

Countywide Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

Exeter City Council submission 30 November 2024

Exeter City Council fully supports the proposal for an active travel route (Boniface Trail) between Exeter and Crediton. There are advantages and disadvantages to both the proposed options.

Quiet Lanes Alignment

Whilst quiet and picturesque and enjoyable for leisure activities, it is likely that this route would be less well used by commuters and those wanting a quicker and more direct route (for time efficiencies), especially when it is dark or with low temperature weather conditions in the winter. This could be improved by providing lighting on this route, although this could result in light pollution affecting biodiversity along the route. Consideration should also be given to people travelling alone who may not feel safe due to the quiet and isolated route. This route would benefit from good air quality for users as it is away from main roads and associated traffic pollution and would also benefit the proposed new housing estate that would be adjacent to this route. However, some of the elevations along this route could prove challenging for many active travel users. We note that the cost of delivering this option is lower and the delivery time would be quicker.

A377 Alignment

This purpose-built, off-road cycle route from Crediton to Exeter St Davids railway station offers the opportunity for use all year around and with suitable lighting will be safe and practicable to use during the dark in the autumn/winter months – and is an attractive option for commuters. However, we are aware that the air pollution from vehicles would have a negative impact on users of the route and that this option would also be less attractive for leisure purposes. The high visibility of this route along the main road could support its profile and encourage car users to consider active travel instead. We note that this option is a higher cost and longer delivery time making this a more challenging route to implement.

Other considerations

An active travel route between Crediton and Exeter could result in additional parking requirements in Crediton for those that live outside of Crediton and need to drive to park in Crediton to use this new route and consideration should be given to a potential increase in park and cycle requirements.

Exeter St Davids railway station area needs improvement to receive and be more welcoming to cyclists, and the route for cyclists between Cowley Bridge Road and Hele Road into Exeter is challenging and in urgent need of improvement. It would be preferable for both options to be developed when the route reaches Exeter i.e. along Cowley Bridge Road and along the river on the Exwick side.

Recommendation

Exeter City Council is very supportive of the proposal to develop an active travel route between Crediton and Exeter and have outlined what we consider to be the benefits and disadvantages of both options. However, the A377 Alignment option is likely to make the greatest impact in terms of reducing GHG emissions and aligning with the Exeter Net Zero 2030 Plan, whilst also encouraging active travel by commuters thereby likely to reduce traffic volumes and improve air quality.