

Exeter Strategic Cycle Routes Consultation

Report of the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Committee before taking effect.

Recommendation: It is recommended that:

- (a) the committee notes the key responses to the Exeter Strategic Cycle Route consultation;**
- (b) in principle support is given to progress further design of the routes shown in Appendix I, including workshops with key stakeholders and local members.**

1. Background/Introduction

This report provides an overview of the response to the recent consultation on Exeter's strategic cycle routes. The proposals are at an early stage of design and this report also seeks in principle support to continue developing the detail of the routes in consultation with key stakeholders and local members.

2. Proposal

Consultation for the proposed E3 (Redhayes Bridge to City Centre), E4 (Redhayes Bridge to University) and E9 (Newcourt to City Centre) cycle routes was undertaken during summer 2015.

The cycle routes (Appendix I) are currently in their early stages of design and the consultation was run so that all options and issues can be considered at an early stage, to help shape the plans before any detailed design or formal planning process is implemented. In general, members of the public were very supportive of Devon County Council investing in additional cycle infrastructure across the city. Many responses support routes away from the main arterial roads that will encourage increased use by children, females and other less confident cyclists.

Constructive feedback was received regarding the general approach to the cycle routes but also specific sections of route (see Appendix II). These suggestions will be built into the proposals where possible and include, for example, ensuring cyclists have priority at all side roads and, where publicly acceptable, relocating on-street parking to provide more space for cycle lanes, which would help minimise potential conflicts with pedestrians, and ensuring clear and consistent signing.

The proposals received some criticism, with the following two aspects receiving particular attention:

- Existing commuter cyclists do not consider the plans to be ambitious enough, with 'Dutch style' infrastructure on main arterial routes being their preference.
- The section of route proposed to run within Higher Cemetery, close to the southern boundary, is considered inappropriate.

The County Council recognises that it is difficult to satisfy the needs of the wide range of people who responded to the consultation, which ranged from members of cycle touring clubs who could be considered confident cyclists to people who did not currently cycle. The needs of these

extreme groups of people are therefore likely to be very different and result in a different type of infrastructure solution.

There were calls for more ambitious proposals, which would involve significant (and potentially controversial) changes to existing radial road corridors (see section 3). On the other hand, there was support suggesting that off-line cycle routes, making use of routes through parks or on quieter streets would meet the needs of younger people and less confident cyclists.

The County Council's overall objectives for the cycle proposals are to encourage more people to take up cycling, which will help increase physical activity (in the interests of public health) and help manage congestion through mode switch from the car. This is particularly important in the context of significant continued growth of the city and its environs. The most effective way of achieving this is by creating routes that are easily accessible, convenient for people to use and offer safe passage, segregated from traffic where possible.

The proposals not only provide long distance, strategic routes between the major developments on the eastern edge of the city with the city centre but they also link up densely populated neighbourhoods along the route (i.e. Whipton/Heavitree) with local destinations (i.e. schools, hospitals, local parks). The proposals therefore serve a significant catchment and cater for both longer and shorter distance journeys, which is not the case with routes based on radial road corridors.

Designers did consider on-road solutions at an early stage; however, these were rejected due to the city's historic road network and difficulties in introducing cycle infrastructure without removing bus lanes, on-street parking or carriageway space. This had the potential to have knock-on effects for the rest of the city's road network and would involve substantial costs.

Ongoing consultation is planned to work up more detailed plans and address some of the localised concerns, particularly in relation to the cemetery.

3. Options/Alternatives

A report was prepared by respondents offering a more radical approach, which included removal of parking, narrowing of vehicle carriageway, narrowing of footpaths and acquiring land from residential properties to achieve superhighways along Topsham Road and Pinhoe Road. Such proposals are similar to the infrastructure seen introduced in London and a number of cities in Europe.

These more innovative options were considered by design teams at an early stage of the project; however, the historic road network constraints have the potential for significant disruption to pedestrians, residents, bus users and drivers. There were also concerns that such proposals were catering for people who are already cycling and feel confident on their bikes. This may not therefore be benefitting the target audience, namely the less confident cyclist. Neither would they offer a suitably attractive route for people using wheelchairs or pushing prams.

A further concern is that proposals for superhighways on Pinhoe Road and Topsham Road are close to existing, relatively direct routes (Route E4 running along Eastern Fields/Exeter Arena and the River Exe/Riverside Valley Park route). Such proposals would therefore miss capturing people living in major residential areas between the radial corridors, i.e. Heavitree and Whipton where the potential to encourage increased levels of cycling is significant.

In the longer term, when higher levels of cycling in Exeter are being achieved, there may be a stronger case for more radical options.

The alternative of 'doing nothing' will have significant impacts for the city's transport network as the road network is unlikely to accommodate with increased road traffic demand. Furthermore, the authority has targets to reduce the risk of premature death and encouraging citizens to adopt more healthy lifestyles including cycling to work or for leisure purposes will help achieve these public health outcomes.

4. Consultations/Representations/Technical Data

Three public consultation events were held:

- Tuesday 14th July – 2pm to 8pm, County Hall
- Wednesday 15th July – 10am to 8pm, Princesshay Shopping Centre
- Thursday 16th July – 2pm to 8pm, Sainsbury's car park, Pinhoe/Whipton

Consultation material and an online feedback form were also available on the Devon County Council 'Have your say' website. The online feedback form was available for leaving comments from 14 July to 14 August.

A press release providing details of the events and online material was issued and they were also advertised on social media. Approximately 150 people attended the events over the three days and 224 responses were received, either in person at one of the events or through the online feedback form.

5. Financial Considerations

At this stage there are no costings available on the proposals. Further refinements will be necessary and funding has been made available in 2016/17 to continue design work.

6. Environmental Impact Considerations

Proposals that increase the attractiveness of cycling compared to other modes are likely to help minimise car use and reduce carbon emissions.

7. Equality Considerations

Where relevant to the decision, the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Equality Duty requires decision makers to give due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct;
- advance equality by encouraging participation, removing disadvantage, taking account of disabilities and meeting people's needs; and
- foster good relations between people by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

taking account of age, disability, race/ethnicity (includes Gypsies and Travellers), gender and gender identity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, pregnant women/new and breastfeeding mothers, marriage/civil partnership status in coming to a decision, a decision maker may also consider other relevant factors such as caring responsibilities, rural isolation or socio-economic disadvantage.

The proposals seek to be inclusive by encouraging improved routes not just for cyclists, but also other users of our transport system. People who use wheelchairs or people pushing prams will have easier access across side roads, which may improve their experiences of travelling around the city. The infrastructure will serve a number of schools and will thereby offer safer routes for young people. The alternative option of introducing superhighways may exclude such groups.

8. Legal Considerations

As part of the design process, there will be a need to consider what traffic regulation orders (TROs), i.e. signage/restrictions may be necessary and what legal rights of access may be permitted over the routes, which may involve use of a combination of roads and paths.

9. Risk Management Considerations

Further work is required to further investigate the feasibility of some of the more challenging elements of the proposals. Further workshops are planned to work the scheme designs up in more detail.

10. Public Health Impact

There are several academic papers and research that demonstrate the clear links between increased cycling and improved public health.

11. Summary/Conclusions/Reasons for Recommendations

There is a need to encourage more people to take up cycling to support increased physical activity and the continued economic growth of the city. The proposals offer a wide range of people better quality walking and cycling routes, away from the busy radial road corridors and provide linkages between densely populated residential areas and key work, education and leisure destinations. The proposals being developed are therefore expected to deliver increased cycling levels and improved public health outcomes for the city of Exeter.

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Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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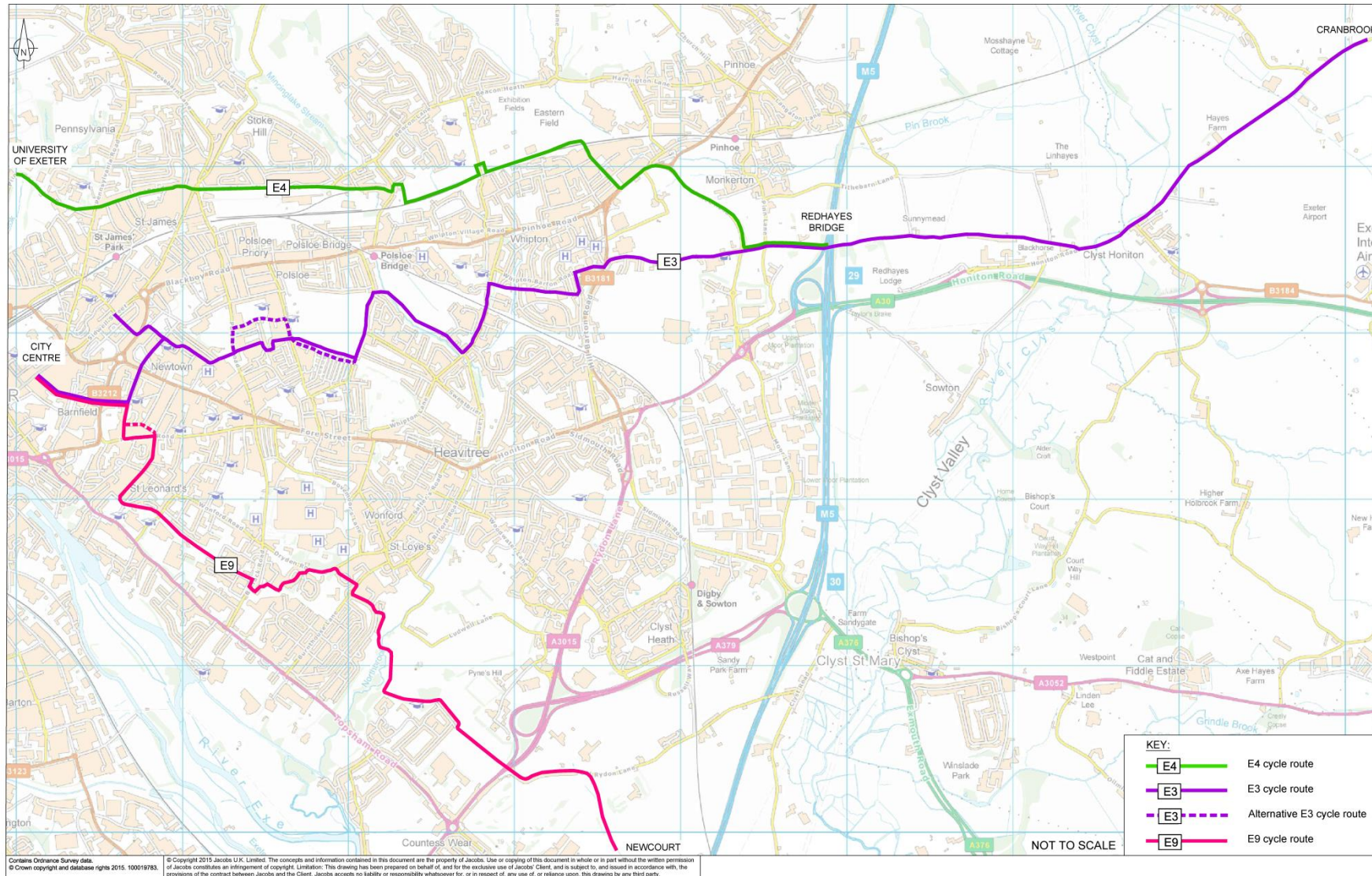
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Background Paper	Date	File Ref.
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Nil

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sc/cr/Exeter strategic cycle routes consultation
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Exeter Strategic Cycle Routes - Overview Map



Total number of responses: 224

General comments

Support:

- Proposals will extend and enhance cycle network.
- Proposals will ensure increased use by less confident cyclists, children and mums.
- Safer routes for less confident cyclists are crucial.
- These routes will encourage children to start cycling at a young age.
- Great to see further investment in cycle infrastructure.
- Greatly support off road routes – cycling on city roads is scary.
- DCC are very good at providing facilities for cyclists and any effort to make cycling around Exeter easier is welcomed.
- These plans are a step in the right direction, before more ambitious plans can be implemented.
- It's a fact that new commuter cyclists often begin by exploring recreational routes.

Opposition:

- There appears to be no evidence of an overarching vision or strategy which articulates how we wish our city to function as it grows in size and how the cycle routes build into an overall city network.
- The Exeter transport infrastructure requires significant re-thinking – a grander, longer term vision is required to display genuine ambition for a cycling city.
- A detailed holistic infrastructure masterplan is needed, together with a hierarchical projects list.
- The approach to cycling infrastructure focuses on individual 'routes', rather than creating a 'network'. A route is adequate for specific journeys from A to B but is inflexible and insufficient when one deviates from the route.
- Plans need to be more ambitious and focussed on longer term goals – Copenhagen approach.
- Proposals are a poor use of time and money – enormous potential to take Exeter into a new cycling era has been wasted.
- More direct routes for commuters are required.
- Put cyclists first, not the car.
- Traffic congestion is not solved by making it easier for more cars to travel in the city.
- The experience of other cities is that only when measures have been put in place which seek to actively discourage and reduce private motor-car use have the realisation of [cycle] visions been realised.
- With careful planning it would be possible to route traffic around and through the city via a series of one-way routes, allowing space for segregated cycle lanes.
- Evidence suggests that investment in cycle routes of the types proposed will not achieve the desired modal shift.
- Remove on-street parking to provide more space for cycle lanes.
- There is little evidence in the proposals that these cycle routes will be constructed as proper primary cycle routes, useable by people who are 8 or 80, e.g. lack of segregation and limited removal of cars.
- Shared use paths result in user conflict – avoid these.
- Cycle lanes on main arterial roads are safer, especially in winter when cycle paths are not gritted.
- Cycle routes should be visible – if we are going to change the profile of our cities transport for the better why hide them away on back roads. The more cyclists on the main routes in and out of the city the more aware drivers will become and the safer routes will become.

- Cycle lanes on main arterial routes should be interconnected with sub routes using existing smaller streets orbiting the city centre.
- There's already ample cycle routes across the city.
- A scheme for cyclists is unnecessary.
- Spend money improving existing infrastructure, rather than putting in new infrastructure.

General:

- No route can accommodate all types of cyclist.
- Infrastructure should be built to international standards.
- Reduce speed limits to 20mph for all vehicles in the city – introduce policing and traffic calming measures.
- All schools should be accessible.
- Cyclists to have priority across side road junctions.
- Cyclists should not have to dismount or negotiate difficult barriers.
- Cyclists should have advance priority at traffic lights, allowing them to move ahead of danger at junctions.
- Signing needs to be clear and consistent, e.g. road markings.
- Needs to be clearer whether sections of route are on or off road.
- Regularly clean cycle paths.
- Covered and secure cycle parking in town is required.
- Ensure cars, cyclists and pedestrians are segregated.
- Segregated on-road cycle routes are the only feasible option for commuter cyclists.
- Off road routes, away from vehicles but segregated from pedestrians, should be a priority.
- 'Pop-up' infrastructure is a quick and cheap way of testing how segregated space will work on a road.
- Increase the number of roads that are car filtered, i.e. through roads severed. This will prevent rat-running and constrain cars to main roads.
- Signalled crossings should give priority to cyclists.
- All cycle routes need to be accessible to tricycles, child/cargo trailers, hand-cycles, mobility scooters, etc.

E3 cycle route

General:

- Route is not direct, fast or consistent.
- Use Pinhoe Road and remove parking.
- Indirect but would link existing infrastructure.

Gipsy Hill Lane:

- Proposed cyclist priority at Pinn Lane crossing is good.

Hollow Lane:

- Proposed vehicle free Ridge Park strongly supported.
- There is a lack of surveillance on this section of route.
- This route is narrow and there could be conflict with vehicles.
- This route should be traffic free.

Hill Barton Road:

- Use the existing bridge into St Lukes College.

Hill Lane:

- An unpleasant route.
- A steep route that isn't ideal for leisure cyclists.

- Possible difficulty crossing Leypark Road due to parked cars.
- Route would need to be widened to make it suitable for shared use.

Vaughan Road:

- Head clearance for cyclists is limited when going under railway.

Hamlin Lane playing fields:

- Segregated cycle lane required on access to playing fields from Georges Close.
- Consider using Whipton Lane and Chard Road or Sweetbrier Lane instead. These routes will be psychologically shorter and there is better surveillance. Consider closing Chard Lane or Sweetbrier Lane to through traffic.

Hamlin Gardens:

- Bridge into playing fields is a good proposal.
- Concern that people will park in Hamlin Gardens to use new bridge into playing fields, reducing parking for local residents and causing problems for emergency vehicles.
- Why is a new access through Hamlin gardens needed when there is already access at either end of the playing fields.
- Crime will increase in the area.
- Litter would be thrown into the river, attracting vermin/pests and impacting wildlife in the area.
- The new bridge would encourage children to play in the river, resulting in injuries.

Hamlin Lane:

- Widen footway alongside Hamlin Lane to create shared use path.

Higher Cemetery:

- Quiet nature of cemetery and dignity of those buried should be preserved.
- Conflict between cyclists and mourners, especially during burials.
- Oppose 'nature reserve' area of cemetery being used.
- Remove parking and use route along Hanover Road instead of cemetery.
- Cycling prohibited in Exeter cemeteries.
- Less privacy for Hanover Road residents that back onto cemetery.
- Cemetery has restricted opening times.
- Conflict with pedestrians.
- Unmarked graves in area proposed for cycle route.
- Increase in anti-social behaviour.
- Gravel lane behind Hanover Road in private ownership.
- If the route is fenced off from the cemetery it would be good.
- Support off road route through cemetery, e.g. to avoid busy Ladysmith Road.
- A straighter route through the northern section of cemetery would be better.
- 24 hour access to cemetery for cyclists would be welcomed.

Ladysmith Road:

- Very busy, particularly at school start/end.
- Cyclists need to be segregated along this road.
- Consider removal of on-street parking.

Sampson Lane/Pretoria Road:

- A good route choice.
- Owned by 3 or 4 different residents.
- Lane is being narrowed by one owner.
- Difficult to make accessible.
- A lot of conflict with pedestrians.

- A lot of conflict with vehicles at school start/finish.
- Alternative route – Park Road – make one-way, remove parking and/or close road to through traffic.

Clifton Street:

- Junction with Clifton Road is dangerous due to the steep hill approaching it.
- Consider one-way traffic on Clifton Street and/or removal of parking.

Clifton Road:

- Needs to be more cycle friendly.
- Route in/out of Triangle Car Park needs to be improved to make it safer for cyclists.

Barnfield Road:

- Mandatory/segregated cycle lanes required.
- Could this section of road be made one-way, providing space for wider cycle lanes.
- Changing priority at Barnfield Way/Southernhay West junction could be dangerous due to limited visibility.

Bedford square:

- A lot of conflict between pedestrians and cyclists.

E4 cycle route

General:

- A good straight route with easy gradient.
- Anything that improves sustainable transport links to the University is good.
- Proposed improvements to route look good.
- Would be good to link to the city centre, as well as the university, e.g. cycle lanes along Old Tiverton Road.

Cumberland Way:

- Why aren't segregated cycle lanes on the road proposed?
- Why have recent road alterations reduced the cycle provision, e.g. at the new roundabout.
- Side road priority should be given to cyclists at new pub.
- Toucan crossing into Exhibition Way is on the wrong side of the junction – was in better location before it was moved.

Exhibition Way:

- Agree that the road surface needs to be upgraded and vehicle speeds need to be reduced.
- Vehicle movements outside businesses at northern end of Exhibition Way need to be better managed.
- Cyclists no longer trigger traffic lights at southern end of Exhibition Way, which they did until recently.

Willowbrook/Betty's Mead:

- Steep gradient, tight corner and poor quality staggered barriers behind Willowbrook School need to be sorted out.
- Can space at edge of school be utilised so that route joins directly into toucan crossing.
- Better lighting required for night use.
- Route design at western access to Betty's Mead, from Beacon Lane, needs to be improved to make it safer for cyclists.

St Katherines Road:

- Potholes need to be filled.
- Speed humps need to be repaired.
- Cycle route past Morrisons is very inconsistent.

Prince Charles Road:

- Cyclists to have priority at side road crossings on north side of Prince Charles Road.
- Road is wide enough for segregated cycle lanes – this would be better than current/proposed shared use paths.
- Create wildflower meadow on existing grass banks.

Stoke Hill Roundabout:

- Dangerous for cyclists.
- Consider raised textured crossing points on all exits.
- Consider making Old Tiverton Road (going north) and Mount Pleasant Road (going south) one-way, to reduce the number of access points onto this roundabout.

Union Road:

- Improvements to infrastructure needed.
- Remove parking to create more space for cyclists (mostly student parking anyway).
- Support use of planted build-outs to slow vehicle speeds.
- Build-outs and planting will make it more dangerous for cyclists and won't slow vehicle speeds.
- Improvements needed at junction with Pennsylvania Road.

Prince of Wales Road:

- Improvements to infrastructure needed.
- Improved footway and cycle lanes should be provided instead of parking.

E9 cycle route

General:

- Very excited about this route – would mean I leave the car at home and cycle to the city with my son.
- Route is not direct, fast or consistent.
- Exe estuary route is more appealing than the E9 route.
- Particularly like the long off road sections.
- Create links into the Exe Estuary Trail.
- Topsham Road is a better alternative.

Old Rydon Lane:

- Cycle infrastructure needed within, and on approach to, new housing development.
- Planted chicanes will slow vehicle speeds.

Rydon Lane:

- Crossing needs to give priority to cyclists.
- Money would be better spent on lane reallocation and signalling at the Countess Wear roundabout.

Ludwell Valley Park:

- Consider using existing footbridge infrastructure.
- Change Ludwell Lane traffic movements.
- Steep gradient not suitable for cyclists.

- Conflict with current park use, e.g. grazing cattle.
- Ludwell Valley Park is a space for walkers and wildlife – adding a cycle route would change the whole ambience.
- Consider using Wendover Way instead.
- Consider using a section of Topsham Road instead.
- Low level/impact lighting would be essential.
- Culverting the stream at the ford crossing is counter to the DCC policy to re-naturalise streams.

Burnthouse Lane:

- More direct route needed through this area.

Kipling Drive:

- Ensure shared use path through middle is wide enough for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Cyclists to have priority when crossing road at either end.

Gras Lawn:

- A Zebra or Toucan crossing would be beneficial to give cyclists priority.

County Hall:

- Route through car park already heavily used by pedestrians/cyclists but regular near misses.
- Route needs to be sensitively designed to take into account listed buildings and St Leonard's Conservation Area.
- Great opportunity for additional interpretation to help people understand the history of the site.

Matford Lane:

- A route through the school grounds, to reach St Leonards Road, would be good.
- Consider a route along Matford Road and Wonford Road instead.
- Matford Road/Wonford Road junction is very unsafe for cyclists.

Claremont Grove:

- Privately owned.

St Leonards Road:

- The proposed section of road to be used is very narrow.
- Consider one-way traffic flow.
- Consider removal of parking.

Magdalen Road:

- Use Spicer Road instead of Magdalen Road.
- Spicer Road is not ideal during school drop off/pick up as vehicles block the cycle lane.
- Magdalen Road/Denmark Road is the best route as there is less gradient.
- Consider closing Magdalen Road to through traffic and allow disabled parking only.