

Magdalen Road, Exeter, Permanent Road Layout Changes

Report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Cabinet (and confirmation under the provisions of the Council's Constitution) before taking effect.

Recommendations: that the Cabinet, subject to approval of the relevant Traffic Regulation Orders by the Exeter Highways and Traffic Orders Committee:

- (a) approve the design and construction of permanent road layout changes on Magdalen Road, Exeter (plan no. 70073648-WSP-CON-100-DR-02 P07 in Appendix 1) with an estimated cost of £900,000; and
- (b) give delegated powers to the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highway Management and relevant local member, to make minor variations to the scheme as required.

1. Summary

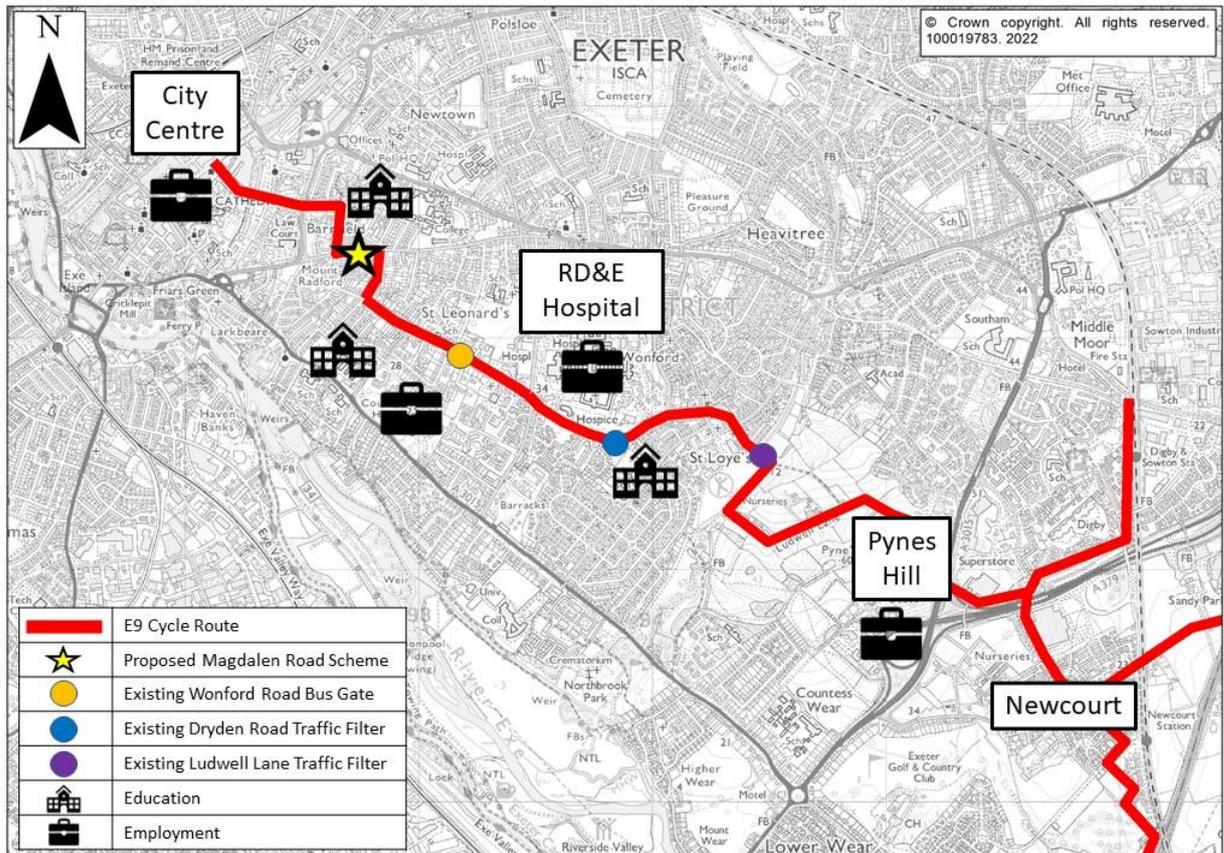
In June 2020, Magdalen Road, Exeter was temporarily made one-way westbound, with a contra-flow (eastbound) cycleway and widened footway to support social distancing. Following public consultation and monitoring of the impacts of the temporary scheme, the [Exeter Highways and Traffic Orders Committee \(HATOC\)](#) resolved to progress permanent restrictions on the road.

Subject to approval of the relevant Traffic Regulation Orders by the Exeter HATOC on 6 June 2022, approval is sought from Cabinet to deliver a scheme to make permanent the temporary arrangements.

2. Introduction

Magdalen Road forms part of the E9 strategic cycle route (see map below), which connects the Newcourt/Pynes Hill area to the Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital and Exeter city centre. It therefore links Exeter residents to education, employment and other amenities.

In June 2020, Magdalen Road was made one way (westbound – towards the city centre) to vehicles, with a contra-flow (eastbound) cycleway and widened footway to support social distancing. This complemented changes elsewhere on the E9 route, on Wonford Road, Dryden Road and Ludwell Lane, to create quieter roads for walking and cycling.



Following a public consultation on next steps, the [July 2021 HATOC](#) meeting resolved to progress permanent proposals for a one-way (westbound) restriction, contraflow cycle lane, widened footway and public realm improvements. After further consultation with local traders on the design of the scheme, [Traffic Regulation Orders \(TROs\) for the permanent changes](#) were advertised in March-April 2022. Subject to HATOC, and Cabinet approval of the scheme, these TROs will be made and sealed prior to the construction of the permanent scheme.

3. Proposal

The proposal can be seen in plan no. 70073648-WSP-CON-100-DR-02 P07 in Appendix 1 and the permanent scheme will be constructed to:

- Restrict vehicular traffic to one-way westbound on Magdalen Road, between the junctions with College Road and Denmark Road, with contra-flow (eastbound) cycling permitted;
- Introduce a restricted parking zone to ban all parking and loading outside of the following marked bays:
 - Existing limited waiting parking bays on the southern side of Magdalen Road, which will be widened as part of the scheme, resulting in the loss of two spaces;
 - Three new loading-only bays on the northern side of Magdalen Road, incorporated into the widened footway.
- Introduce a raised hump uncontrolled crossing point on Denmark Road, at its junction with Magdalen Road;
- Alter the existing zebra crossing on Magdalen Road to match the new highway alignment.

The new loading-only bays will allow loading/unloading at any time, following feedback from traders that deliveries are made at various times throughout the day.

The location of the loading bays was also reviewed in response to traders' feedback, and the proposed orientation of the echelon limited waiting parking bays has been revised to match the existing orientation.

It is also proposed to make a number of improvements to the public realm, including the introduction of planters and additional cycle parking. However, the detailed design of these aspects is subject to change, hence the location/number of these shown in the plan are purely indicative.

As it is necessary to seal the TRO for the permanent one-way restrictions before the temporary TRO expires (in June 2022), there would be an interim period during which the permanent TRO is in force but the temporary infrastructure is largely retained.

Following the implementation of the permanent scheme for Magdalen Road, it is proposed to trial an extension of the one-way system to the junction with Fairpark Road. This is in response to consultation feedback regarding traffic displacement from Magdalen Road onto Denmark Road.

4. Options/Alternatives

Alternative options for permanent changes, including reversing the direction of the one-way restriction and introducing a low-traffic street, were considered at the July 2021 HATOC meeting. However, considering consultation feedback and alignment with wider objectives, these options were rejected in favour of making the temporary arrangements permanent.

It is not considered feasible to progress an alternative option at this stage, as this would require significant additional design work, delaying the delivery of the scheme and requiring the advertisement of alternative TROs. As the temporary TRO covering the temporary changes is due to expire shortly, it would be necessary to revert to the previous (pre-COVID-19) arrangements in the interim, adversely impacting provision for pedestrians and cyclists.

5. Consultations/Technical Data

A [public consultation](#) on high-level options for Magdalen Road was held in February-March 2021, with over 1,500 responses received. Nearly 75% of resident/visitor respondents agreed with reducing through traffic in Magdalen Road, but among traders, there was a 50 : 50 split for and against reducing traffic.

Considering feedback from this consultation along with the options' alignment with other objectives, at the July HATOC meeting it was resolved to progress a scheme to make the temporary arrangements permanent, i.e. with vehicular traffic restricted to one-way westbound. It was also resolved to consult further on the design of such a scheme.

This further consultation was conducted during February 2022, with feedback invited from local traders, the St Leonards Neighbourhood Association and the resident with vehicular access from Magdalen Road. 14 responses were received, which enabled revision of the parking and loading restrictions proposed under the TROs.

According to a June 2021 traffic count at the St Leonards Road/College Road junction, approximately 3,100 vehicles per day use Magdalen Road over a 12-hour

period (07:00-19:00). This is approximately 50% of the flow recorded in July 2019, before the implementation of the temporary one-way restriction.

At the same June 2021 traffic count, 2,500 pedestrians were recorded over a 12-hour period, along with approximately 500 cycles (an increase of 8% on that recorded in 2019). Therefore, the one-way restriction has changed the balance of road users on Magdalen Road such that pedestrian/cycle flows are now approximately equal to vehicular traffic flows. During the morning and evening peaks, pedestrian and cycle flows exceed vehicular traffic.

6. Strategic Plan

The scheme is well-aligned with a range of actions within the Strategic Plan, insofar as it would prioritise walking and cycling over vehicular traffic, and therefore encourage more people to walk and cycle. By reducing traffic volumes on the E9 strategic cycle route and complementing existing measures on Wonford Road, Dryden Road and Ludwell Lane, it would likely make cycling a safe and attractive option for a wider range of people (including, for example, children).

The scheme is also designed to improve the urban environment on Magdalen Road, making it a more attractive destination for shopping and dining, and providing additional space for community activities. It would therefore help support a green economic recovery from COVID-19 for businesses on Magdalen Road.

The table below summarises how the proposals would impact achievement of relevant Strategic Plan actions according to a seven-point scale, whereby -3 represents a large negative impact and +3 represents a large positive impact.

Strategic Plan priority	Strategic Plan action	Alignment
Responding to the climate emergency	Support a green recovery from COVID-19	+2 (Moderate positive)
Responding to the climate emergency	Prioritise sustainable travel and transport	+3 (Large positive)
Responding to the climate emergency	Encourage sustainable lifestyles	+3 (Large positive)
Investing in Devon's economic recovery	Secure investment in transport infrastructure	+3 (Large positive)
Investing in Devon's economic recovery	Maintain and, where necessary, improve our highway network and improve sustainable transport options	+2 (Moderate positive)
Improving health and wellbeing	Give people greater opportunities for walking and cycling to increase their physical activity	+3 (Large positive)
Helping communities to be safe, connected and resilient	Enable a range of transport options, including public transport	+1 (Slight positive)

7. Financial Considerations

The scheme is expected to cost approximately £900,000. £500,000 of Department for Transport Active Travel Capital Funding will be used to deliver the scheme, with the balance from Devon County Council Local Transport Plan funding. The Department for Transport funding has been awarded specifically to this scheme,

hence if the scheme is not delivered, the funding would likely need to be returned to central government. This is new funding which is currently being added to the Capital Programme.

As part of the submission to the Active Travel Fund, a Value for Money assessment was undertaken on the scheme. This forecast that the scheme would generate over £3 of benefits for each £1 invested, with the vast majority of benefits being public health benefits arising from increased cycling rates.

8. Legal Considerations

The legal implications of the proposals have been considered in the preparation of this report.

The proposed changes would be introduced through Traffic Regulation Orders, the advertisement for which was conducted in March-April 2022.

The statutory consultation on the proposed one-way restriction and parking restrictions has been carried out in line with the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996. This includes a public notice placed in the local press, and statutory bodies (e.g. emergency services) being notified of the restrictions.

When making a Traffic Regulation Order, it is the County Council's responsibility to ensure that all relevant legislation is complied with. This includes Section 122 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 that states that it is the duty of a local authority, so far as practicable, to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of traffic (including pedestrians and cyclists) and provision of parking facilities.

9. Environmental Impact Considerations (Including Climate Change)

The measures proposed will improve provision for pedestrians and cyclists on a prominent street in the heart of the St Leonards neighbourhood. They will also form part of the E9 cross-city cycle route, which connects Newcourt and Pynes Hill to Exeter City Centre via Ludwell Lane, Dryden Road and Wonford Road, each of which have been made quieter for walking and cycling through the implementation of modal filters. The scheme will therefore help make walking and cycling more attractive for short distance trips, encouraging modal shift away from the car.

It is acknowledged that some car journeys will be made longer by the proposals, and there may be an increase in traffic on some adjacent roads. However, in view of the significant potential for modal shift from car to active travel, there is expected to be an overall benefit in relation to pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

During the temporary scheme, the reduced traffic levels has seen some businesses create outdoor seating areas, which indicates a perceived improved environment for people visiting the area.

Restricting traffic to one-way westbound rather than one-way eastbound will eliminate queues back from the traffic signals at the College Road/St Leonards Road. This is expected to reduce pollution within the scheme area, making Magdalen Road a more attractive destination for shopping and dining.

10. 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.

This may be achieved, for example, through completing a full Equality Impact Needs Assessment / Impact Assessment or other form of options/project management appraisal that achieves the same objective.

In progressing this particular scheme/proposal, an Impact Assessment has been prepared which has been circulated separately to Cabinet Councillors and is also available alongside this Report on the Council's website at: [Magdalen Road Changes - Impact Assessment \(devon.gov.uk\)](https://www.devon.gov.uk/Information/Reports-and-Proposals/2018-19/2018-19-01-02/Magdalen-Road-Changes-Impact-Assessment), which Councillors will need to consider for the purposes of this item.

The Impact Assessment for this scheme notes the potential for the scheme to particularly advance equality of opportunity for those without access to a car, by virtue of the scheme giving enhanced priority to pedestrians and cyclists. The potential benefits of the permanent scheme may significantly exceed those of the existing temporary scheme, as it will enable the footway widening to be formalised and the public realm to be enhanced, whereas the potential adverse impacts are similar to those of the temporary scheme, as the moving traffic restrictions will be largely the same. Furthermore, these potential adverse impacts have been reduced as far as practicable, for example by permitting westbound vehicular traffic on Magdalen Road and thus maintaining access to businesses for those reliant on the car.

11. Risk Management Considerations

This proposal has been assessed and all necessary safeguards or action have been taken/included to safeguard the Council's position.

A Stage 1 / 2 Road Safety Audit has been conducted for the proposed permanent scheme. The recommendations of this audit will be considered when refining the design.

As the proposed arrangement has been trialled for nearly 2 years, it is considered that many of the risks and potential issues are well-understood and can be mitigated through the delivery of the permanent scheme.

12. Public Health Impact

The scheme will have a positive public health impact by improving facilities for walking and cycling on a busy neighbourhood centre, thus encouraging people to walk and cycle more frequently.

As noted above, the scheme will also eliminate traffic queuing back onto Magdalen Road west from the College Road/St Leonards Road junction. This will reduce the exposure to pollution for users of Magdalen Road.

13. Summary

The proposal will implement permanent changes on Magdalen Road, including a one-way restriction for vehicular traffic, a contra-flow cycle lane and widened footway. These changes are designed to improve facilities for pedestrians and cyclists and create a more attractive urban environment, whilst maintaining vehicular access for local businesses and residents.

The proposal will build upon the County Council's encouragement of active travel in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and enable people to maintain behavioural changes in the longer-term. In doing so, it aligns well with the County Council's Climate Emergency declaration and the adopted Exeter Transport Strategy, by encouraging modal shift away from the private car towards more sustainable modes of travel.

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Electoral Divisions: St David's & Haven Banks; All in Exeter

Cabinet Member for Highway Management: Councillor Stuart Hughes

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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Background Paper	Date	File Reference
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Nil

Magdalen Road, Exeter, Permanent Road Layout Changes – Final

