

Devon County Council is being urged to be bold this week, as they respond to the government's latest travel guidance. The Exeter Cycling Campaign welcomes the government's message, which is prompting councils across the country to deliver new, temporary infrastructure. These radical changes are needed to allow social-distancing for those cycling or walking to work, schools and public places.

What are the covid-safe initiatives that Devon County Council is being urged to deliver quickly? The idea is to help people feel safe enough to choose active travel. This means paths that protect those cycling from cars, lower speed limits, and pedestrian- and cycle-only zones. They also include cutting out rat-runs to create Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, 'safe school' areas and changes to junctions.

What does this mean for Exeter?

We must prioritise routes where people can't keep socially-distant. So schools, colleges, hospitals and shopping streets are the first places to give back more space to people. We have used our city-wide supporters to crowd-source some recommendations. A full list of our proposals is available [here](#), with a glimpse of them below:

- Bollard protection for people walking and cycling, plus car parking removal on **Barrack Road / Polsloe Road/ Mt Pleasant Rd**. This is a vital route for people cycling across the city, and for NHS workers getting to the RD&E.
- Planters or bollards to filter out rat-running in the **Heavitree residential area**.
- Bollard protection for people walking and cycling, plus car parking removal in **Heavitree Road**. This is both a heavy footfall retail area and a key route into town.
- A short stretch of bollard protection on **Topsham Road**, where the shared path is too narrow to socially distance. This is on the north side of Topsham Rd between Ludwell Valley and Southbrook Rd (especially opposite School Lane).
- Filtering out motor traffic on **Fore Street**, making the full width available to people walking or cycling.

Glimpsing a new future

The government has realised that the UK's streets are too narrow for people cycling and walking at a safe distance. Many won't want to use public transport for a while, and we don't have the space for everyone to jump in their cars. The Secretary of State for Transport, Grant Shapps, said:

"We recognise this moment for what it is: a once in a generation opportunity to deliver a lasting transformative change in how we make short journeys in our towns and cities."

The government's new approach is welcome, and it recognises the mood for change that's sweeping the country. We also support their detailed guidance to local authorities. It states that the government "**expects local authorities to make significant changes to their road layouts to give more space to cyclists and pedestrians**". Safe, protected paths must be part of this.

Campaigners urge council to be bold with Covid-19 safe roads



Exeter Beautician Sarah said "Quieter streets have been great. I've been able to start cycling in the city with my children. I'd love to have a safe cycle path along Alphington Rd so I don't have use my car so much"



Mike Walton from the Exeter Cycling Campaign says:

"During the lockdown we've glimpsed a new future for Exeter. A future where our children can travel safely across the city, where the air is clean and where the car doesn't dominate local neighbourhoods. Many people, many families, want to cycle and will do so if it feels safe. Just imagine how different Exeter would be if most of our short journeys were 'people powered'.

We're heartened to hear the government tell local authorities to get things done. It provides the mandate to Devon County Council to urgently lock in safe, convenient and connected routes for people to walk and cycle."

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About the Exeter Cycling Campaign

Exeter Cycling Campaign is a small charity, run by volunteers. We want to see cycling become an everyday choice for people of every age and ability on safe, direct, connected and convenient paths.

EXETER CYCLING CAMPAIGN

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