EXETER
CityFutures

"A Green Restart"

Outcomes of Exeter's Emergency Transport and Travel Roundtable

Held Online: 20 May 2020

NET/ ZERO EXETER

Introduction

Exeter City Futures invited those keen to contribute to the development and delivery of transport and travel solutions for Exeter's "Green Restart" to join an online Emergency Transport and Travel Roundtable that took place at 2pm on Wednesday 20 May.

It was intended that this event:

- Bolstered the confidence of policy makers in the city to make radical decisions and support the implementation of innovative change now

- Influenced policy in the city and engender a new culture of innovation in Exeter where people, communities and businesses are encouraged to 'trial and fail' in implementing new ideas and plans

- Encouraged collaborative thinking and constructive contributions to deliver a tangible outcome – evidence of solutions Exeter's electorate wants the city to deliver

The Panel consisted of Devon County Councillors, Exeter City Councillors, Stagecoach South West and Ben Bradshaw MP. Following a Panel discussion and roundtables, the attendees were asked to reflect their opinion of the measures announced by Devon County Council and make recommendations to the city as to what bold measures they also want delivered in Exeter.

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Quick Links

- Panel Discussion (link to video)
- Roundtable discussion (link to summary)
- Poll: recommended top priorities (link to original Poll)
- Reimagining Exeter (link to interactive map)

Background

With the Covid-19 lockdown easing from the week commencing 11 May 2020, the government has began highlighting measures that will help people start their return to work and travel more for leisure and exercise purposes.

Exeter now has a choice:

1. Welcome the city's resident and working population back on a 'business-as-usual' basis, with a return to congestion, air pollution and health conditions included; or

2. Step up as a leading city, embrace its net zero and clean and inclusive growth ambitions, and deliver innovative solutions that rapidly embed new active travel behaviours adopted by Exeter during the pandemic (70% more cycling, more people walking, and fewer cars on the roads) and work towards greater use of public transport

With cleaner air and more active people, Choice #2 could bring city net zero and inclusive growth goals forward by years. It is imperative, too, that choices made now are made for long-term benefit. Yes, active travel options will support the need for social distancing as people get back to work, but we need long-term health and resilience in our city.

Pop-up options for increased active travel introduced now adopted as permanent solutions will have a lasting positive impact on citizens health, fitness, and happiness, reduce congestion and improve air quality and benefit the local economy.

The government themselves announced on 9 May:

"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 therefore expects local authorities to make significant changes to their road layouts to give more space to cyclists and pedestrians. Such changes will help embed altered behaviours and demonstrate the positive effects of active travel."

They encourage a "green restart" and have suggested a toolkit of measures that can be taken now.

Following the government's declaration, which also included the release of a £250m emergency active travel fund (the first stage of a £2bn national investment in walking and cycling), Devon County Council is actively exploring a series of temporary measures including pop-up facilities and removal of car parking spaces to support social distancing for walkers and cyclists. Read more on their website here.

Exeter City Futures believes the city is stronger on this road to recovery when we - residents, community organisations, businesses, educational institutions and councils - work side-by-side to achieve shared goals. It's what made curation of the Net Zero Exeter 2030 Plan possible. Now, with the Net Zero Exeter 2030 Plan an integral pillar of Exeter City Council's Covid-19 recovery, this is the opportunity to take the learnings from our current challenging situation, and turn it into creative, positive, practical action.

1. The Panel

Contributors to the Panel discussion included city and county councillors, a representative of public transport provision, and an Exeter-based MP:

- **Karime Hassan**
  Chief Executive, Exeter City Council (Chair)

- **Ben Bradshaw MP**

- **Cllr Phil Bialyk**
  Leader of Exeter City Council

- **Cllr David Harvey**
  Portfolio Holder for Environment and City Management, Exeter City Council

- **Mike Watson**
  Managing Director, Stagecoach

- **Cllr Andrew Leadbetter**
  Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health Services, Devon County Council (Cabinet Liaison for Exeter) and Exeter City Council

- **Cllr Rob Hannaford**
  Devon County Council (Exeter Highways and Traffic Orders Committee; Children's Scrutiny Committee Chair) and Exeter City Council
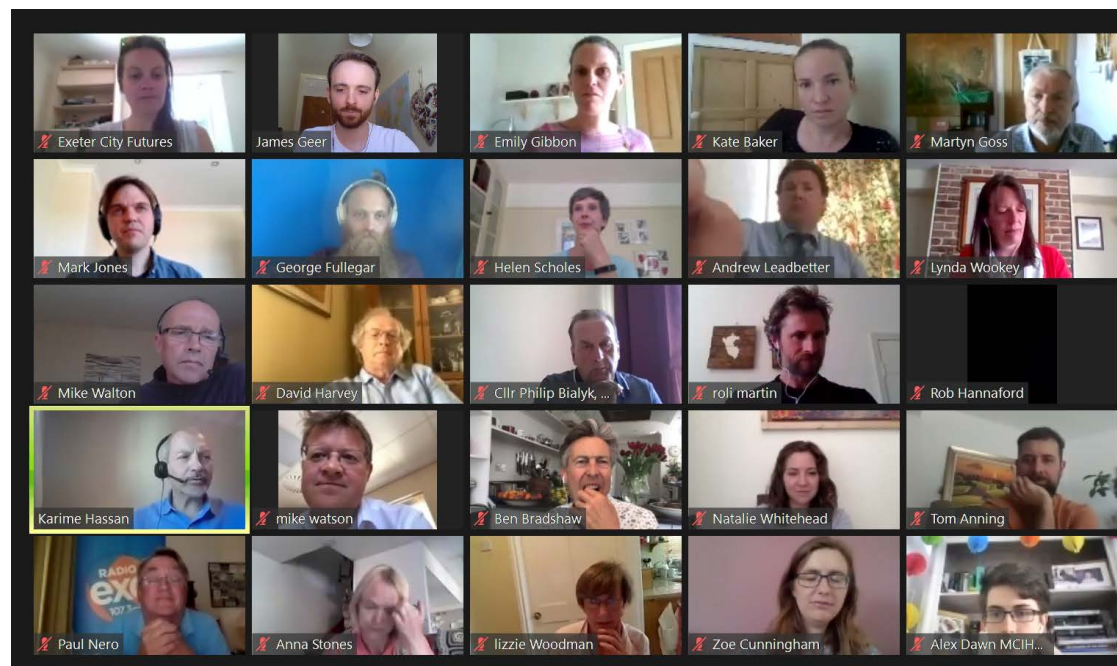
2. Poll

What type of organisation do you represent today?

Delegates reflected Exeter's mix of city and county councils, businesses, public transport operators, the hospital and university, community groups, and residents concerned about how to maintain social distancing now and how Exeter can emerge from the pandemic.

The balanced mix of representation was achieved through the invitations that went out via Exeter City Futures Partner Network, those who registered for the Net Zero Exeter Mobilisation Summit (cancelled due to Covid-19), the CIC's board members and their communications leads, and to the public.

As a result, contributors were split across public sector (21%), education institutions (8%), businesses (24%), community organisations (21%) and individuals (36%) - a welcome mix of residents and workers from across Exeter that helped us meet the event objectives in expressing the voice of the city and their requirement of the councils to be bold and speedy in their plans and delivery of them.

Over 150 people registered to participate and more tried to register as the event started, showing the strength of the opportunity to hear what politicians had to share, and the chance to put forward clear proposals to policy leaders. The event platform limited the number of people able to attend to 100.
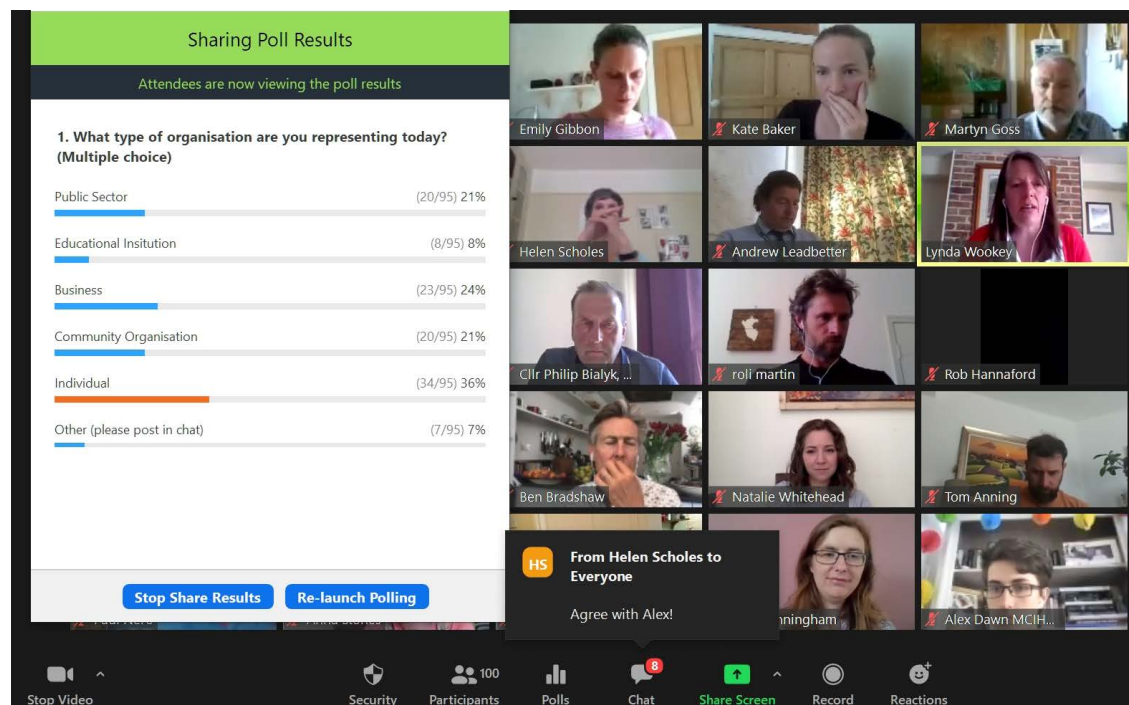
"Having this event today is a fantastic start, because it's been advertised in community WhatsApp groups, Facebook groups and anybody could come and say their piece.
The city council want to hear what the people have got to say.
I see this is an important start to the dialogue."

Ruth Williams, Exeter City Councillor

3. The Agenda

The structure and agenda for the two-hour event ran as follows:

- Welcome and introductions

- Panel discussions

- Poll: How confident are you now that Exeter will achieve a "Green Restart" and embed transformational change?

- Roundtable discussions

- Feedback

- Panel response to the Roundtable Discussions

- Poll: Which of the priority solutions proposed through the Roundtable discussions would you like to see adopted by the city?

- Summary and close
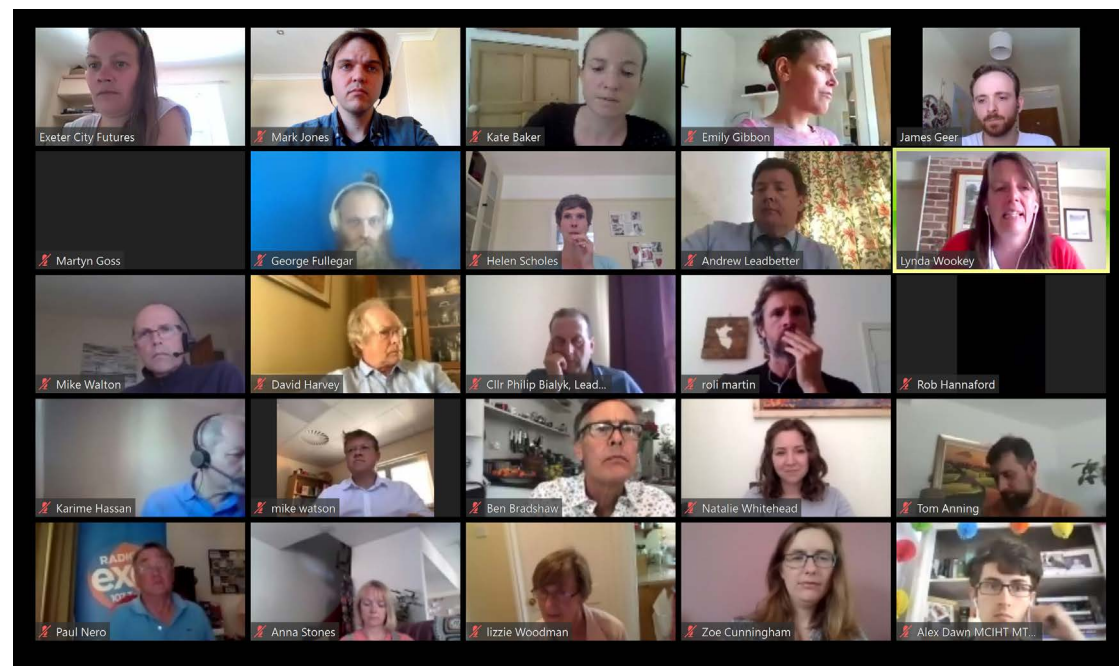
"I just wanted to say thanks very much for organising and facilitating a great session. I felt it struck the right balance of presentation, discussion and poll and the audience was well balanced. Let's hope that action follows soon."

Participant, Business Representative

4. Panel Discussion

The Panellists were asked to speak to:

- Their organisation's view of what travel and transport should look like as Exeter emerges from the pandemic and how this aligns to the Net Zero Plan, Clean and Inclusive Growth ambitions, and the Green Restart

- The measures their organisation is committed to delivering and over what timescale

- Calls for action – what they need from residents and workers in the City of Exeter to help with implementing and embedding those and other measures

Watch the full Panel discussion here

Specifically, on the measures published by Devon County Council:

Karime Hassan:

Are the measures promoted entirely dependent on government funding?

Cllr Andrew Leadbetter:

These are quick wins we think we can get on with quickly, but yes we are partly reliant on getting the money from the government.

Karime Hassan:

What could stop it, if it's not just the money?

Cllr Andrew Leadbetter:

No because we want to do this and a lot is relatively easy and some of it is down to how much infrastructure you want to put in. Going with temporary traffic orders...so we can put these things in two ways. One we put in and hear what people have to say or we put them in a temporary measure.

The Net Zero Plan is at forefront of our thinking as well, and we shouldn't underestimate what's already happened in the city and plans for more Park and Ride.
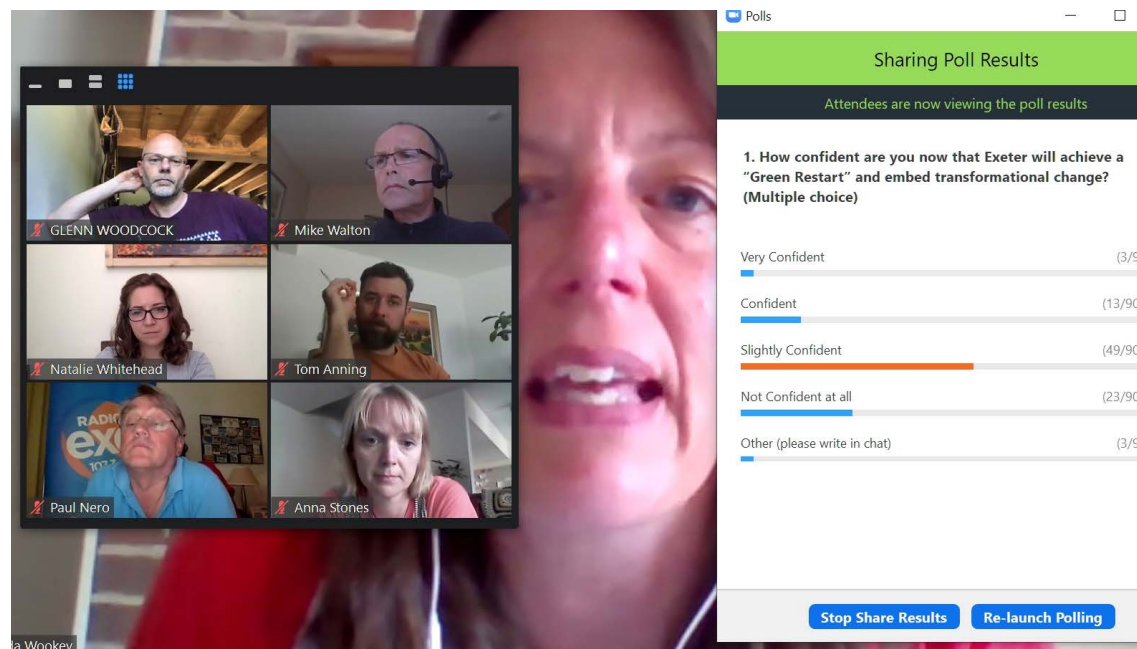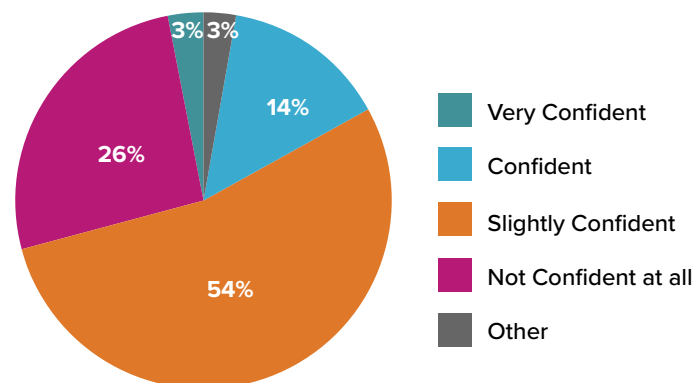
Remember Exeter is not an island...and that we represent car drivers and businesses as well.

5. Poll

How confident are you now that Exeter will achieve a "Green Restart" and embed transformational change?

To gauge participants initial reaction and thoughts as to the measures, opinions and views shared by the Panel, delegates were asked to express to what extent they believed the city would deliver its ambitions.

Going in to the roundtables, 80% of delegates recorded that they were only slightly confident or not confident at all that Exeter would achieve a 'Green Restart' and deliver radical change in the city.

- Very Confident
- Confident
- Slightly Confident
- Not Confident at all
- Other

Pie chart values: 3%, 3%, 14%, 26%, 54%

Polls — Sharing Poll Results
Attendees are now viewing the poll results

1. How confident are you now that Exeter will achieve a "Green Restart" and embed transformational change? (Multiple choice)

Very Confident (3/90)
Confident (13/90)
Slightly Confident (49/90)
Not Confident at all (23/90)
Other (please write in chat) (3/90)

Stop Share Results   Re-launch Polling

6. Roundtable Discussions

All the Panel members and delegates were split into facilitated roundtable discussions during which they were asked to consider:

- What do you feel about what the Panel has just shared?

- What other opportunities are there/what other solutions are we, as a city, missing?

  You may like to take account of:

  - The technological, social and economic considerations
  - How these align with the Net Zero Plan, Clean and Inclusive Growth ambitions, and the Green Restart

- How could these potential solutions be trialled and evaluated to enable their consideration for permanent adoption?

- Which of the solutions that you have identified would you recommend the city adopts (choose up to 3)?

Read a full summary of each roundtable discussion here.

Note: the roundtable discussion document was an open document, to which people could add views post-discussion if they felt they did not have a chance to add them at the time.

7. Recommendations

Top priorities for action the city must address

The facilitator of each roundtable discussion was asked to feed back on their group's Top Recommendation – the number one priority solution identified by their breakout group.

Watch the full feedback session here.

Roundtable 1: James Geer facilitating

- Top recommendation:

  Close the arterial routes – do it now and ask for forgiveness later

  "Lots of work already done by Exeter Cycling Campaign and Extinction Rebellion that has helped identify what those routes are."

- Recommendation 2:

  Incentivise green methods perhaps through participatory citizen tool or app on key decisions to reduce the risk on bold decisions.

- Recommendation 3:

  Significantly improved cycle routes on a temporary basis that will after a time and some adjustment become permanent.

Roundtable 2: Helen Scholes facilitating

- Top recommendation:

  Pilot schemes closing small numbers of roads and trialling a congestion charge. Given the work that has been done, can we introduce pilot schemes as soon as possible around closing a small number of routes around the city to cars, at selected locations and see what happens? Also more stick: can we trial a congestion charge aligned to that to further discourage private cars?

- Recommendation 2:

  Immediacy of action.

  "There's the real concern that if we allow this to drift much longer, we will have lost the opportunity."

Roundtable 3: George Fullegar facilitating

- Top recommendation:

  Pedestrianise the historical city centre. There is a need for immediacy of action, although there are things that need to be done in the long term as well.

- Recommendation 2:

  "Park and Move" based out of the science park – medium term goal.

- Recommendation 3:

  Set specific timetable of measures to be put in place.

7. Recommendations

Top priorities for action the city must address

Roundtable 4: Kate Baker facilitating

- **Top recommendation:**
  Get on and close roads to encourage walking and cycling and to discourage people using cars. There was a general consensus that even people who are not interested in the environment or climate change, as humans we are generally pretty lazy so we will choose the cheapest and quickest thing so if we can incentivise people to make the right choice, so if roads are closed, if it's quicker to use the bike or to walk or for them to get the bus in, that will work.

- **Recommendation 2:**
  Joined up cycle lanes and pop up cycle lanes.

- **Recommendation 3:**
  Join up green spaces to create a National Park.

Roundtable 5: Mark Jones facilitating

- **Top recommendation:**
  More efficient use of road space – narrow lanes and continuous bus lanes.

  "The reallocation of road space in the way it doesn't displace the traffic somewhere else - narrowing lanes and making more space for cyclists and having continuous bus lanes."

- **Recommendation 2:**
  Cycle and Ride facilities for villages + more bus/cycling integration.

- **Recommendation 3:**
  Car parking levies.

Roundtable 6: Mike Walton facilitating

- **Top recommendation:**
  Build safe, segregated, cycle routes.

- **Recommendation 2:**
  Car-free areas in the city.
  "We want to say 'be bold leaders, be bold, now is the time to grasp this. It's electorally strong for you to do so."

- **Recommendation 3:**
  Congestion / pollution charging for single-occupancy private cars.

Roundtable 7: Roli Martin facilitating

- **Top recommendation:**
  Actively encourage the use of bicycles and buses and using experiential traffic orders to actually close roads to show everyone we mean business, that it's actually happening. It gives you the foothold to a longer-term proposal that reallocates funding into a solid car-free city centre.

7. Recommendations

Top priorities for action the city must address

Roundtable 8: Alex Dawn facilitating

- Top recommendation:

  The real focus is on the immediate response and measures that have been discussed for a long time such as shift travel time and encourage working from home. The immediacy of the problem isn't about longer term growth of movements in and out of the city, but how you handle the returning levels of person movements in the immediate future.

Roundtable 9: Elaine Anning facilitating

- Top recommendation:
  Ensure solutions are inclusive. Communication and education - identifying communities that could be really engaged with having road closures, and make sure we speak to groups such as elderly and disabled people - address blockers to active travel for particular groups of people. As a very hilly city we have to make sure that what we put in place is inclusive for everyone including carers and enablers.

- Recommendation 2:
  Reallocation of road space is also really important, especially along the lines of the Liveable Exeter design. Close one bridge at Exe Bridges and reallocate that.

Roundtable 10: Glenn Woodcock facilitating

- Top recommendation:

  Reclaim community spaces with cheap pop up solutions.

Often when we pedestrianise, or create stuff that's beneficial for pedestrians and cyclists, there is an immediate backlash, but after a while they love it and they don't want it to go away.

"Much of this is about leadership and taking advantage of the current situation, and that's going to require some courage."

- Recommendation 2:

  Workplace levies, which from an economic point of view might be seen as regressive, but it's an opportunity that people would understand.

Roundtable 10: Lynda Wookey facilitating

- Top recommendation:

  City and county councils must work together, look at what they can do and with what powers, and what resource and be transparent. And HATOC must meet more regularly and to provide evidence the councils are doing something.

- Recommendation 2:

  Grassroots through to councils need to be connected and working together to collaboratively deliver and embed their initiatives.
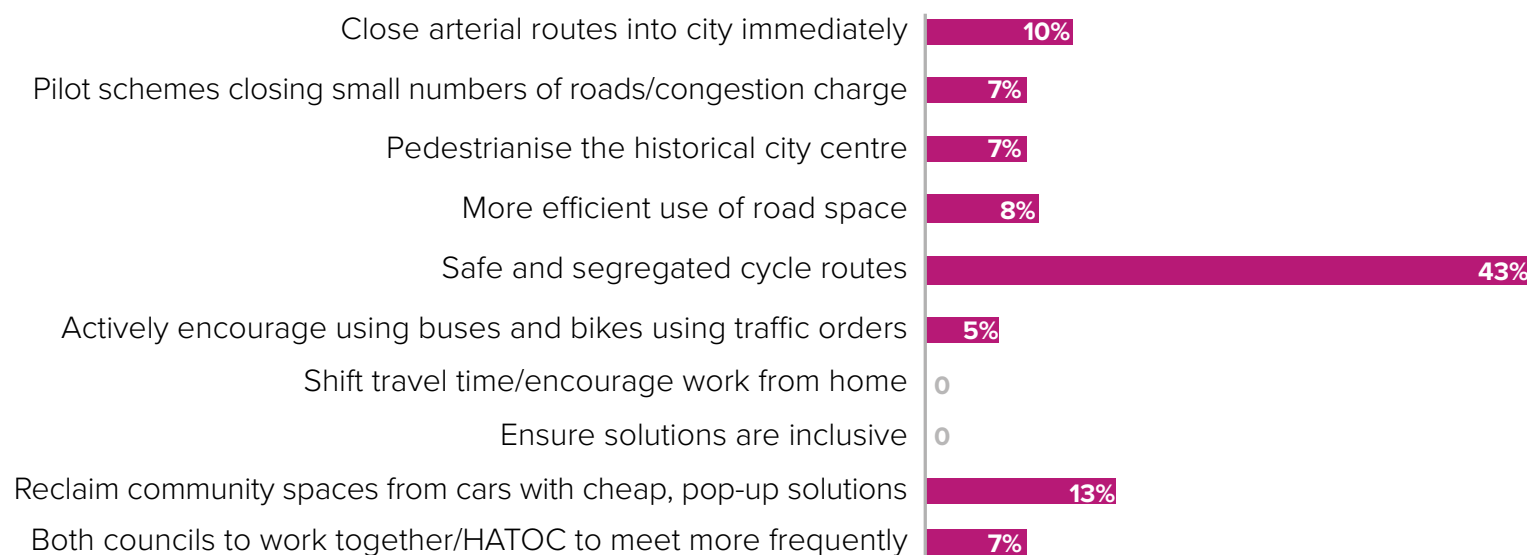
- Recommendation 3:

  Seek the low hanging-fruit – changing fuels in public transport as producing and distributing biomethane and other fuels would also create local jobs.

8. Poll

Vote on top recommended priorities for action

Following the Roundtable's delivery of their Top Recommendations for actions, the audience was asked to vote on them (Doodle Poll here).
The aim was to show which action the people of Exeter most want their councillors to put in place.

The result showed that by far and away the number one action demanded is 'safe and segregated cycle routes'. It is important to consider that those recommendations attracting no votes is no reflection on their importance. The Poll was designed so that people could only choose to vote on one priority action.

Priority	%
Close arterial routes into city immediately	10%
Pilot schemes closing small numbers of roads/congestion charge	7%
Pedestrianise the historical city centre	7%
More efficient use of road space	8%
Safe and segregated cycle routes	43%
Actively encourage using buses and bikes using traffic orders	5%
Shift travel time/encourage work from home	0
Ensure solutions are inclusive	0
Reclaim community spaces from cars with cheap, pop-up solutions	13%
Both councils to work together/HATOC to meet more frequently	7%

9. Chat and Analysis

During the online meeting, delegates used the Chat function to raise and discuss points shared by the Panel, the Roundtables and in the Feedback sessions. Here the audience also shared their expectations for the event, and further evidenced their needs and support for the city to deliver bold measures that will help them return to travelling into and around Exeter confidently and safely.

Read the full chat here

The Chat content was also analysed to determine the themes arising and measures that Exeter's electorate would most support. The most prominent are strong calls for urgent and immediate action and for active travel/people first prioritisation.

Here you can see how the Chat content was assigned themes:

Themes	Count
• Urgent Action!	49
• Reallocation of roads for cycle lanes/segregated cycle lanes/car free streets	31
• Air pollution/cleaner air	18
• Make streets more child friendly/cycle to school	13
• Priority for walk/cycle/buses	13
• Additional funding needed from the LA/reallocate road budget	13
• Congestion charging/levys on cars/parking/discourage cars	12
• Looking to support active travel/social distancing/use furloughed staff	11
• Accessibility of planning/solutions (disabled/older/push chairs/deliveries)	10
• Quick wins to cement new travel and exercise habits	8
• Cycle and green travel connections/corridors - joined up networks	8
• Integrated public transport - wider area (GESP)	7
• Joined up approach ECC and DCC	7
• EV cars and E Bikes	7

	Count
• Car free centre	7
• Support for active travel - training/maintenance/signage/schools/businesses	6
• Buses council owned/free/subsidised	5
• Electric/hydrogen buses	4
• Review plans and ambitions and get involved	3
• Union Road parking ban/one way	3
• Bus free centre	3
• Secure bike storage	3
• Use roads for community events (keep fit classes/play streets)	2
• ECC and Sport England - clarity on progress	2
• Park & change/car share points	2
• Living streets	2
• Cleaner/greener Exeter	1
• Bus cycle racks	1
• Behavioural science used to influence travel	1
• Orbital bus routes	1
• Map routes - school/work etc	1
• Freight hubs	1
• Rural bus routes	1

Once the Chat content had been identified by theme, the themes were grouped to show the types of measures attracting the most focus:

Count	Measures
• 89	Active travel/people first
• 57	Urgency
• 23	Public transport/park & change
• 22	Funding/Councils
• 21	Environment
• 19	Reduce cars
• 15	Looking to support/influence
• 10	Accessibility

10. Panel Reflection

The Panel were asked to consider the discussion and feedback, and were asked:

What can you say about the message coming across about timing and level of commitment?

Cllr Andrew Leadbetter:

"So I've been back to talk to our Highway Planners and they want to see the initial quick wins they proposed on the ground by 1 June. By 1 June, because that's when we think there will be more announcements on the lockdown. I will also add that I checked on Union Road, but that is very much on their radar and they want to start talking to the local members who represent the local area about moving the parked cars off the road as a quick, easy, win."

In relation to the question on collaboration, could you outline some of the collaboration that has taken place that perhaps people aren't aware of?

"The biggest collaboration is the joint Exeter Transport Strategy - the one that went out to consultation recently, that shows we already talk at many levels - and the Liveable Exeter Board, and HATOC is joint committee between the city and county council, chaired by a city council member."

Cllr Phil Bialyk:

"The message I get is the speed at which we need to do stuff: process of orders, advertising orders, overcoming the barriers. We must circumvent some of the months that this can take, and not in a way that stops people raising some of the issues. We need to do more such as the temporary road closures we did in Magdalen Road, which was an important collaboration, and get people to accept we need more cycling and pedestrianisation. I feel sure we can work together with the county to bring forward many of these proposals."

Beyond the end of the immediate interim, could you respond to the bigger ambition and the sense that this doesn't go far enough?

Ben Bradshaw MP:

"We need the immediate stuff. I think it's great that Andrew's given 1st June date. That's brilliant, and Union Road is going to be a great, symbolic, project. The county and city have got collectively quite a good strategy. There is stuff that's already designed that could be brought forward.

"The county has its strategic cycle ways strategy, which hasn't yet been completed. But then, depending on how we end up, where national and local policy thinking ends up in 6-12 months' time, that would give us a bit more time to plan the more comprehensive long-term changes that the city needs. Some of it will be old ideas, I'm sure, like making the arterial routes flow in one way and out the other one way, or new thinking which is determined by how people are actually choosing to travel.

"This has been a really good start, but I think you need those immediate ones, the next 6 months to a year, then you need the long term as well."

Watch the full Panel Reflection here.

11. Reimagining Exeter - Interactive Map

To further evidence quick wins and measures the electorate will support, Exeter City Futures published the 'Reimagining Exeter' map during the Emergency Roundtable event.

View the interactive map here

Highlighting what the electorate across Exeter enjoy in the city, what they would like to see introduced or changed as the city emerges from the pandemic, the map collected nearly 250 responses in the first 24 hours.

From insight shared on beautiful views across the city that people want others to experience to suggestions for infrastructure changes, the mood is constructive from people who are genuinely invested in their city.

The data is Open Source and therefore can be downloaded into a spreadsheet to help determine and timetable the quick wins, medium and longer term measures that will be supported by residents, businesses, and community organisations in Exeter.

Exeter City Futures will publish some data analysis of the points made on the map in due course.
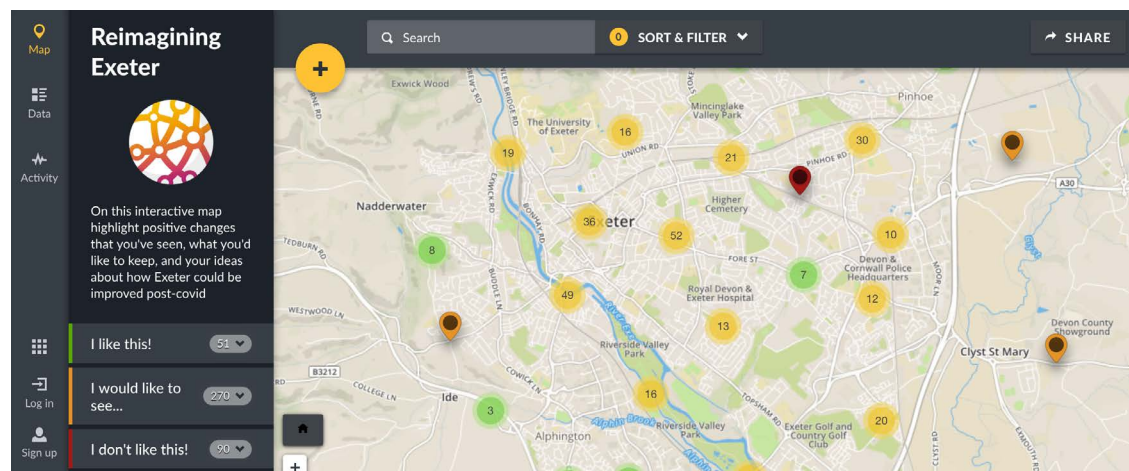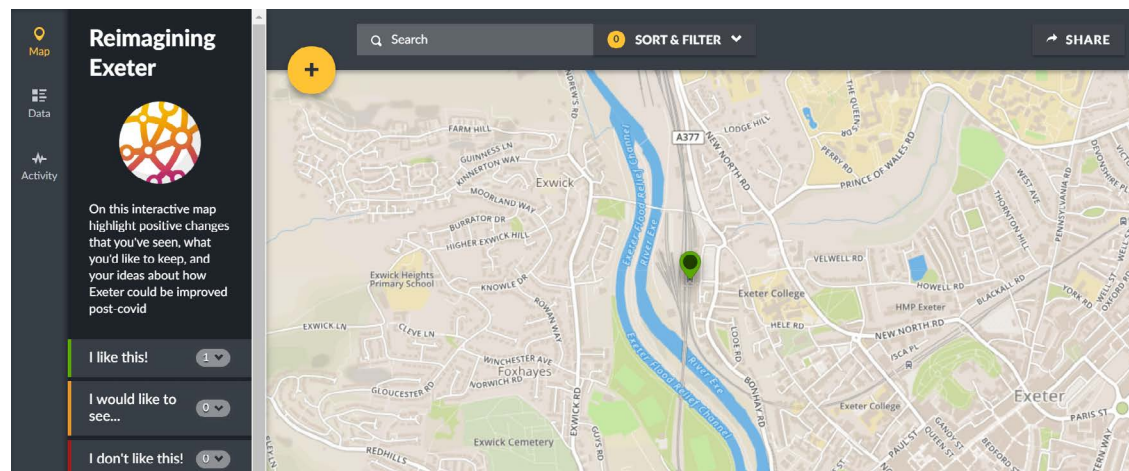
12. Social Media

Exeter City Futures has also generated, and continues to generate, outputs from the Emergency Transport and Travel Roundtable through its social media channels.

In maintaining engagement with the city's residents, workers, and community organisations through Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook, Exeter City Futures is collating additional feedback that can be relayed to Devon County Council and Exeter City Council.

Results from Exeter City Futures communications so far include:

- Details of the Roundtable shared in community WhatsApp and Facebook groups and other networks, demonstrating the extended reach of the Exeter City Futures Partner Network

- Post-event, soundbites and video clips of the Panel discussions that have reached over 8000 people

- The #Reimagining Exeter Interactive Map quickly becoming one of the most popular activities Exeter City Futures has delivered, securing high levels of engagement and around 250 contributions in its first 24 hours (over 400 in two weeks)

Amplifying the impact of the Emergency Transport and Travel Roundtable, Exeter City Futures continues to use its social media channels to:

- Promote soundbites and video clips, details of the resulting activity from the event to maintain engagement with Exeter's population

- Highlight interesting contributions to the #ReimaginingExeter Interactive Map to spark wider discussion and further contributions, sharing this with Devon County Council and Exeter City Council

- Promote the #NetZeroExeter 2030 Plan, pulling out carbon savings and relevant sections to continue momentum around the city's carbon reduction agenda

- Promote Exeter as a leading city, with positive stories, reports and good Exeter news

- Share best practice and recent developments in other cities to inspire action

13. Next Steps

As outlined in this report, Exeter's Emergency Transport and Travel Roundtable not only reflected the electorate's view of the 'Green Restart' measures proposed by Devon County Council on 13 May, but has shown the council that residents, businesses and communities will support bigger and bolder measures to enable Exeter to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic.

The important question now is: 'What next?'

To ensure the constructive input and significant outcomes of the Roundtable continue to effectively facilitate the city's Green Restart, Exeter City Futures proposes a follow-up Roundtable with a wider representation of city politicians and officers.

Engaging cross-party representatives and those delivering the measures together, the outcomes of the Emergency Roundtable would be reviewed alongside the time-limited opportunity afforded by the evidenced call for bold measures.

The purpose would be to identify how the recommendations can now be integrated into their plans, existing or in-progress, and accelerated in their delivery and effectiveness by unblocking barriers.

In parallel to Devon County Council's delivery of planned measures to enable pedestrians and cyclists to maintain social distancing as the city continues to emerge from lockdown, Exeter City Futures will also work with Devon County Council and Exeter City Council to further facilitate effective collaboration with the city's electorate through:

1. Making the report and the information to which it links, and the details logged on the #Reimagining Exeter Interactive Map, publicly available.

   The data is Open Source and anyone can use it to inform the planning and implementation of city improvement measures.

2. Further analysis of the Roundtable outputs and entries on the Reimagining Exeter map to identify where measures recommended by the city's residents, workers and communities could:

   i. enhance the existing council-proposed measures

   ii. Inform quick wins, medium and longer-term measures to support Devon County Council in developing their timetable and scope of proposed measures

   This is already underway as a result of the Roundtable activity.

3. Holding an Active-Travel Connect event, bringing together communities, businesses and city stakeholders to support community-initiated projects and ideas. It was clear from the Roundtable that grassroots projects, reflecting community aspirations and commitment to a net zero future, could help the city meet the second top voted recommendations conducted at the event: reclaiming community spaces from cars with cheap, pop-up solutions; and support the city's aspiration that both councils work together more.

   The Active-Travel Connect event is planned for the week commencing 29 June.

13. Next Steps

4. Enabling consequent conversations, meetings, events or working groups where this will help Exeter emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic a better and stronger city and aligns to the Net Zero Exeter goals.

Resulting opportunity for a Retail & Customer Travel Roundtable is being investigated – further details to come soon.

Finally, Exeter City Futures believes the Emergency Transport and Travel Roundtable has given the city a glimpse as to what a collaborative population could achieve in ensuring Exeter is a great place to live and work now.

The event engaged a constructive audience of people ranging from politicians, businesses, the university, college, community groups and residents. They brought their views on what they need, and shared news of the activities they are already undertaking, to help Exeter meet its ambitions to be a cleaner, greener, healthier city.

Exeter showed its hand – the energy and will of the electorate for city to #BuildBackBetter is palpable and must be harnessed. This will ensure not only an efficient delivery of effective and welcome measures now, but also support the development of a sustainable and rich culture in the city of powerful policy making, embedding and adoption.

"Thank you very much for an excellently run session with such a wide group of contributors, very impressed and encouraged!'

Aimée Hall, participant