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Exeter City Council
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please reply to:

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Dear Ian Collinson,

2026-06-29

Exeter City Centre Strategy 2026-31

We are responding on behalf of the regional branch of our national membership organisation to those parts of the consultation to which, with our specific interest, we consider that we can most usefully contribute. We have not, therefore, attempted to respond to the detailed questions 6-10 about Themes 1-5.

Railfuture is Britain's leading and longest-established, independent national voluntary organisation campaigning exclusively for a better railway across a bigger network for passenger and freight users, to support sustainable economic growth, environmental improvement and better-connected communities. We seek to influence policy makers and decision takers at local, regional and national levels to implement pro-rail policies in development and transport planning.

1. In what capacity are you answering?

On behalf of a community group – Railfuture Ltd, Devon & Cornwall regional branch

2. Do you?

Live and work outside Exeter, but visit the city

3. Why did you decide to take part in this consultation survey?

Particular, but not exclusive, interest in Theme Six – Connectivity of the City Centre

The vision for the City Centre

- A city centre buzzing with talent, where dynamic startups create ideas and energy.
- Tired buildings and sites are re-used and revitalised with high quality architecture and spaces accommodating a vibrant mix of new uses.
- The Culture, history and commerce of Exeter is brought to life for everyone.
- Streets and spaces feel alive morning noon and night, with independent and national shops serving the needs of our residents, students and visitors.
- From the High Street to the Quay, there are homes for families, professionals and students,
- A stone's throw from the Roman Walls and Cathedral, musicians, artists and comedians make people move, think and laugh.
- The City Centre excites and inspires, with culture, events, public art, unique shops, food, urban nature and leisure experiences.
- People can hop onto a bus or taxi, easily and safely.
- Waterways and parks are connected by walkable, safe green streets.
- Buildings and spaces are adaptable making Exeter City Centre resilient to change in our climate.

www.railfuture.org.uk www.railfuturescotland.org.uk www.railfuturewales.org.uk
www.railwatch.org.uk

4. Thinking about the Vision outlined above

How much do you agree with it
Strongly agree.

5. Thinking about the six themes in the City Centre Strategy, please rank them in order of importance to you personally - where 1 is your highest priority.

Theme One – Appearance and Cleanliness

6

Theme Two – Safety, Accessibility and Wellbeing

5

Theme Three – Daytime and Night-Time Economy

3

Theme Four – Destination Offer

4

Theme Five – City Centre Living

2

Theme Six – Connectivity of the City Centre

1

Theme One – Appearance and Cleanliness

6. Thinking about Appearance and Cleanliness, please rank which priority actions are of greatest importance to you, where number 1 is of greatest importance.

Ensure the city centre's public spaces create an attractive green city centre environment

Find better ways to keep the city centre clean and tidy seven days a week

Make space for nature within existing spaces and new developments

Introduce vibrant city dressing to enliven streets, historic and cultural buildings

Raise pride in the city centre, leveraging effort from residents and businesses

Theme Two – Safety, Accessibility and Wellbeing

7. Thinking about Safety, Accessibility and Wellbeing, please rank which priority actions are of greatest importance to you, where number 1 is of greatest importance.

Reduce city centre anti-social behaviour by continuing to work in partnership with police and support agencies on preventative strategies

Safer Exeter, the Community Safety Partnership, addresses city centre safety and social cohesion for equality, diversity and inclusion

Improve lighting and CCTV within the city centre

Ensure city centre parks and open spaces are safe spaces and accessible for all

The city centre is accessible to those with limited mobility

Theme Three – Daytime and Night-Time Economy

8. Thinking about Safety, Daytime and Night-Time Economy, please rank which priority actions are of greatest importance to you; number 1 is of greatest importance.

Reduce vacancy rates in the city centre by repurposing vacant shops for meanwhile uses and developing the creative industries

Make the city centre an attractive and viable proposition for start-ups, independent and micro businesses

Create the conditions for people to stay longer within the city centre so it is viable for all during the day and night

Work collaboratively across the city centre to support protect our retail and hospitality

Develop a varied and diverse offer to attract residents from outside of the city

Focus on ways to celebrate and encourage performing arts across the city centre

Theme Four – Destination Offer

9. Thinking about Destination Offer, please rank which priority actions are of greatest importance to you, where number 1 is of greatest importance.

Develop a cultural strategy

Build on our UNESCO City of Literature status by promoting heritage, public art, performance and festivals

Build on the Visit Exeter branding and celebrate our culture, heritage and nature offer and to fully utilise the opportunities for tourism arising from this

Improve the quality and accessibility of public art

Encourage and support events and festivals throughout the year

Work with city partners to attract more business events and conferences to Exeter

Improve signage and wayfinding with clear easily understandable signs, maps and digital tools

Theme Five – City Centre Living

10. Thinking about City Centre Living, please rank which priority actions are of greatest importance to you, where number 1 is of greatest importance.

Through Liveable Exeter, work with developers in bringing forward city centre regeneration sites

Unlock and deliver other major city centre development opportunities

Collaborate with statutory, voluntary and community partners to deliver a joined-up approach to reducing homelessness in the city centre

Incorporate energy efficiency measures into existing new buildings

Encourage property owners and developers to create living spaces above city centre retail and mixed-use ground floors

Incorporate innovative solutions within buildings, transport provision, energy and other infrastructure to achieve the ambitions for a net zero city

Theme Six – Connectivity of the City Centre

11. Thinking about Connectivity of the City Centre, please rank which priority actions are of greatest importance to you, where number 1 is of greatest importance.

Make the movement for people within the city centre safer
5

Improve connectivity into the city from rural hinterland for shoppers, students, commuters and visitors enjoying the cultural offer with late night buses
6

Understand the needs for those with limited mobility such as people who are disabled or older. (Measure of success: An increase in public transport usage for those with limited mobility.)
3

Establish partnerships to improve the bus and train network within and into Exeter, so that its accessible and affordable for our residents, business community and students. (Measure of success: Increase in the number of people who travel into Exeter by bus and train.)
1

Provide city centre car and cycle parking, serving the needs of residents, visitors commuters and our business community
7

Improve connectivity between the city centre to the Quay and Exeter St David's train station
4

Improve the gateways to the city centre, including Exeter Central, Exeter St David's and Exeter St Thomas train stations. (Measure of success: Increase in the number of passengers through city centre train stations.)
2

12. Which voices do you feel are currently under-represented in Exeter city centre?
Regular users of the city's ten rail stations, in eight wards.

13. Can you suggest examples of projects, ideas or partnerships you would like to see in the city centre?

As 5 of the 10 lines in Great Scenic Railways (Devon & Cornwall) radiate from Exeter, an Exeter-focussed partnership with the Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership to further promote Exeter and its easy access by rail to most parts of the city and especially the centre.

14. What is the single most important thing the City Centre Strategy should achieve?
Demonstrably increased mode share of trips by rail.

15. How should success of the City Centre Strategy be measured?
Fewer empty premises, more residents.

16. Would you like to continue being involved in shaping Exeter City Centre?
No, thanks.

17. If you ticked any of the above, please add your name and email address so we can get in touch with you.
Did not tick any of the four options in Q16.

18. Can we anonymously use any quotes you provided in the free text responses for our reporting on this consultation?
Yes.



19. **Which of the following age bands you fall into**

Not applicable for organisation's response

20. **How do you describe your sex?**

Not applicable for organisation's response

21. **Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?**

Not applicable for organisation's response

22. **What is your ethnic group?**

Not applicable for organisation's response

23. **What is your employment status?**

Not applicable for organisation's response

24. **Do you consider yourself to have a long-term health condition and/or disability?**

Not applicable for organisation's response

25. **Would you be interested in sharing you views of being involved in Exeter City Council consultations?**

No, thanks.

Yours sincerely,

Tim Steer

Chair, Railfuture Devon & Cornwall regional branch

Roger Blake BA MRTPI (Rtd) MTPS

Acting Convener, Northern Devon Railway Development Alliance

Infrastructure & Networks Director, Railfuture national Board