

PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

8 March 2018

Present:

Councillor Luke Sills (Chair)

Councillors Lyons, Foggin, Keen, Owen, Mitchell, Prowse, Wardle and Wood

Apologies:

Councillor D Henson

Also present:

Director (DB), Cleansing & Fleet Manager, Principal Accountant (PM), Principal Accountant (MH), Programme Manager - Communities and Democratic Services Officer (SLS)

In attendance:

Councillor Peter Edwards	- Leader and Portfolio Holder for City Development
Councillor Philip Bialyk	- Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, Communities and Sport
Councillor Stephen Brimble	- Portfolio Holder for Place
Councillor Rosie Denham	- Portfolio Holder for City Transformation, Energy and Transport
Councillor Rachel Sutton	- Portfolio Holder for Economy and Culture/Labour Group Deputy Leader
Councillor Rob Hannaford	- Member attending under Standing Order 20
Councillor Chris Musgrave	- Member attending under Standing Order 20 and 44

12 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2018 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record, subject to the last bullet point in Minute 5 relating to a trial of a Quayside bus during the summer period including a reference to being "on Sundays".

A Member commented on the current procedure of signing the minutes as a correct record when the minutes were not before Members. The Democratic Services Officer undertook to pass on the comment to the Corporate Manager Democratic and Civic Support.

13 **Declaration of Interests**

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest were made.

14 **Questions from the Public under Standing Order 19**

In accordance with Standing Order No 19, two members of the public, Mr Cleasby and Mr Poltawski, submitted questions on issues relating to the consultation timeframe of the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan and a request for making the litter bins more seagull proof particularly on Cathedral Green, but also widespread throughout the city centre and residential areas.

A copy of the questions had been previously circulated to Members, and these, together with the appropriate responses from Councillor Edwards as Leader and Portfolio Holder City Development and Councillor Brimble, Portfolio Holder Place is appended to the minutes.

15 Questions from Members of the Council under Standing Order 20

In accordance with Standing Order No 20, Councillors Hannaford and Musgrave had submitted their respective questions on the City Council's overall strategy for support of business and in relation to the District Centre in St Thomas and also on food waste recycling in Exeter.

A copy of the questions had been previously circulated to Members, and these, together with the appropriate responses from Councillor Brimble, Portfolio Holder Place is appended to the minutes.

16 Exeter Community Partnership - Heavitree Pilot Project

The Portfolio Holder City Transformation, Energy & Transport introduced the final report of a pilot of a community partnership project for Heavitree. This was a yearlong collaboration between the University of Exeter, Exeter City Council and Exeter City Futures to connect partners, create opportunities and drive impact, focusing on the themes central to Exeter City Future's goals of making Exeter congestion free and energy independent by 2025. Support was given to the community in Heavitree to collect existing and new data to help understand the cause of the traffic challenges faced by them. Councillor Denham introduced Kerry Deacon, Education and Engagement from Exeter City Futures and also the City Council's Programme Manager Communities. The project was managed by Lindsey Anderson, Impact and Partnership Development Manager, based at the University of Exeter.

The project included six weeks of local listening and engagement activities using sites on Fore Street, the Heavitree Friendly Library based in the Parish Church, and at Ladysmith and St Michael's schools in Heavitree. Over 200 people completed a travel and energy survey, and many more had engaged with the project and talked about what they loved about Heavitree, as well as providing comments relating to traffic and congestion in their ward. The majority of comments focused on traffic and congestion and after a series of workshops, the partnership, working with members of the community, formulated the following two questions:

- How can we motivate and incentivise parents and staff who currently drive to school to use alternative mixes of travel?
- How can we enable and encourage the use of sustainable and attractive alternative mixes of transport to reduce the number of cars driving through Heavitree?

Two community-led working groups (a School Working Group and a Congestion Working Group) collected data to evidence the problems and create practical solutions. The School Working Group are also engaging with Sustrans and Devon County Council's transport team, and are monitoring air quality at a number of hotspots and comparing air quality data in locations outside their school gates, Higher Cemetery, Heavitree Park and on Heavitree Road.

The Portfolio Holder City Transformation, Energy & Transport welcomed what had been a very positive experience which had kept the community engaged and

energised. The pilot methodology offered a good example to roll out in other communities with the right approach early on, support and understanding of both anecdotal and qualitative data. It was now important to talk to other communities in Exeter and engage Members and broaden the topics to the issues of interest. A Member commented on schools in his ward, where walking to schools was already phenomenally high, the result of air quality monitoring both by those schools and on Cowley Bridge Road in his ward. He also commented on the need to resolve transport attenuation issues, and made reference to the budget for Exeter City Futures. Kerry Deacon responded and stated that she did not have the latest results of the schools' survey but the School Working Group had a series of questions and would have that detail. There had been a continuous engagement taken outside of the school environment to create a better understanding of air quality around the school.

The Portfolio Holder City Transformation, Energy & Transport stated that the transport monitoring referred to ongoing work with Greenpeace to acquire a more sophisticated level of air quality monitor. The working groups were also considering a number of solutions including implementing a school walking bus. The data had given ideas to the community and it was important to understand how data could give more power and also influence others. She referred to the Congestion Working Group which had looked at the capacity of nearby Park and Ride sites and whilst it was appreciated that the community could not solve such issues alone, data could address a lack of information such as car park usage which could be useful to both Devon County Council and Stagecoach.

Members embraced the process, and considered that the pilot was the way forward and consider how best this could be developed. Kerry Deacon explained that, although the project had finished in December, Kerry and Lindsey Anderson would continue to work with the community until July. The Programme Manager Communities also spoke of the involvement of Exeter City Council and welcomed the pilot as an excellent example of community building, and through her work she would continue to help promote community planning work.

Members thanked Lindsey Anderson and Kerry Deacon for the report.

17 **Food Waste Collection**

The Cleansing and Fleet Manager presented a report and outlined Eunomia Research and Consulting's business case for a separated collection and recycling of food waste in the city. The report included five different recycling and rubbish collection scenarios, with a comparison of cost and performance against that of the current service (the 'baseline') provided by Exeter City Council. There would be a requirement for additional recycling and customer support staff, with the option of food waste collection costing more than the baseline service, as well as coming with a degree of uncertainty and therefore financial risk to the Council. Members were presented with a proposed recommendation that the current recycling service, without a food waste collection, should continue as the service option with the lowest modelled costs and financial risk. The Cleansing and Fleet Manager explained that the business case for food waste collection would be reviewed every year as part of the Recycling Plan. The review would also take account of any developments in technology for waste collection and treatment and changes in the markets for recyclable materials, and the evolving financial case for food waste collection.

Councillor Musgrave attended the meeting and spoke under Standing Order 44 and expressed his disappointment that the recommendation was not to proceed with the collection of food waste at this time. Exeter was the only local authority in Devon not

to offer this service. He referred to a recent petition, which over 600 individuals had signed in favour of such a collection. He was concerned that an expensive report had been commissioned, which could have provided an opportunity for additional revenue generation.

The Member Champion for Communities and Food Recycling referred to the consultant's report, and he did not feel that the City Council should be asked to be burdened with such a significant expenditure when set against the current financial constraints and future uncertainty of such a commitment. The Cleansing and Fleet Manager stated that the cost of the final consultant's report was £16,240. Eunomia had been able to provide an informed report, with the costs, likely environment and performance of food waste collection. He reiterated that the collection of food waste remained an aspiration of this Council.

The Cleansing and Fleet Manager welcomed Members' positive comments on the Cleansing and Recycling service and responded to the following points:-

- Exeter City Council's support on waste reduction through its dry recycling scheme, exceeded the rates achieved in most cases by the Devon and also the nationwide scheme.
- Exeter had been able to meet the stricter regulations from the implementation of China's 'Operation National Sword', having the foresight to have an established Materials Reclamation Facility, (MRF) and offer high quality recyclables ensuring that export to China remained cost effective. There was also a reduced environmental impact with the container ships returning with a return load of recycled materials from the U.K. The streamed and separated material allowed the Council to continue to enjoy a market in the UK and Europe, despite the general decrease in the value of recycled materials.
- the over purchasing of food was noted as being an obvious factor in the increase in excessive food waste.

The Director also thanked Members and agreed that the service did represent value for money. He referred to the Association for Public Service Excellence 2016/17 (APSE) performance indicators, which confirmed that Exeter City Council's recycling rate of household waste in terms of refuse collection was the fourth most effective authority in the UK and cost efficient service for its council tax payers.

A Member commented on previous recycling performance and considered that Exeter City Council should still be prioritising a food waste collection service. The Cleansing and Fleet Manager stated that he was aware that the recycling rate had reduced over the past two years and he agreed with the Member that a fall in recycling rates across the country could be attributed to changes in behaviour. He advised that the level of packaging processed through the MRF was the same, but the volume of material was lighter. He added that the inclusion of street sweepings in the recycling rate, with any increase in street cleansing effectiveness could have the effect of increasing our non-recycled waste.

The Portfolio Holder for Place shared the regret, but appreciated that food waste collection would be a cost to the Council, when financial consideration was vital in such times of austerity and cuts. However, this did remain a long term ambition as well as taking any opportunity for revenue generation through the MRF. He commented on the options and possible further consideration in the future and he acknowledged that the cheapest option was not necessarily what was best for the residents of Exeter. The Member Champion for Communities and Food Recycling also referred to his role as Chair of Devon Authorities Strategic Waste Committee and it should be acknowledged that Exeter's recycling culture was quite significant

even to the extent of taking in recycling from other Devon authorities. He echoed the Portfolio Holder Place's view, that whilst it remained a key aspiration to introduce a food waste collection, this could put the broader service at risk and effect the recycling and residual waste collections. This was not what Exeter deserved, hence the commitment to look at an annual review to identify the best time for introduction of any system for Exeter's residents. He invited the Cleansing and Fleet Manager to describe how the MRF made a difference with its infra-red technology and opportunities to bolster the existing recycling service in Exeter.

Place Scrutiny Committee noted the current and planned measures to improve the recycling rate achieved by the current service; and supported approval by the Executive of the following:-

- (1) Exeter City Council should continue to provide the current recycling service (described as the 'baseline' in the circulated report); and
- (2) that officers provide an annual update on the food waste business case in the Recycling Plan, presented to Place Scrutiny Committee.

18 **Budget Monitoring (3rd Quarter)**

The Principal Accountant (PM) presented the report which advised Members of any major differences, by management unit between the approved revenue budget and the estimated outturn as part of a quarterly financial update in respect of Place Scrutiny Committee. The current forecast suggested that net expenditure for the Committee would decrease from the approved budget by a total of £101,620 after transfers from reserves and revenue contributions to capital. This represented a variation of 2.12% from the revised budget and included a supplementary budget of £621,297, already agreed by Council. The Principal Accountant (MH) stated that the report also included a predicted outturn update in respect of the Place Capital Programme, and she confirmed a total current spend of £1,871,990 in 2017/18 with £931,970 of the programme potentially deferred until 2018/19.

The Chair introduced Councillor Owen, on the Financial Working Group, convened to provide a focus of the financial reports presented to the three Scrutiny Committees. One of the aims of the working group was to ensure that Members made the most of the opportunity to challenge and comment on the financial reporting. The Member was grateful to the Finance team who did an excellent job providing both information and support at the Scrutiny Committee meetings and elsewhere, and he hoped that future reporting would include more explanatory narrative to allow Members to offer a clearer challenge. He also sought further clarification on the significant variations by management unit for Place Scrutiny Committee, for the March report as follows:-

- 81A4 – Public Safety - The Director confirmed that the Home Call Alarm Service had made a net profit for the authority. The operating profit had increased substantially and in 2015/16 there was a healthy 19% profit, which increased to 21% profit in 2016/17. There had been a steady growth which had exceeded income expectations, however demand was expected to plateau.
- 818A6 - Parks and Green Spaces - The Director referred to the overspend and explained that the Public Realm service were working smarter and more efficiently with greater mechanisation. He also explained that the Parks and Green Spaces and street cleaning had separate budgets, but were managed as a whole with an overspend of £60,000, out of £3.8 million budget.

- 81D4 – Street Cleaning - The Director stated that an underspend was due to less vehicle repairs but they were in the process of acquiring more modern vehicles.
- 83B5 – Planning Services - The Principal Accountant (PM) stated that the underspend on the pay budget was attributed to a budget which had not been removed.
- 83B8 - Major Projects - The Principal Accountant (PM) stated that the compensation payment was in respect of the Bus Station and was due to the tenant under the Landlords and Tenants Act 1954. The City Surveyor had to end the tenancy earlier than anticipated in order to secure the site for redevelopment. He also explained that no further compensation would be due when the Bus Station is closed.

Place Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

19 **Exeter Highways and Traffic Orders Committee Minutes**

The minutes of the Exeter Highways and Traffic Orders Committee (Devon County Council) held on 16 January 2018 were circulated for information.

The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 7.10 pm

Chair

**PUBLIC QUESTION RECEIVED for Place Scrutiny Committee – 8 March 2018
from Mr Peter Cleasby**

To Councillor Edwards as Leader and Portfolio Holder City Development

Question

The Draft Statement of Community Involvement for the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan envisages that 6 weeks will be allowed for public consultation on the first draft of the Plan. The 6-week limit was defended by the project manager for the Plan, Simon Thornley, at a public meeting on 19 January 2018. The Chief Executive of East Devon District Council subsequently indicated that a 12-week period would be preferable.

Unlike developers and the large house builders who can afford to pay expert consultants to study the draft and the volumes of supporting evidence, many individuals and small organisations cannot make serious responses to the draft within 6 weeks. Some will need to consult their members. Planning is intended to shape the communities in which we all live, so their input is every bit as important as those with professional skills and commercial interests.

Since the final version of the Statement of Community Involvement has not yet been published, despite the closing date for comments being 11 months ago, will the City Council make it clear to the partner authorities that it considers a 12-week consultation period must be adopted?

Response - Councillor Edwards, Leader and Portfolio Holder City Development thanked Mr Cleasby for his question. Of course, this was a matter for agreement between the four Councils preparing the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan, and not one for just one Council acting alone. Any decision on this would need to make sure that it struck a proper balance between the need to consult and engage communities, and the increasing imperative that there was a good, long term Plan in place. For Exeter, the need for a Plan was particularly important as we do not have a five year supply of housing and were therefore particularly vulnerable to ad-hoc development by appeal, with the loss of strategic oversight and local decision making this implied. Having said that, he agreed that 6 weeks was quite a short period, and he would certainly support some increase as long as it did not have a significant impact on the timetable. He said that he did not think it would be sensible to give a more definitive answer at this stage, since the matter would come before the Cabinets of the four Councils for decision in the near future.

Mr Cleasby was invited to respond and he said that he was grateful for the response from the Leader. He understood that meetings would have to be held at the other Councils. Nevertheless he still considered that a longer period of consultation would be more appropriate, as it was important to ensure a robust Plan and the local population would be all the better for being informed.

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**PUBLIC QUESTION RECEIVED for Place Scrutiny Committee – 8 March 2018
from Mr Leon Poltawski**

To Councillor Stephen Brimble as Portfolio Holder, Place

Question

Having seen the litter havoc wrought by growing numbers of seagulls around the city, I wonder when the council are going to do something about making the litter bins around town gull-proof? Cathedral Green, a major tourist attraction in Exeter, is blighted by litter scattered by gulls, but the problem is widespread through the city centre and residential areas.

I appreciate that cost is an issue but the solution does not have to be expensive, perhaps a matter of fitting swinging doors to the bins. And remember the cost saved by not needing as much time spent on clearing up.

Response - Councillor Brimble, Portfolio Holder Place made a response and advised that the Cathedral Green area was owned and managed by Cathedral management staff. The litter bins on this green area were a different design to that of the public litter bins around the rest of the city. During the summer of 2017, Exeter City Council in partnership with the Cathedral management conducted a trial of Big Belly Bins. These bins have a battery powered by solar energy and have a compactor inside the bin, which increased the volume of litter that could be placed inside. It also had a flap style opening which meant that gulls (or anyone else) did not have access to litter once in the bin. The 6 week 'Big Belly Bin' trial, took into account the summer tourist season and when the students returned to the city in numbers, coped with the waste very well. Unfortunately the decision to implement changes to the existing litter bin provision on the Green, was not one that Exeter City Council could take as this land was privately owned by the Cathedral. The trial was undertaken to prove or disprove the concept. It was agreed at the time of the trial that the Big Belly Bins would be a solution to the problem described on the green area at times. However, it did not take into account litter left behind on the grass by picnickers. The Big Belly Bins were also considerably more expensive (more than 8 times) that of a standard litter bin and this would no doubt be a factor to consider for the Cathedral staff.

With regard to the other litter bins across the city. Most of the City Council's litter bins had fairly small apertures because of the reason stated in the question, although it was important to accommodate a pizza box size of litter. Last week there was a demonstration of a different style of litter bin with even smaller apertures available. It is planned to purchase some of these new style litter bins to trial in the new financial year, albeit within the constraints of the Council's existing budgets, which currently sit at around £15,000 p.a. Councillor Brimble, Portfolio Holder Place also put this into context, and advised that the City Council had approximately 1,200 litter and dog bins across the city which needed to be maintained as they become broken or vandalised.

The City Council's street cleaners were out on the streets from 06:00 – 18:00, 7 days a week, 364 days per year and do their very best to keep any over flowing litter bins to a minimum. On the odd occasion this occurred they responded quickly and efficiently to return the place to an acceptable standard.

Bags of waste presented for collection also attract seagulls. The Council encouraged residents to use seagull—deterrent sacks to contain their rubbish. For commercial waste collections the pricing policy encouraged the use of wheelie bins rather than rubbish sacks for those customers who could store a bin. The Council was also

investigating the potential to install larger on-street bins in parts of the city centre where rubbish sacks could be contained as a deterrent to seagulls.

MEMBER QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDER at Place Scrutiny Committee – 8 March 2018 - Questions from Councillor Hannaford

Response to be made by Councillor Sutton Portfolio Holder Economy & Culture

Question 1

Could the Portfolio Holder please briefly outline the City Councils overall strategy to promote and support small and medium sized businesses, including independent traders?

Response - Councillor Sutton, the Portfolio Holder, Economy and Culture confirmed that the Growth and Enterprise team supported a wide range of businesses from across the city in terms of size and sectors. Small businesses and independent traders made up the majority of businesses within the city and were a very important part of economy. The team oversees The Exeter Key Employer Programme, a wide range of businesses were included within the programme from 1 or 2 man bands to international companies such as the Met Office. Different sectors were also included, such as retail and hospitality to professional services and advanced manufacturing and tech companies. The team meet these businesses once a year to gather data on business performance and to find out if they were encountering any challenges and to ensure the business remains open and located in Exeter. One area of work where valuable business information had been gained was on broadband, as a result a bid to the Local Full Fibre Network to improve superfast broadband to ultrafast in Exeter and Greater Exeter had been submitted.

The team were currently working across departments to promote City Council services that businesses access, and they were due to attend the South West Business Expo at WestPoint on 15 March. Services that are attending include, Invest in Exeter, Business Rates, Environmental Health, Licensing, City Development, Exeter Business against Crime (EBAC), Recycling, Trade Waste and Exeter Business Centre to highlight the good work that is being done. It was not just about being a regulatory body, but supportive advice to businesses was also offered. The team are due to undertake a business consultation exercise at the show to develop a Business First Charter – and are keen to articulate that they are very much pro-business. This topic will be the subject of a future report to Committee.

The City Council also manage the Exeter Commercial Property Register, and website allows any type and size of business to search for vacant property and offices within Exeter. The team supports and guide businesses on suitable vacant properties.

A new area of work will be around supporting businesses around skills, and a new post of Skills Officer is currently being recruited, which will support small and independent businesses within Exeter to recruit and retain the right talent. This new post will also work with schools, Exeter College and the University in ensuring that there are the right skills for the right type of vacant jobs in the city – not just now but for 5 – 10 years' time.

The City Council also manage Visit Exeter, which promotes Exeter to attract new and repeat visitors to the city. A major part of their work is to promote the variety and quality of small retail, hospitality and cultural businesses that were in Exeter.

The City Council supports and promotes areas across the city that face adversity, such as the fire that occurred in the Royal Clarence Hotel and the current flood alleviation works on the Quay. Visits are made to businesses on a regular basis to discuss progress and to address challenges and issues they face as a business.

Councillor Hannaford asked a supplementary question as to whether the City Council had set out their stall as a local council to dispel the myth that they were anti-business and anti-enterprise.

Councillor Sutton, the Portfolio Holder, Economy and Culture, referred to the interesting work taking place, and stated that she was proud of the business support in the city and as a key element that support would carry on.

Question 2

Is the Portfolio Holder aware that there are plans to reboot and reform the St Thomas Traders & Business Association?

Response - Councillor Sutton, the Portfolio Holder, Economy and Culture said that she was aware of the aspirations, both as a Portfolio Holder and as a Councillor for Westexe.

Question 3

What guidance and support could the City Council give to this process? And he also qualified that was in relation to the potential BID and any guidance and support the City Council would give.

Response - Councillor Sutton, the Portfolio Holder, Economy and Culture confirmed that a member of the Growth & Enterprise team would be available to support the St Thomas Traders & Business Association in their efforts to reboot and reform. She also referred to the potential for a BID and certainly would facilitate any proposed meeting with the City Centre BID and it was hoped that a decision would be made on that in due course.

Question 4

Should it be the wish of local traders, could the Portfolio Holder, please consider facilitating a meeting to look at progressing a St Thomas Business Improvement District, with local members, council officers and businesses?

Response - Councillor Sutton, the Portfolio Holder, Economy and Culture reiterated her delight at facilitating a meeting with St Thomas businesses and members, as well as a number of City Council officers to discuss progressing a Business Improvement District for the area. We could also include the Exeter City Centre Business Improvement District within the discussions to learn from their journey.

Councillor Hannaford asked a supplementary question and any plans to expand St Thomas and Cowick as a major district shopping centre as they will benefit from a robust business and trading association.

Councillor Sutton stated that she welcomed the opportunity to share best practice for such a thriving part of the city.

MEMBER QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDER at Place Scrutiny Committee –

8 March 2018 - Questions from Councillor Musgrave

Response to be made by Councillor Brimble Portfolio Holder Place

Question 1

Does the Portfolio Holder agree with me, that breaking a manifesto commitment to introduce food waste recycling is a pretty rubbish deal for Exeter?

Response – Councillor Brimble the Portfolio Holder Place advised that the Exeter Labour Party manifesto promised to complete the business case into food waste doorstep collection and to introduce it at the earliest opportunity. The key phrase there was the "earliest opportunity". Increasing the recycling rate and introducing a food waste collection remained a long term ambition. Like many local authorities, Exeter City Council had a budget and all the options for introducing a food waste collection were either a cost to the Council or a financial risk. The cheaper options according to the Eunomia report involved moving to a three weekly black bin collection and in one case kerbside recycling collection. He said that he was of the view that the current co-mingled recycling collection every two weeks with being processed through the MRF is the most efficient way to improve recycling rates. He had asked the Environment Secretary, Michael Gove for help to deliver the governments targets on recycling and cleaner environments. Mr Gove had responded stating that there was no money available for councils. He represented everything the Government had done to starve local government of funds to improve recycling rates, improving cleansing services and support the work of council staff.

Councillor Musgrave asked a supplementary question about the cost of the consultancy report. The Portfolio Holder Place would ensure the final figure was provided.

Question 2

How does the Portfolio Holder intend to improve the city's poor recycling rates without the introduction of food waste recycling?

Response - Councillor Brimble the Portfolio Holder Place advised that Paragraphs 9.2 – 9.5 of the Food Waste Collection report presented to the Place Scrutiny Committee on 8 March described some of the measures being taken to increase our recycling from materials other than food waste. Further details of the City Council's Recycling Plan could be found in the report to Place Scrutiny Committee in September 2017

<http://committees.exeter.gov.uk/documents/g4839/Public%20reports%20pack%2014th-Sep-2017%2017.30%20Place%20Scrutiny%20Committee.pdf?T=10>.

Paragraph 9.6 of the food waste report also noted that Exeter had the fourth lowest amount of total waste collected per head in the country, and lowest outside London. Therefore the City Council's policies would concentrate on maintaining the Council's good record on waste reduction, improving the capture of the materials that was currently collected, and adding new materials to our recycling service where it was cost effective to do so.

Councillor Musgrave asked a supplementary question about the cost sharing arrangement with Devon County Council for the disposal of food waste in respect of Exeter's Energy from Waste plant. Councillor Brimble, the Portfolio Holder Place explained he would obtain more detail on the Energy from Waste plant for Councillor Musgrave.

Question 3

Does the Portfolio Holder agree with me, that food waste recycling is now a basic expectation of most ratepayers?

Response - Councillor Brimble, the Portfolio Holder Place advised that the most recent available figures from www.parliament.uk (2014/15) indicate that fewer than 45% of English local authorities offered a food waste collection and the percentage was unlikely to have increased substantially since then. Our neighbouring authorities all offer food waste collection, which may contribute to the perception that it is a widespread expectation.

Question 4

Does the Portfolio Holder agree with me, that the decision not to proceed with food waste recycling in the city is based on the addition revenue budget being allocated for the loan to the council to deliver the bus station project?

Response - Councillor Brimble, the Portfolio Holder Place stated that the Bus Station and Leisure Centre project was a completely different budget to cleansing and recycling services. As Portfolio Holder, he said that his aim had been to protect the budgets of front line services in cleansing and recycling. This was in the context of revenue support grant disappearing by 2020. The City Council had continued to protect the recycling budget and supported continued improvements to the Materials Reclamation Facility (MRF) which generates income from recycled material. The staff have been working hard recently with councils, charities and volunteers all over the South West to process Ocean plastic collection through Exeter MRF. He believed that we should place our limited budgets towards recycled material that is a revenue generator for the council such as plastic, aluminium, glass, paper, cardboard and cans. For this reason he said that he had worked alongside organisations like Row for the Ocean to ensure that all plastic is recycled in Exeter. He believed that we should aim to eliminate single use plastics in Exeter through recycling. One step that should be taken too achieve this is to introduce recycle on the go bins in the city centre to improve recycling rates.

Exeter has had the highest reduction in CO2 emissions of any city in the UK for the last decade. According to centre for cities. A reduction of 44% from 2005-2025. The Council has pursued a low carbon agenda for many years and has demonstrated a commitment to district heating, renewable energy and passivhaus construction setting excellent standards for environmental performance through the development plan. The City Council was recognised as Environment Council of the Year in 2016 and the environmental agenda needs to be seen in a far more enlightened way than simply a question of food waste.