

Exeter City Council & Devon County Council Street Charter for Exeter

Foreword by Councillor Stephen Brimble, Lead Member for Place, Exeter City Council and Councillor Roger Croad, Cabinet Member for Community, Public Health, Transportation & Environmental Services, Devon County Council.

Exeter City Council and Devon County Council are committed to ensure that all pedestrians, especially those affected by sight loss or mobility difficulties can fully participate in and enjoy the local built environment, without feeling unsafe or concerned about walking into an obstacle.

For a person with a disability it can often be a challenge to get around to visit their local shops, GP surgery or other local services, with a variety of obstacles hindering their journey and at worse causing injury. A recent RNIB survey found that a third of people said they had been injured during a three month period when walking around their local area. They said that they were so intimidated by the risks outside they ended up staying at home and becoming isolated. We don't want people to feel this way.

Both Councils believe engaging with the local community is crucial in helping us make decisions which will affect Exeter. This includes the design, layout and management of the City Centre, shopping precincts and our residential streets to ensure that they are free from obstacles and are clutter-free.

Exeter City Council and Devon County Council are dedicated to engaging positively with our residents and value their input on how we plan, develop and manage our built environment.

Our 'street charter' sets out a list of actions and commitments, which everyone involved agrees to abide by. These have been formed under different headings, which represent the main issues that pedestrians, particularly those that are blind or partially sighted face when negotiating the built environment in Exeter.

Street Charter for Exeter

Advertising boards and street and cafe furniture

We agree to:

Work with local business owners to make them realise how advertising boards cause real difficulties to pedestrians, in particular those that are blind or partially sighted, and to consider alternative forms of advertising.

Work with local businesses to ensure that street café furniture and pavement retail displays offer appropriate protection to allow their safe navigation around by a blind or partially sighted pedestrian.

Undertake regular street furniture audits in the city centre and main shopping precincts to ensure that they are as safe as they can practicably be.

When the City Centre and neighbourhoods are redeveloped, or new developments take place, proactively engage with blind and partially sighted people, and accessibility groups, around the design of the development and implementation of street furniture-

Wheeled bins and refuse/recycling bags

We agree to:

Require residents, where possible, to leave their bins and bags at the boundary of, but within, their property curtilage.

Proactively encourage residents to be considerate in how they present their bins or bags, which will include coverage in Exeter City Council's 'Citizen' newspaper delivered to all homes in Exeter four times a year.

Make sure that all refuse collection crews are required to return bins on to the curtilage of a property and are made aware why it is important to reposition bins as safely as possible.

Work with businesses to find solutions for the safe presentation of their trade waste and recycling.

Overhanging shrubbery and branches

We agree to:

Promote accessible ways for blind and partially sighted people to report overgrown shrubbery and branches through our reporting services.

Act swiftly upon reports of overgrown shrubbery and branches by alerting the residents to be considerate in managing their shrubs and trees or taking action if it is a Council-owned property.

Proactively encourage residents to be considerate in managing their shrubbery and trees as part of any annual highway safety inspection programme.

Parking on pavements

We agree to:

Use our existing powers to endeavour to keep the pavement clear of obstructions caused by parked cars.

Promote the Devon County Council 'Report a Problem' web page for residents to provide information on problem parking areas to allow the deployment of enforcement resources.

Work with Devon and Cornwall Constabulary to use their existing powers under the Highways Act 1980 and other legislation to endeavour to keep the pavement clear of obstructions caused by parked cars.

Work with Devon and Cornwall Constabulary to engage with blind and partially sighted people and the wider community to improve awareness of the dangers of parking on pavements.

Continue to leaflet problem areas and put pressure on the Department for Transport for the necessary changes in legislation to allow further enforcement where appropriate.

Crossings

We agree to:

Through monitoring and public reports we will fix and repair faults promptly to minimise disruption to pedestrians.

Where there is demand we will consider amendment to signal timings and also potential new crossings, subject to funding, this however needs to be balanced against the needs of the wider network.

We seek to make pedestrian crossings meet national standards with appropriate facilities such as tactile paving, audible beeps, rotating cones and dropped kerbs.

New Council developments: shared space

We agree to:

In accordance with our Public Sector Equality Duty, involve and consult with blind and partially sighted people when new developments such as shared space schemes are put forward and make any necessary changes to the schemes. Where this is not possible, we will consider whether or not the scheme should still go ahead.

Multi-Use paths

We agree to:

Continue promoting the need to considerate and patient of other users of Multi-Use Paths (whether cyclists, walking, dog walking, skateboarding, horse-riding, driving etc.)

Consultation

We agree to:

Engage with Living Options Devon, the Royal National Institute for the Blind and other appropriate representative bodies for people with accessibility needs, to assist in the development of major highway improvement schemes which are likely to have an accessibility impact.

Cross-Warranting

We agree to:

Actively explore opportunities for cross-warranting of officers in order to expand the number of officers 'on the ground' to deal with a variety of obstruction issues.

Streetworks

We agree to:

Direct highway enforcement resources to address inadequate facilities for pedestrians during temporary road works

Date:

Sign:

Print:

(Leader of Exeter City Council)

Date:

Sign:

Print:

(Leader of Devon County Council)

Dated 6 March 2018

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