



**Exeter**  
City Council

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**Date:** 31.03.2023

Dear Sir/Madam

**RE: Draft Exeter Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) Consultation**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft Exeter LCWIP. The City Council welcomes the work on the document and our involvement and looks forward to continuing this dialogue in future. In particular, we are keen to ensure that the LCWIP supports City Council net zero objectives, the need to provide high quality linkages to emerging development sites as being set out in the Exeter Plan and the ongoing programme of work included in the Live and Move Strategy. All these play out within the context of the Exeter Vision 2040.

The LCWIP presents an opportunity to demonstrate wider outcomes for health and communities through our collaborative work locally. The joining up of transport, planning, health and community activity which the LWCIP supports should enable cross government resources to achieve multiple outcomes. The City Council looks forward to proactively working on the delivery of the LCWIP once it is finalised.

**Strategic comments**

There has been positive collaboration between the City and County Councils in the preparation of the LCWIP. This involved City Council officers feeding into workshops and evidence gathering for the LCWIP but also extended to with County Council officers being involved in the drafting of the outline draft Exeter Plan transport policies. Greater use of more up to date, local data could be made to ensure the robustness of the LCWIP, including the Local Active Lives Survey undertaken as part of Live and Move.

The City Council is supportive of the geographical scope of the plan; it is appropriate for the administrative area of Exeter to be the focus whilst extending out to key origins and destinations in the surrounding area which are functionally closely link to the city (e.g. development area at South West Exeter and Cranbrook).

Looking at the wider transport policy context, there is a clear delivery linkage between the existing Exeter Transport Strategy and the draft LCWIP which provides further, more scheme specific detail on project implementation. It is recognised that an element of project prioritisation is required.

However, the LCWIP would benefit from further clarity to evidence how the priority projects will support the target of 50% active travel by 2030 and identify that the projects included are sufficiently ambitious to deliver on that ambition - the challenging funding context is understood however the LCWIP suggests that only 9 or 10 of the schemes may be delivered in the next ten years which may not be sufficient to meet challenging net zero ambitions in the city.

In terms of delivery and funding, it is understood that the LCWIP reflects the level of funding likely to be available to the County Council for transport investment. Given the links to the Exeter Plan and Live and Move, further clarity should be provided on how the priority routes in the LCWIP will be funded. This will be important evidence to support the development strategy in the Exeter Plan and could be explored further through the infrastructure planning work which City and County officers are starting.

Turning to the headline walking and cycling aims for the city, it appears that the transport strategy ambitions are used interchangeably. These ambitions are variously described as:

- 50% active travel;
- 50% of trips to be made by foot or cycle by 2030
- 50% of commuting trips within the city will be made on foot or by cycle
- 50% of work trips originating in Exeter to be made on foot or by cycle by 2030

These ambitions would benefit from further clarity as they could be subtly different.

There is a related point about the strategic ambition to increase active travel and the type of provision delivered for walking and cycling. It is understood that there are significant challenges with delivering for both walking and cycling and a 'one size fits all' approach may not be possible. Nonetheless, it is important to recognise that dual use paths can create conflict between walking, cycling, and wheeling, particularly when cyclists, children, less abled individuals and older groups use the same space in very different ways. Providing the appropriate type of provision recognising the needs of a variety of groups is vital in delivering routes which encourage use for the community as a whole and meet the key ambition of significantly increasing active travel. This means that separating walking and cycling should be given greater focus.

The Live and Move evaluation framework includes a significant focus on gathering local impact through an enhanced annual Local Active Lives survey. The data has highlighted inactivity data that demonstrates specific inequalities within certain communities within Exeter. Those residents that live in wards with the poorest health outcomes in the city are three times more likely to be inactive than the mainstream population. Furthermore the data highlights key populations in the city where inequalities around walking and cycling are most prevalent:

- Residents from culturally diverse communities
- Women and Girls
- Residents on low incomes

The LCWIP can further utilise the data from Local Actives to help prioritise, reduce inequalities regarding access to walking and cycling and build the case for investment, a link can be provided to lead officers.

## Cycling and walking routes

It is positive to see the clear alignment between the proposals in the LCWIP and the content of the emerging Exeter Plan which includes the Liveable Exeter sites as a key framework of the development strategy for the city; each of the Liveable Exeter sites are served by at least one of the top priority cycle schemes. This alignment will help to provide travel options and support high quality development at these sites.

The strategic alignment between the LCWIP and other programmes also extends to the Live and Move Strategy; each of the 12 priority communities in the Live and Move Strategy are served by at least one of the key cycle routes. This will be important to help facilitate those communities to increase activity in their daily lives and will complement the wider Live and Move programme. Particular focus should be given to Wonford and Beacon Heath. Looking more strategically, although the priority proposed cycle routes do link to the Live and Move priority communities, more emphasis should be provided on Wonford, as a key area of focus, and on the Live and Move programme as a whole – this will help make the case to lever in additional external funding, particularly through citing the role of Sport England.

The Liveable Exeter principles in the draft Exeter Plan specifically reference the importance of making places walkable, providing outstanding quality through optimal densities to facilitate walking and cycling, ensuring active streets and supporting spaces for people and wildlife. The role of walking and cycling in creating high quality developments should therefore be referenced more strongly in the LCWIP and could be considered in scheme prioritisation. Similarly, the important links between walking and cycling and improving air quality would also benefit from being directly referenced for each scheme. Demonstrating this relationship could assist in leveraging further investment because it would meet some of the objectives of the Exeter Air Quality Action Plan.

Having reviewed the list of priority routes proposed in the LCWIP there is an appropriate emphasis on linking key development sites to a combination of the city centre, employment areas, key transport interchanges such as St David's Railway Station and the priority areas in the Live and Move Strategy. On the understanding that prioritisation has to take place because of the limited resources and funding available for delivery, the prioritised schemes generally seem appropriate. However the coverage of the proposed priority routes south and west of the River Exe is limited and therefore additional provision should be considered there. Further consideration should also be given specifically to linking to the city leisure centres, key playing pitches (such as King George V), the green circle and the Valley Parks – these are key destinations which improve equality of access to healthy lifestyles for all our communities.

It is also vital to ensure that the five key routes into the city are provided for by alternative, attractive cycle routes, preferably with segregated provision to reduce the conflict between pedestrians and cyclists. The key routes of Heavitree Road, Alphington Road, Topsham Road/Bridge Road and Pinhoe Road are provided for by the priority proposed cycle routes. However, currently these strategic routes are off-line and take minimal action to reduce the dominance of car travel on the key corridors. Cowley Bridge Road is currently not covered by the proposed, priority cycle routes despite being one of the key corridors into the city, also linking to St David's Railway Station. The E19 route should therefore be considered a priority.

## **Walking**

The LCWIP gives significantly greater focus to cycling over walking. Although it is understood that cycling offers the opportunity to travel longer distances which brings a wider breadth of facilities and services within range, walking is the more dominant form of active travel and is more likely to be a suitable option (notwithstanding distances) for a larger number of people.

It is also recognised that interventions related to walking are likely to be smaller scale in many cases. The LCWIP would benefit from a more balanced approach to providing a greater emphasis on walking through the identification of a more significant package of walking interventions. This could include the grouping of similar types of smaller projects such as those relating crossings, public realm or surfacing.

Greater emphasis should also be provided on improving access to the Green Circle by walking and cycling. This is a key walking route for the city, providing access to open/natural space for many communities, including some of the city's least affluent areas, and would benefit from strategic improvements to widen this access.

Lastly, a key highway feature in Exeter which causes significant severance is the inner bypass/Western Way. This creates a significant barrier between the city centre, the Quay and other areas and is a constraint to direct access for walking and cycling. It also creates a poor environment in terms of place-making and air quality. While some of the priority cycling schemes will help to address this issue, overcoming the severance and collar-effect provided by Western Way should be considered more comprehensively. This should consider key junctions such as at Exe Bridges, Paris Street and Sidwell Street as well as the inter-connecting links.

## **Other supporting measures**

The LCWIP does address some supporting measures such as place-making and low traffic neighbourhoods. However this could be developed. Further consideration in the LCWIP should be given to identify the role which walking and cycling routes can play in supporting the principles of 20-minute neighbourhoods to provide for sustainable communities. The City Council is undertaking some initial map-based work to consider this and would welcome input from the County Council. This approach relates strongly to the concept of place-making and reducing the need to travel.

The LCWIP identifies the importance of support measures for cycling beyond the identification of the actual routes. However there is little detail. Further specific consideration should be given to identifying additional locations for high quality cycle parking at rail stations, strategic development locations, Valley Parks and employment areas. More specific approaches and requirements for residential cycle parking could be helpfully identified while additional provision for cargo bikes and adapted bicycles should be addressed. The City Council would welcome further joint working on this as part of the LCWIP and the Exeter Plan because these measures are vital to provide the wider support and encouragement for cycling.

One of the interventions in the LCWIP proposed in addition to the provision of new and improved routes is the enhancement of the co-bike network. The City Council is supportive of this roll out, particularly as part of the emerging focus on delivering mobility hubs including on the key corridors

into the city. A programme of investments at all rail stations, employment areas, large scale developments and within those areas of higher levels of deprivation would be welcomed and could be prioritised further. In the case of strategic development areas, mobility hub provision, including co-mobility, will be included in ongoing policy development in the Exeter Plan and should be funded from development.

Finally, it would be helpful to consider how the use of walking and cycling routes in the city can be promoted and monitored to improve the mode share of active travel and demonstrate the benefits of interventions made. There are synergies here with Live and Move and the City Council would welcome further discussions to explore how a joined up approach to promoting and monitoring active travel could be delivered in future. This approach could helpfully be harnessed to provide for early community engagement in helping to inform the walking and cycling which are progressed.

I hope these comments are helpful in progressing the Exeter LCWIP and we look forward to working with you on the various matters set out in this response. If you have any questions please do not hesitate in contacting me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ian Collinson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ian" written above the last name "Collinson".

**Ian Collinson, Director of City Development**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jon-Paul Hedge". The signature is very stylized and cursive, with the first name "Jon-Paul" written above the last name "Hedge".

**Jon-Paul Hedge, Director of Comms, Culture and Leisure Facilities**