

South Street, Exeter: Observations of Exeter Cycling Campaign

The Exeter Cycling Campaign welcomes additional provision for people to cycle or walk in the city. We have reviewed the [proposed contra-flow advisory cycle lane on South Street](#) and are grateful for the opportunity to comment on these.

The link between the quay and the city centre / cathedral is critical for a better connected and active city. This route and the South Street as a 'place' do not currently function well.

We see that the changes being proposed fall short of the interventions envisaged in the widely-consulted vision laid out in the [Lhc Design Report for Exeter City Council](#) in 2018.

We note that the consultation suggests that this proposed contra-flow advisory cycle path is a modest scheme and that longer-term changes to Market Street/Combe Street are planned. This is understood. However, we have concerns that this proposal will achieve limited benefit for enabling people to cycle up South Street because the difficult crossing of Market Street and the link between Coombe Street and Market Street haven't been properly addressed. Furthermore, the design of the on-road advisory contra-flow cycle lane will be of limited use for people using non-standard bikes or trailers and will still be seen as too dangerous by many bike users. In addition, the design of the north end of South Street is poor and looks designed to encourage people to cycle on the pavement.



The LHC Design report recognises that South Street is a “highway dominated space used as a vehicular cut-through across city centre”. One of the first interventions recommended by LHC Design, and discussed with DCC, was to “restrict traffic between core daytime hours”. Tackling traffic volume first would make this advisory contra-flow cycle lane more attractive and should be the first step in this scheme. We assume that the recent changes on Queen Street / Iron Bridge are contributing to this traffic reduction on South Street but would like to see more ambition for reducing car-dominance on this street..



As with all proposals since Jul'20 we would ask DCC to confirm that this proposal has been assessed using the current design standard tools specified in LTN 1/20 and meets minimum requirements. Specifically, that the design scores over 70% using the Cycling Level of Service (CLoS) tool and that there are no red-scored turning movements using the Junction Assessment tools (JAT) (LTN 1/20 (para 1.1.2 and appendices A & B)). We fear that this temporary solution, which appears to fall short of the LTN 1/20 design standards, may undermine DCC's efforts to secure future central government funding.

The Campaign welcomes measures to create safe space for people to cycle on South Street. We recognise that to develop a cycle network it is sometimes necessary to implement solutions that don't initially link up well with the rest of the cycle network and that this incremental approach has worked with some success in Exeter in the past. However our conclusion is that this current South Street proposal requires some further work before implementation. We would suggest that the design needs further attention for example:

1. Consider day time reduction / prohibition of private car use on South Street (*this measure was described as 'supported in principle by DCC' in the LHC Design and DCC meeting summarised in para 3.3 of LHC Design report*)
2. Tackle the difficult crossing across *all* of Market Street (consider building a raised zebra/tiger crossing across the whole road so that it is safe and links South Street to the quay).
3. Widen the advisory cycle path on South Street to meet current design standards.
4. Place the cycle path the other side of the parked cars
5. Narrow the road and junction between Coombe Street and Market Street (*one of the first interventions proposed in para 6.1 of LHC Design report*)
6. Provide a safe link to Coombe Street (it is our view that this needs to be done at the same time as South Street)
7. Consider removal of (some) car-parking spaces on South Street

Comments on the specific designs proposed by DCC

The Campaign believes that more thought is needed to the South Street design, and the way it connects up to the quay.

Looking at the proposed South Street advisory contra-flow lane we observe that:

1. **Cycle path width:** It's proposed width (1m) appears to be narrower than "Absolute minimum" width laid out in the LTN 1/20 design standards.

Table 5-2: Cycle lane and track widths

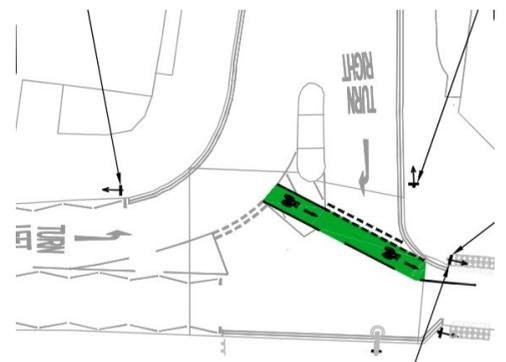
Cycle Route Type	Direction	Peak hour cycle flow (either one way or two-way depending on cycle route type)	Desirable minimum width* (m)	Absolute minimum at constraints (m)
Protected space for cycling (including light segregation, stepped cycle track, kerbed cycle track)	1 way	<200	2.0	1.5
		200-800	2.2	2.0
		>800	2.5	2.0
	2 way	<300	3.0	2.0
		>300-1000	3.0	2.5
		>1000	4.0	3.0
Cycle lane	1 way	All – cyclists able to use carriageway to overtake	2.0	1.5

*based on a saturation flow of 1 cyclist per second per metre of space. For user comfort a lower density is generally desirable.

The experience of having a (mandatory) cycling contraflow with a road heavily used by buses in Paris Street is not encouraging. Buses regularly cross over the mandatory cycle lane, rendering this path unusable / dangerous. We fear this will also be the case with this South Street proposal.



- Market Street crossing:** The junction across Market Street to join South Street has poor legibility, provides little protection for people cycling from the quay and requires a sharp turn onto the green-painted crossing whilst maneuvering the turn across Market Street. This junction fails the 'is it safe for a 12 year old' test and probably amounts to a red-fail turn under the Junction Assessment tool (JAT). This weak link means any improvement along South Street will be of limited value and use.



Consider removing the access from Market Street onto South Street. Egress from Market Street could be through Fore Street or Mary Arches Street.

If the access from Market Street to South Street is retained then the right turn onto South Street needs better protection for people walking and cycling. The LHC Design proposal was for a zebra crossing here. Alternatively, a raised crossing, like that used at the north end of Queen Street could be used.

- Coombe Street Link:** Travelling in a northerly direction along South Street from Coombe Street people cycling are exposed to

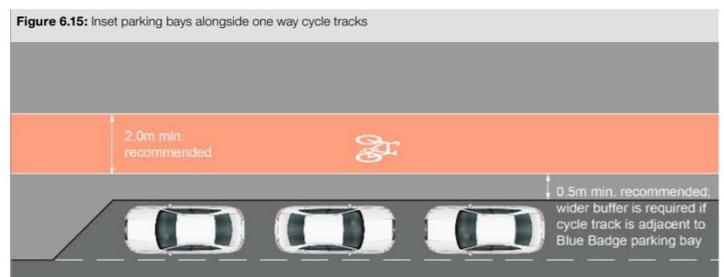


multiple conflicting movements at the junction with Market Street in very quick succession, limiting their opportunity to observe and anticipate hazards. People cycling are offered no physical protection or separation approaching or half-way through the Market Street crossing and their route through the junction requires a difficult near-right-angle turn.

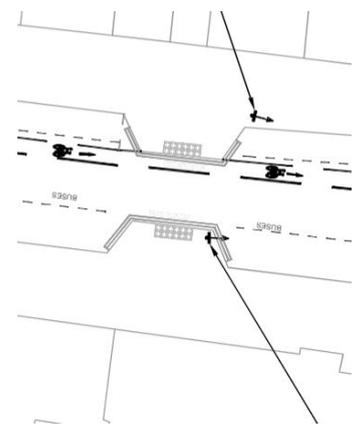
We recognise that changes to Coombe Street-to-Market street have been trailed as a future intervention. The link from Coombe Street to South Street is critical for joining up the quay to the city centre. This link is currently poor -with some green paint between Coombe Street and the pelican crossing but nothing thereafter.

Without improving this link we are concerned that any improvement along South Street will be of limited value.

4. **Positioning of cycle path:** The proposal misses the opportunity to create a safe cycle path. This should be placed on the inside of the parked cars rather than outside. This would provide some protection from both the moving traffic along South Street and cars moving into and out of parking spaces. Moreover with the proposed design, coaches moving off from the East side of the road would risk swinging into the path of people cycling on the cycle lane, as they currently do on Paris Street (para 6.2.40 of LTN 1/20)



5. **Chicanes:** the drawings in the proposal do not show measurements. It is therefore difficult to assess whether the narrowing of the road for the pedestrians build-outs are creating a dangerous pinch-point for people cycling. We would seek reassurance that the widths of these pinch points has been assessed against design standards (para 7.2.9 & 7.2.10 of LTN 1/20)



7.2.9 Chicanes and pinch-points should be designed in such a way that cyclists are neither squeezed nor intimidated by motor vehicles trying to overtake. The preferred option is to provide a bypass or alternatively sufficient lane width (more than 3.9m) so that the cyclist can remain in the secondary position and be overtaken safely. Where the lane or cycle bypass is bounded by fixed objects such as full height kerbs, the additional widths given in Table 5-3 should be provided.

7.2.10 When width is insufficient for a bypass, the carriageway width is restricted to prevent overtaking. This will not be desirable over long lengths unless motor traffic volumes are also very low, as cyclists will feel intimidated by vehicles waiting to overtake. Gaps between kerbs (or kerb and solid white centre line) should be a maximum of 3.2m. As noted above, widths between 3.2m and 3.9m may encourage close overtaking by motor traffic at pinch points and should not be used.



6. **Junction at north end of South Street:** The design of the junction of South Street with Fore St/High St is poor. To expect people cycling to move from the road to the pavement and back to the road shows a poor understanding of desire lines, perceptions of safety and human behaviour. This junction needs more attention.