth, something I normally don’t see a lot of.

“Too much time is spent on what we think we are able to get, and not on what we want or what we need.

“We should be thinking big – we should have a grand plan and aspire to make Exmouth into the town it should be.”

Ian MacQueen, chairman of the Exmouth Chamber of Trade, said: “The world is moving towards rapid frequent public transport and away from expensive transport like cars. You never know – soon you may be able to travel to Exeter when you want at the drop of a transit train.”

Courtesy : Exmouth Journal