

Proposed Traffic Regulation Orders for Queen Street and Iron Bridge/St David's Hill, Exeter

Report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport

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

1) Recommendation

That the Committee be asked that:

- (a) The comments of the consultation be noted;
- (b) the Traffic Regulation Orders, as modified in accordance with part 3 of this report, are made and sealed;
- (c) the footway widening on Queen Street and Iron Bridge proposals shown indicatively in Appendix 1, are approved at an estimated cost of £245,000; and
- (d) the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport be given delegated powers, in consultation with the Chair of HATOC and the local member, to make minor amendments to the scheme details.

2) Background/Introduction

Temporary changes to provide more space for pedestrians in Queen Street were installed in 2021. Iron Bridge was also made one way, except cycles, to mitigate the impact of displaced traffic on the residential community around St David's Hill. The implemented scheme was discussed and agreed at the December 2020 meeting of the Exeter Highways and Traffic Orders Committee (HATOC)¹.

The temporary scheme has reduced the dominance of vehicles in the city centre and active travel levels have increased. This aligns with the Exeter Transport Strategy 2020-2030. Improving the pedestrian corridor of *St David's station and Queen Street to the city centre* is also identified in the Exeter Transport Strategy's 5-year Implementation Plan.

Following public consultation in Autumn 2021 on the future of Queen Street, a decision to advertise permanent changes was made by the Exeter HATOC on 17 January 2022². Following further discussions with local members and the Chair of HATOC, minor changes were agreed to the scheme approved in January before the traffic regulation orders were advertised in November 2022.

However, with significant rises in construction costs over the last 12 months, it is proposed to make some further modifications to the advertised scheme.

3) Revised Proposals

The final proposed scheme includes permanent changes to make Iron Bridge one way eastbound except cycles and it is recommended that this is implemented as advertised. To avoid excavations near a sensitive structure, the no entry signs will replace the existing weight limit signage that is illuminated and located on the buildouts before the bridge. Advance warning signage of the no entry on Iron Bridge will also be provided on St David's Hill and Hele Road approaches to the St David's Hill/Hele Road mini roundabout junction.

On Queen Street, it is now proposed that the southern footway be widened by 1.3 metres to approximately 3.4 metres width. The vehicle carriageway between Northernhay Street and Paul Street will be narrowed to achieve this, with the residual carriageway width of between 6.1- 6.3 metres which is wide enough for two buses to pass.

It is also proposed that vehicles and cycles in this section of Queen Street would be under signalised control using the existing Queen Street/Paul Street junction. Utilising this existing junction would mean less delay for all users than under a shuttle signal working arrangement, particularly for westbound buses, taxis and cycles which experience long red times under the temporary shuttle arrangement. The junction of Northernhay Street and Queen Street would return to a priority junction where vehicles exiting Northernhay Street would be allowed to turn left or right out.

Pedestrian crossing points outside the RAMM and top of Paul Street are incorporated into the signals. Following feedback from the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), the Paul Street crossing would be a single stage for pedestrians, instead of the previously proposed pedestrian zebra over the cycle lane and signals crossing the vehicle carriageway. The Toucan crossing by Northernhay Gate will be a standalone toucan crossing, as it was before the temporary scheme.

The revised scheme does not include cycle lanes on the 80-metre section of Queen Street between Northernhay Street and Paul Street. Instead, eastbound cycles will mix with all traffic whereas westbound would be for cycle, bus and taxi only. In the westbound direction the mixing of cycles with vehicles with daily flows of less than 1,000 vehicles would be fully compliant with Local Transport Note (LTN) 1/20 Cycle infrastructure design guidance. Eastbound cycles would have to mix with traffic, which although not improved by the proposal would be consistent with the provision along 300 metres of Queen Street from the Clock Tower.

After further consideration, it is recommended that the restrictions prohibiting northbound vehicles on Paul Street, between the Guildhall Car Park and Queen Street, and ahead only out of Upper Paul Street are modified to allow cycles. Cycles will be the only vehicle allowed to enter Queen Street from Paul Street and Upper Paul Street therefore allowing greater permeability for cyclists within the city centre.

A summary of the changes in the revised scheme compared to the January 2022 approved proposal are shown in the table below.

	Previous proposal	Revised Scheme
Footway width	4.0 metres	3.4 metres
Cycle provision	Cycle lanes	With traffic
Carriageway width	5.7 metres	6.3 metres
Bus and Taxi	Two way under shuttle	Two-way can pass in carriageway
Vehicle egress from Northernhay Street	Signalised - left out only	Priority - Left and right out

In addition to the changes to access, it is proposed to change the eastern loading bay at the front of Exeter Central Station to a taxi bay. The loss of the eastern loading would be partially mitigated by provision of a new loading bay on the narrow section of Queen Street which will help serve those businesses on this stretch of Queen Street without rear access. Following representation from Exeter College it is recommended to modify the traffic order and relocate the loading bay 10 metres south, in front of Big Bakes and part of Brodys, so as to avoid the narrowest part of the footway by the Music and Performing Arts Centre and glass frontage of Brody's.

It is proposed to convert the existing taxi rank on the railway bridge to additional disabled parking and convert the electric vehicle recharging point to an additional car club space. It is recommended that these changes are implemented as advertised.

4) Technical Data

Traffic surveys on Queen Street from before the scheme (October 2019) recorded approximately 9,000 pedestrian movements, 6,500 two-way vehicles, and 700 two-way cycle movements between 07:00-19:00.

The impact of the temporary changes has been monitored through manual traffic counts in the city centre, which found that between 07:00-19:00:

- Queen Street traffic flows have reduced on average by 35%, with revised flows ranging from 3,600 by the RAMM to 5,100 by the Clock Tower.
- Iron Bridge traffic flows have reduced by 30% (from 3,700 to 2,600) and St David's Hill flows have reduced on average by 15%, ranging from a 30% decrease at Iron Bridge end to a 5% increase at the Hele Road junction.
- Traffic flows have increased by 7% on Bonhay Road (10,600 to 11,000), but there is no change in traffic flows on New North Road east of Clock Tower.
- Cycle flows on Queen Street have increased by 25% (from 680 to 850) and more than doubled on St David's Hill (from 50 to 130).

The Clock Tower Roundabout has been a collision cluster site over recent years. The scheme has reduced traffic entering the Clock Tower roundabout and the 2021 collision

data and provisional 2022 data shows that there have not been any recorded injury collisions at this junction since the temporary scheme was introduced.

Average annual number of personal injury collisions		
Location	Before (2015-2019)	After (2021-2022)
Clock Tower Roundabout	2.0	0.0
Queen Street	2.6	2.5

Queen Street is a busy 20mph city centre street and access considerations include:

- Queen Street has a number of bus services including the Stagecoach H/University service (linking rail stations to the University of Exeter, City Centre and the RD&E Hospital), 359, 360 and 366 bus services.
- Taxi interchange at Exeter Central Station and Queen Street is the main route for taxis between Exeter St David's Station and the city centre.
- Queen Street is used by fire service appliances travelling to and from Danes Castle Station.
- On-street access for loading and deliveries is required for a number of businesses on Queen Street.
- Queen Street is the only vehicular access for residents of Northernhay Street.
- East of Paul Street junction, Queen Street South is semi-pedestrianised, with access only permitted for buses, loading and taxis.
- Approximately 1,000 car park spaces are located off either Queen Street (including Isca Car Park (295 spaces), Central Station Car Park (70) and Northernhay Street (30)), or Paul Street (Guildhall (397) and Harlequins (91)).

5) Consultations/Representations

Consultation on the temporary proposals was undertaken in Autumn 2020. Traders and businesses contacted about the temporary changes were predominantly in favour of a scheme. Two thirds of public respondents also favoured a scheme, with many respondents wanting to see pedestrians and cyclists be given more priority and space on Queen Street in the future. The impact on St David's Hill was the most raised concern and a hybrid scheme with the smallest impact on that area was progressed.

Public Consultation on a permanent change was undertaken from 15 September to 13 October 2021. Approximately 600 public responses were received with a broadly 50:50 split in favour and against. Key stakeholders including InExeter (BID), Exeter City Council and Exeter College stated strong support for permanent changes. Some stakeholders did however want the scheme to be more ambitious in reducing traffic on Queen Street and segregating cyclists. Concern was however raised by St David's Primary School about the impact of the scheme on St David's Hill. Traders on this section of Queen Street also

asked for a loading bay. A summary of the consultation responses is provided with the January 2022 HATOC report².

Following subsequent design changes, further local consultation on a revised scheme was undertaken in October and November 2022 with letters sent out to key stakeholders and approximately 100 properties affected by changes to the layout on Queen Street and, Northernhay Street. A meeting was also held with the RNIB to discuss the revised layout and confirm that concerns around crossing types in the January 2022 proposal has been resolved in the proposed scheme.

Exeter College raised concerns about a loading bay reducing the benefit for pedestrians and the proximity of the loading bay to the area where the footways are narrowest adjacent to the black railings next to the Music and Performing Arts Centre. Moving the loading bay out into the carriageway would mean cycles would be obstructed and therefore it is proposed to move the loading bay south in front of Big Bakes and partly in front of Brody's.

The Exeter Cycling Campaign stated the proposed changes would reverse the benefits of the temporary scheme and do not support the proposed scheme. In Exeter agreed the proposals were a pragmatic solution to lock in the trial and wished to see some planting to be included in a final scheme. Exeter City Council were supportive of the permanent scheme, but highlighted some potential negative impacts about increased queuing exiting the Guildhall car park and air quality with traffic queuing by the RAMM instead of more open area around Central Station. Stagecoach were also content with the proposed scheme.

The Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) for the changes were advertised from the 3rd until the 24th November 2022. Overall 6 respondents provided comments to the TROs. A summary of comments received and council response is provided in Appendix 2 and main points summarised below:

- Social distancing no longer necessary;
- Longer journey times;
- Reduced vehicular route options and displaces traffic onto other routes;
- Drivers ignoring no entry on Iron Bridge;
- Preference for temporary scheme layout to be made permanent;
- Support for scheme, but that the proposals should go further.

There also remained a desire from some stakeholders responding to the local and TRO consultation for a comprehensive scheme along the length of Queen Street, although there was acknowledgement of the challenges and viability of this given rising material and construction costs.

Approved redevelopment of the Harlequins Centre includes significant changes to Paul Street. A suitable tie in of the Queen Street County-promoted scheme with the developer Paul Street proposals have been discussed to ensure both schemes are compatible.

6) Strategic Plan

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/strategic-plan>

The scheme is well-aligned with several actions within the Strategic Plan. It creates a more attractive environment to support the city centre economy and improves road safety.

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.	Prioritise sustainable travel and transport.	+3 Large Positive
Investing in Devon's economic recovery.	Secure investment in travel infrastructure, improving travel choices and road safety.	+2 Moderate positive
Improving health and wellbeing.	Give people greater opportunities for walking and cycling to increase their physical activity.	+2 Moderate Positive
Helping communities to be safe, connected and resilient.	Enable a range of Transport options, to improve access to services and jobs.	+1 Moderate Positive

7) Financial Considerations

As a consequence of rising materials and civils works costs, the cost of the original proposal brought to January 2022 Exeter HATOC has increased above the approved budget.

This revised proposal represents a cheaper scheme. The 3.4m width footway would save costs, while still delivering a substantially improved environment for pedestrians compared to the existing situation. Using the existing signals would also avoid the need for new signal heads, a new electrical connection between each end of the shuttle and changes to surfacing. The revised proposal would also take less time to construct, with less programme risk and associated disruption for users of Queen Street.

The cost of the proposals is £245,000. This would be fully funded from DCC Local Transport Plan budget and is identified in the approved capital programme.

8) Legal Considerations

The proposed changes would be introduced through Traffic Regulation Orders. The statutory consultation on the proposed orders has been carried out in line with the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996. This includes a public notice having been placed in the local press and statutory bodies (e.g. emergency services) are 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 and provision of parking facilities. This includes provisions for pedestrians and cyclists. After reviewing the comments submitted during the consultation and the data collected, it is considered the scheme is acceptable.

The 18 month Temporary Traffic Regulation Order covering the temporary arrangements has been extended by the Secretary of State to run until February 2023. Approval of the proposal would enable the traffic restrictions to be made permanent before expiration of the temporary order.

9) Environmental Impact Considerations (Including Climate Change)

Sustainable travel enhancements achieved by reducing vehicle capacity are identified in the Exeter Transport Strategy 2020-2030 as one of the most effective means of reducing carbon emissions from transport. The scheme is therefore expected to have a large positive environmental impact.

The temporary measures have reduced the volumes of vehicles and supported improved facilities for pedestrians and cyclists on Queen Street with increased cycles recorded since the temporary scheme. Access for buses and taxis in Queen Street has also been retained, ensuring the proposals support sustainable travel options.

Some traffic has been displaced onto other roads and some journeys being made longer. Typically, traffic has rerouted from the city centre onto routes such as Bonhay Road (A377) which are more appropriate networks for cross-city traffic movements.

10) Equality Considerations

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has also been undertaken for the proposed scheme. This identified that overall, the proposals are expected to advance equality of opportunity and particularly noting benefits to the wide ranging ages of people using Queen Street and in the city centre. The Equality Impact Assessment will be published on the DCC webpages at <https://www.devon.gov.uk/impact/published>.

Through feedback on the temporary scheme and consultation on the proposed scheme, it highlighted that people with mobility impairments wanted the crossing outside RAMM to be retained, and the RNIB requested the Paul Street crossing be a single stage crossing. These are both reflected in the proposed scheme.

The proposals also retain two-way bus, cycle and taxi access to Queen Street, therefore improving the situation for people who do not have access to a car, which may include young people, elderly people or people with disabilities.

11) Risk Management Considerations

A form of temporary changes has been in place for 18 months, and the period of most significant disruption that occurs immediately after any change will have already taken place, with traffic flows having largely settled down.

A road safety audit has been undertaken for the proposed scheme and recommendations will be addressed through the detailed design.

The Iron Bridge is subject to a weight restriction. The traffic monitoring suggests that not only have vehicle volumes fallen, but that the proportion of larger vehicles has reduced by a greater extent than the traffic flow reduction providing benefit to a sensitive structure.

12) Reasons for Recommendations

The proposal supports the County Council's encouragement of active travel and aims to reduce the dominance of vehicles in the city centre, both of which are targets of the adopted Exeter Transport Strategy 2020-2030.

The scheme provides a balanced approach of improving the environment on Queen Street, while limiting the impact on St David's Hill and maintaining access for sustainable modes.

Meg Booth,
Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport

Electoral Division: St David's & Haven Banks

Local Government Act 1972: List of background papers

¹ [Exeter Highways and Traffic Orders Committee on Monday, 14th December 2020](#)

² [Exeter Highways and Traffic Orders Committee on Monday, 17th January, 2022](#)

Equalities Impact Assessment – published on the DCC webpages at
<https://www.devon.gov.uk/impact/published>

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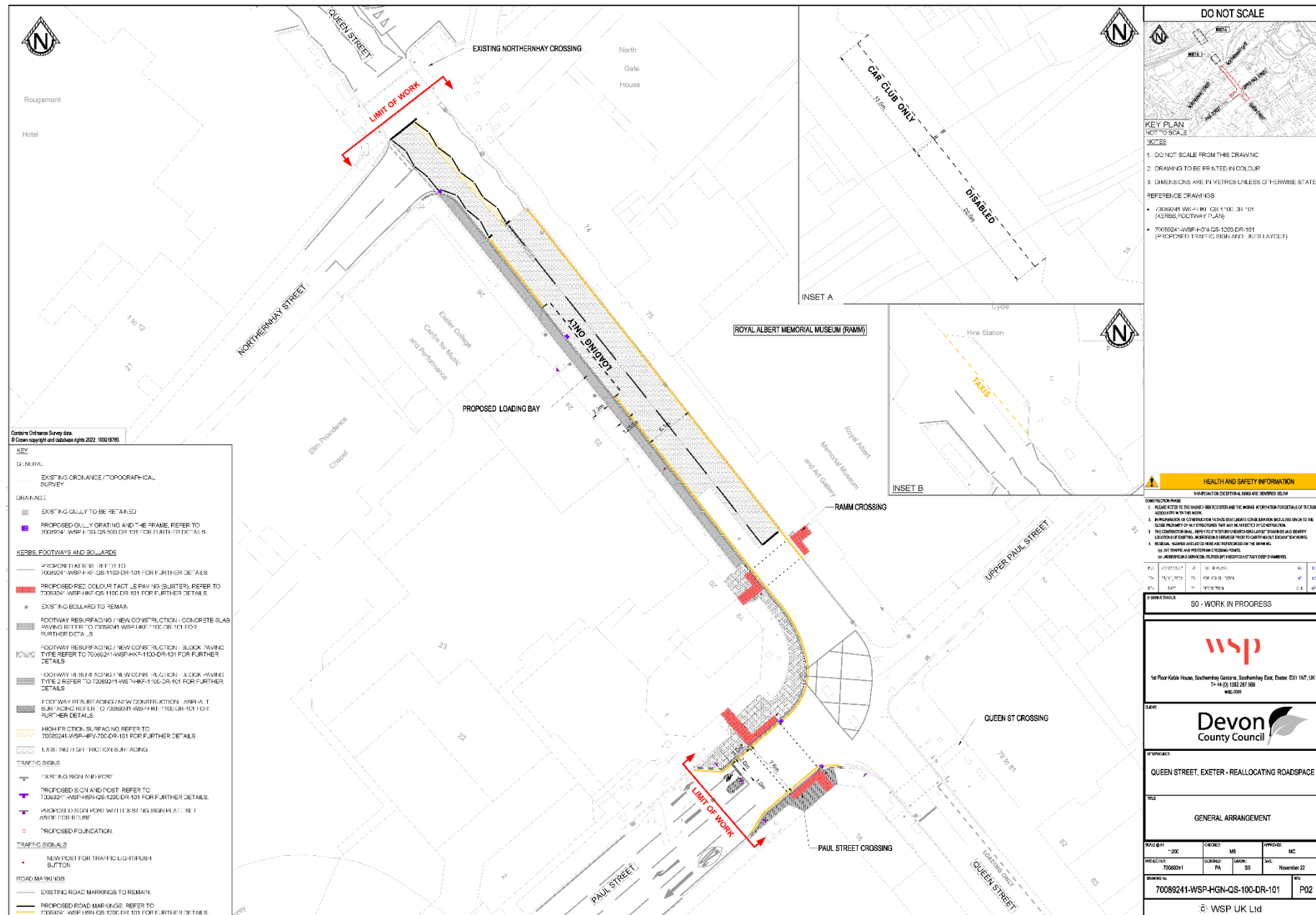
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sc/cr/Queen Street and Iron Bridge St David's Hill Exeter

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Appendix 1 – Scheme Plan



Appendix 2 – Summary of TRO comments

Submissions received for proposed moving & waiting restrictions

Devon County Council (Paul Street, Exeter) (Prohibition of Motor Vehicles) Order - ENV ID 5977

Devon County Council (Queen Street, Exeter) (Waiting Restrictions) Amendment Order - ENV ID 5978

Devon County Council (Queen Street South, Paul Street, Upper Paul Street, Northernhay Street & Iron Bridge, Exeter) (Traffic Regulation) Amendment Order - ENV ID 6023

Comments	DCC Response
Respondent 1 - Resident of St David's Hill, Exeter	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Respondent objects to the one way systems and that these are no longer necessary as we are no longer social distancing.	Objection noted. Noted that social distancing is no longer government advice. However, this scheme has a number of wider benefits and following the trial the temporary scheme it is now being proposed to be made permanent.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">It will increase travel times for the residents of St Davids Hill to get to North Street.The extra journey time will cause more pollution from car emissions which in turn contributes to global warming.	Noted that some journeys by car will be longer, although additional journey length is modest. It is considered that the benefits of increased active travel and road safety outweigh this.
Respondent 2 – Resident of Topsham	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Respondent feels that this will not reduce use of vehicles but just displace traffic onto other already busy routes – for instance Paris Street and New North Road.	Noted that some journeys by car will be longer, although additional journey length is modest. It is considered that the benefits of increased active travel and road safety outweigh this.
Respondent 3 – Business Owner, South Street	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Respondent supports the proposal.	Support Noted.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Respondent feels that traffic should be banned from going down Paul Street completely. Pedestrians rarely look when crossing the road at the crossing near the junction with Queen Street and it is dangerous for pedestrians, they should have right of way.	Noted, but this is outside the scope of this scheme. Within this scheme it is proposed that the traffic signals at Paul/Queen Street will be utilised to improve visibility from drivers at the eastbound stop line to pedestrians crossing Paul Street.

Respondent 4 – Resident of Iron Bridge, Exeter	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respondent supports the one way proposal as it reduces harmful fumes from vehicles and improves air quality. 	Support noted.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respondent feels that the one way system is not being adhered to by motorists and that enforcement is required. 	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>Additional sign illumination requirements with the permanent change will increase prominence of the no entry signs. We can explore enforcement here if we experience problems once the scheme is made permanent.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respondent suggests camera enforcement. 	The council is currently investigating Moving Traffic Enforcement so this is something that could be considered in the future if it were felt necessary.
Respondent 5 – Chairman of Exeter Civic Society	
<p>Comments on 5977 (Prohibition of Vehicles on Paul Street)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respondent supports the one way proposal, the pavement widening and introduction of a cycle lane. 	Support noted.
<p>Comments on 5978 (Changes to Waiting Restrictions)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respondent objects to the proposal to return two way traffic into Queen Street between Paul Street & Northernhay Place. 	Objection noted.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respondent would like the temporary restrictions to be made permanent. 	Noted. The rationale for the revised scheme has been based on cost, design iteration following safety audits and reducing delay to users.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respondent objects to the loading bay proposed opposite the museum as they feel that other loading bays in Queen Street are sufficient for all businesses of Queen Street. 	Objection Noted. The loading bay was proposed in response to requests from local traders.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respondent suggests having a loading bay outside Harlequins on Paul Street instead. 	Noted. There is planning consent granted for the new development that would include loading here.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respondent would like the pavements on both sides to be widened, though they admit that widening the granite pavement will be difficult. 	Noted. Insufficient scheme budget to widen footway on both sides. The priority is to widen narrower footway on south.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respondent suggests amending the pedestrian crossing near Paul Street to make it a wide raised platform to assist pedestrians. 	Noted, the crossing is planned to be narrowed from to assist pedestrians.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respondent suggests that a single lane for traffic with two 1.5 metre cycle lanes on Queen Street would be preferable. 	Noted. The rationale for the revised scheme has been based on cost, design iteration following safety audits and reducing delay to users.
<p>Comments on 6023 (One Way on Iron Bridge and Compulsory Turns along Queen Street)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respondent supports the proposals. Respondent does not think Hackney Carriages should be allowed to travel along Queen Street, they should have to use the same routes as other normal traffic. 	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted. Access has been retained for taxis throughout the temporary scheme and there is no proposal to restrict this.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respondent suggests that the pavements on the Iron Bridge should be widened or a cycle contraflow lane be introduced. 	Not part of current scheme due to cost. Can however be explored alongside future maintenance if one way except cycles is made permanent.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respondent says that they have heard that drivers are sometimes ignoring the one way system here, for the one way system to work, improvements to the road layout are required. 	Comment noted. Additional sign illumination requirements with the permanent change will increase prominence of the no entry signs. We can explore enforcement here if we experience problems once the scheme is made permanent.
<p>Respondent 6 – Resident of Dinham Mews, Exeter</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respondent objects to making the Iron Bridge one way for vehicles. As a local resident, the respondents journey time is now increased. 	Noted that some journeys by car will be longer, although additional journey length is modest and it is considered that the benefits with increased active travel and road safety outweigh this.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vehicles do not always see advance signage at the St Davids Hill roundabout so when they find they cannot pass over the iron bridge they hold up traffic by turning in the road. 	The proposed scheme includes advance warning signage and as drivers become familiar with new layout instances of this expected to reduce.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respondent would like for the one way restriction on Richmond Road to be reversed to aid drivers who are residents in Dinham Road, Mount Dinham and Dinham Crescent. 	Comment Noted. It is considered that Hele Road is the more appropriate route for the additional traffic.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respondent is concerned of the effects of future works to the iron bridge should it need repairing, it may become out of use completely during the works. 	<p>Comment noted. Any maintenance/roadworks can reduce availability of routes during temporary works.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This proposal makes travelling through the city centre less flexible. 	<p>Noted that less access/egress routes by private vehicle. However, reduced traffic volumes improve safety and attractiveness of city centre routes for other travel modes, such as walking and cycling.</p>