



Transport Planning,
Devon County Council,
County Hall,
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Exeter, EX2 4QD.
By Email: transportplanning@devon.gov.uk

31 October 2025

Dear DCC Transport Team.

Barnfield Road Consultation October 2025

The Society is very disappointed with the level of information provided with this consultation, and your statement for Phase 1 '***The plans for Princesshay to Western Way are in detailed design stage and therefore there is limited scope for change without starting the project again. However, we would like to understand support and views for the proposed scheme.***

At the end of the consultation webpage it is stated '*Following this consultation, all results and feedback will be analysed and taken into account when moving towards the next stage of design. **For Phase 1 (Princesshay to Western Way) this will mean finalising the design to move towards construction.***

If you have made up your minds about these proposals then this consultation is a sham, despite you acknowledging under the heading **Previous Engagement**: '*Previously, we have reached out to residents and businesses in the immediate area to try and understand their views on the type of scheme we should consider. **The main feedback we received was that Barnfield Road has too much vehicular traffic on it to make some aspects of the scheme feasible, without causing major disruption and inconvenience, or even increasing congestion elsewhere in the city.***' You have chosen to proceed with a proposal without addressing the concerns of the previous engagement with local people who know the area best.

You state that further analysis will be undertaken after the revised access arrangements to the Princesshay car parks has been implemented by Exeter City Council, but that should have been done before this consultation to inform the public about the change in vehicle numbers rather than to make the judgement that '*about 30% of the Barnfield Road traffic accesses the car parks*'. You should therefore re-consult once you have data regarding vehicle numbers accessing and leaving the Southernhay area via the two existing routes to demonstrate that these proposals will result in benefits rather than congestion elsewhere.

The consultation webpage states:

- This will improve links between the E3 & E9 cycle routes and Princesshay. We agree with this.
- This will improve links between communities and workplaces and leisure. We accept that some people may benefit but a great many people employed in the area will not live locally, so if they use this route it may well be by car or public transport. Secondly, if our assertion is correct that many people will arrive by car, then they will be penalised by having to queue to leave the area via Magdalen Road.
- It is stated that the changes will give visitors a better 'first impression', but in the future visitors are unlikely to arrive in Southernhay because there is limited timed car parking. Future visitors are likely to be local people that have business and shopping needs that can be accommodated with the short stay parking period, or arrive via bicycle.

Whilst the Society is supportive of measures to improve traffic flows across the city, and to improve pedestrian and cycling measures, it is important that those measures do not result in adverse traffic conditions that may add to congestion. Our concern with these proposals are that the only exit for traffic from the Southernhay area will be via the junction with Magdalen Road – a route that is already congested at peak afternoon travel times. As an example, the author of this letter took 25 minutes to travel from the South Street junction to the Western Way/Barnfield Road junction on Wednesday 29 October. He has experienced similar congestion at this time of day so it is not surprising that traffic currently cuts through Southernhay to bypass this section of Western Way.

If your proposals are to partly alleviate this scenario it is worth reflecting that this traffic is aiming to get to the Paris Street roundabout and onward journeys from there east, west or northwards. But the fundamental problem for this traffic is that the Paris Street roundabout cannot cope with the level of evening peak time traffic resulting in traffic backing up to Magdalen Road. If the traffic that cuts through Southernhay is then forced to use the Magdalen Road/Western Way route there will be more traffic queuing on this route, probably resulting in traffic extending back to the South Street junction. **The consultation has failed to consider the consequences of changes to Barnfield Road and the highway network other than the pleasantness of making Barnfield Road a quieter road.**

In addition, the daytime traffic that currently uses Southernhay to access the two Princesshay car parks will in the future have to access these via Western Way and Paris Street, adding more vehicles to that route for those travelling from the west of Exeter. Whilst it is desirable to reduce the level of traffic in the Southernhay area, especially that which cuts through at peak times, it strikes us that the problem of traffic congestion in this area will only be solved through changes at Paris Street roundabout to improve the flow of traffic. **We suggest that this should be the transport teams' main priority rather than this proposal.**

It may also be worth considering the implications of any accident or other blockage in the lower part of Southernhay East – how will traffic exit the area in the event of such an incident if the only way out of what will be a cul-de-sac is blocked?

Phase 1. Barnfield Road – Princesshay to Western Way.

We object to this proposal because we believe that it is not necessary to make Barnfield Road one-way to improve cycling and walking. The road is clearly wide enough to ensure the provision of improved 1.5m wide cycle lanes (minimum recommended by LTN 1/20). Whilst it is appreciated that a 2.0m cycle lane is better than 1.5m, LTN1/20 is clear that cycle lanes should be consistent. The current proposals shows 1.5m wide cycle lanes on the route between Southernhay East and West, but on the route between Western Way and Denmark Road there is no cycle lane or separation from local traffic. So why the need for a 2.0m wide cycle lane?

Barnfield Road has a very narrow pavement on the Barnfield Crescent side, and observation shows that users of the path will sometimes step off the path in the path of cyclists. Section BB shows that the total width of this length of road between the pavement kerbs on the Theatre side to the wall on the Barnfield Road side is about 9.0m offering more width than the section of road between Southernhay East and West at 8.0m – section AA, but you are happy to propose cycle lanes and two-way traffic there.

Two way traffic, rather than one-way can be achieved by:-

- Removing the pavement on the north side and replacing it with a narrow buffer (maximum 0.5m?) to protect cyclists from colliding with the side wall. Some adjustments may be needed to ensure adequate access to No5 Barnfield Road, but we believe that a single pavement can accommodate the number of pedestrians.
- 1.5m cycle lanes on each side of the road instead of the generous 2.0m.
- 5.5m will be available for a highway for two way traffic. This is wider than the 5.0m shown in section AA.
- The south side of the pavement could be widened by 0.5m to support the volume of pedestrians if only one pavement is in place. People exiting the area are likely to be heading towards the St Leonards area or the Fairpark Car Park. The northern pavement provides little benefit because the vast majority of pedestrians will be heading in the same direction as those on the south side.
- A raised crossing platform is positioned across the road east of Southernhay East to enable pedestrians to cross to the south side pavement. This will have the added benefit of supporting pedestrians commuting along Southernhay East.

With the benefit of retaining two way traffic on Barnfield Road there will be no need to widen the junction with Southernhay East to allow lorries to turn into this street. Diverting lorries onto this route towards Magdalen Road is not ideal because of the number of homes located there, as well as the Southernhay Hotel. We should point out that as Southernhay Gardens are listed on the national register of Parks & Gardens of Special Historic Interest approval will be needed from Devon Gardens Trust to alter them.

We support other parts of the phase 1 changes with improved pedestrian crossing points on Southernhay East and West.

LTN1/20 expects cycle lanes to be continuous but our understanding is that that part of the cycle lane outside the Barnfield Theatre will be discretionary to allow for loading and

unloading – this is not acceptable because cyclists will either use the pavement (not supported by ATE) or have to navigate around delivery vehicles. However, the theatre has a loading bay to the rear so the Highway Authority should challenge Barnfield Theatre on the need to park on Barnfield Road for deliveries rather than to use their own delivery bay which appears to be currently used for private parking.

Phase 2: Barnfield Road Junction with Western Way.

We appreciate that the plans for the Western Way Junction are in the early design stages, but it is disappointing that you have not managed to clearly demonstrate what the two options are – the photo montages are not clear. It would have been much preferable to have plans for the two options to clearly understand what is being suggested.

However, we support the provision of crossing points across Western Way which align with the two existing cycle lanes, and hope these can be designated by white lining across the road. We suggest that if conflicts can be avoided then a joint pedestrian/cycle phase is introduced to reduce the number of light phases.

We are not sure why there is a shared cycle path on the east side of Western Way because the designated route for the E9 cycle route is via Denmark Road and Barnfield Road from Magdalen Road. LTN1/20 states that shared paths will no longer be supported, and whilst this may be an existing route, you should take the opportunity to return the pavement to pedestrians only.

Phase 3. Barnfield Road – Western Way – Denmark Road.

We accept that this section of road is quiet and cyclists may feel comfortable when there is little traffic present, but LTN1/20 is unequivocal that cycle routes should be consistent in design and not vary between different designs along the route unless it is impossible to achieve this. With two-way traffic on this road and car-parking on both sides there is a lot of potential to make changes to develop an appropriate cycle lane.

Separate cycle lanes on each side of the highway will conflict with cycle parking, and make this unsafe for cyclists. If dedicated cycle provision is planned, we recommend that a dual cycle lane is developed on the north side of the road with the removal of car parking because all of these properties have a service road access to their rear gardens for car parking, but this may not be popular with residents and businesses.

The junction at Denmark Road is too wide and sometimes results in conflicts between on-coming traffic and cyclists. If improvements are considered then this should be narrowed to help vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists navigate the junction safely.

Yours faithfully

K Lewis

Keith Lewis. Chairman