

LEISURE COMPLEX AND BUS STATION PROGRAMME BOARD

Monday 7 November 2016

Present:-

Councillor Bialyk (Chair)
Councillors Denham, Edwards, Gottschalk and Prowse

Apologies:-

Councillor Wardle

Also Present

Chief Executive & Growth Director, Deputy Chief Executive, Client Lead (Build) and Democratic Services Officer (Committees) (SLS)

Justin Pickford - Baker Ruff Hannon
Iain McNeill - WSP Group Limited
James Halse - Arcadis Design and Consultancy
Rob Sims - Communications Consultant

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MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2016 were signed by the Chair as a correct record.

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members made no declarations of interest.

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INTERIM BUS STATION UPDATE

Justin Pickford and Ian McNeill attended the meeting to present the latest detail of the Interim Bus Station arrangements for Members' information.

Justin Pickford referred to the meeting of the Board on 12 July 2016 when the detailed design, procurement and implementation of the proposed Interim Bus Station arrangements were approved. He reminded Members of the bus related matters which would be provided during the period of construction, to include a minimum number of bus stands and stops as part of a mixed design solution to provide shelter and protection from the weather, information for passengers, as well as driver welfare and bus operator facilities including office accommodation.

The preparation for the installation of the new temporary bus shelters to be used whilst the Bus Station was being developed would start to appear in the city centre on Paris Street, Sidwell Street and Southernhay from mid-January, but they would not be in use until the end of March when the Bus Station was due to close. A comprehensive communications exercise would provide key information and help to manage the public's expectations in the run up and also during the initial period of use. As part of the effort to ensure that the public had the necessary information, two large display boards would provide colour coded detail to show the reallocation of the existing bus station bays to the temporary stands. These would be located at

the top of Paris Street opposite John Lewis and also in Princesshay. Representatives of Stagecoach and Exeter City Council were continuing their discussion over the solution for the back of house facilities for the current operator, but it was likely that some of Stagecoach's operations may be located within the Civic Centre during the interim period. Members were reminded that it was anticipated that the interim bus station arrangements would be in place for approximately two years, whilst the Bus Station site was redeveloped.

Iain McNeill recalled the reasoning behind the approach in providing temporary bus stops in Sidwell Street North, Paris Street and Southernhay and presented an update of the interim arrangements which included:-

- 7 stands on Sidwell Street North
- 5 stands on Sidwell Street South
- 5 stands on Paris Street
- 4 stands on Cheeke Street
- layover at various times on Red Lion Lane, Verney Street,
- Bampfylde Street, Paris Street, Summerland Street and Sidwell Street (13 Spaces)

The provision would provide flexibility to Stagecoach in the allocation of services to stands and routing generally around the city. He referred to a meeting of Devon County Council's Exeter Highways and Traffic Orders Committee (HATOC) which was due to take place on 14 November. Members of that Committee would be asked to approve the introduction of a number of temporary traffic restrictions to support the temporary transfer of bus services from the Bus Station, as well as various temporary traffic restrictions, as required, and instigate the changes required for the displaced parking around the Southernhay area. It was likely that Devon County Council would appoint the highway contractor within the next week or two. Provision to obtain permission to work on the highway network had to be obtained to ensure the contractor team was in place to commence work in the New Year. Iain McNeill confirmed that the work would take place in three stages with Phase 1 - Paris Street remaining open; Phase 2 - and the closure of through traffic, followed by Stage 3 - to reinstate the highway as deemed appropriate. It was also proposed that the traffic flow changes to the vehicle access arrangements for the car parks, Princesshay Car Park 1 and also Broadwalk House would change. This was to reduce the possibility of cars queuing in Paris Street and enhance the opportunity for exiting onto the wider traffic network.

Iain McNeill outlined the timeline and need to vacate the Bus Station site for the new build Bus Station project by 30 March 2017 -

- the temporary facilities were required to be in place prior to 30 March 2017
- to enable the relocation of the buses into the temporary facilities for the timeline, the highways alteration works in Sidwell Street and Paris Street are likely to commence 9 January 2017, with the works to Southernhay commencing January / February 2017
- the interim arrangements would need to be in place until the new Bus Station was completed and open to the public, (currently scheduled for December 2018)
- areas subject to the highways remodelling to create the interim arrangements would be returned to their current layout, circa January – March 2019

There had been ongoing discussions with National Express, Megabus, and Stagecoach and Devon County Council regarding a city centre location for dropping

off and boarding of long distance coaches, with Sidwell Street presenting the most appropriate interim solution. There would be three coach stands, with covered shelter for approximately 40 passengers and their luggage on Bampfylde Street. He also referred to the parking for visiting touring coaches with parking spaces on South Street as well as at Haven Banks.

The team would continue to progress the development and implementation of the arrangements, including:

- to finalise the detailed design solution in Sidwell Street with information from trial holes for the siting of the bus shelters;
- continue to consult with accessibility groups;
- continue consulting with the Bus Users Group, Stagecoach and a range of stakeholders;
- conclude the provision of suitable bus operator and driver welfare facilities;
- finalise the appointment of the Highways contractor and start date
- implement the works, and
- continue to coordinate with the Communications Team at Exeter City Council.

A Member referred to the forthcoming HATOC meeting and a report which had identified the estimated costs of the works to be £80,000. He also referred to the removal of parking bays in Sidwell Street and South Street and was concerned over the lost revenue to the Council. The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that the cost of £80,000 is for the highways works, with the total forecast cost for all matters in connection with the interim arrangements being £400,000.

The Member also referred to the need for any works to the pavement around the John Lewis store, stating that he hoped any such cost could be minimised when New North Road was opened to inbound traffic. Iain McNeill advised that the plan was to follow the existing curb line to avoid any unnecessary cost.

Members noted the latest report on the interim arrangements for bus travel whilst the new Bus Station site was being developed as well as the status of the project which remained on target and on budget.

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COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Rob Sims presented the detail of the Communication Strategy for the Interim Bus Station arrangements. (A copy of which is attached to the minutes)

He circulated a copy of the Communications Strategy and set out the

- aims and objectives
- strategy
- communication channels and
- timetable

The Strategy would help to ensure that people were aware of the timescale and arrangements for the temporary bus arrangements ahead of, and during the closure of Exeter Bus Station, which would take place at the end of March 2017, and that Exeter was seen as being open for business during this period.

Work in respect of communicating the detail of interim arrangements was progressing well and to the agreed timetable. The City Council's Communications team continued to work with Stagecoach, the Bus Users Group, a range of

passenger groups and stakeholders to ensure that the information reached those who used the Bus Station and highlight the changes to an audience on a Devon wide scale.

The team would use a number of ways to inform people including:-

- social media, and a series of short videos will be produced which had the potential to be shared with many people and boosted on Facebook and Twitter to spread the message to a wide range of people.
- media releases would continue to be made at regular opportunities and direct contact made with the Express & Echo, radio and also trade press.
- the Exeter Citizen was due to be published on 20 November and would contain all the detail of the interim arrangement.
- weekly email bulletins were already sent to over 8,130 subscribers of the Council's GovDelivery service.
- a letter drop will be made to all businesses and residents in the affected area of Sidwell Street and to businesses in Southernhay.
- a leaflet will also be produced for passengers in conjunction with Stagecoach, and include a map and full details, including a colour coded key to the temporary bus stands. The leaflets will also be distributed at prominent locations in the city including the Bus Station, the Civic Centre, train stations, the RD&E Hospital and available in the public areas of larger retailers such as John Lewis and Marks and Spencer.
- larger employers and business groups such as the Exeter Chamber of Commerce will also be targeted to spread the information, and
- businesses and stakeholders will receive a face to face visit from the communications team, as well as have a dedicated contact.

A series of engagement days at the Bus Station have been planned in January and also between February and March, as part of an intensive eight week media campaign of awareness. It was important to ensure that the message about the arrangements were clear, particularly when there was a time lapse between the placement of the bus shelters and the temporary stops actually becoming operational.

A Member congratulated the Communications team on an excellent piece of work so far and was pleased that every effort had been made to ensure the right information would be available for the public and local businesses. Rob Sims responded to the Member's question and confirmed that he had met with representatives of Stagecoach and they had been fully engaged in all of the arrangements. He had also briefed senior Princesshay staff and the city centre's Business Improvement District representatives.

The Chair referred to the opportunity for the public to ask questions or attend the meeting and he was delighted to advise that he had received a number of questions by email from Keith Lewis of the Exeter Civic Society. He had been unable to attend a recent Accessibility Group meeting, but had sent in some questions, and it was felt appropriate to answer these at the Programme Board.

Questions received from Keith Lewis: - (Responses in italics below)

- 1) You will know that my main concern are adequate protected width within the bus station concourse for non-bus-users to pass through the bus station, and to enable this, that queue management processes are put in place to discourage bus – users blocking the route. *R - James Halse confirmed that a further meeting with the project's engineers, ARUP, had been arranged to discuss the*

final layout for the concourse and the provision of a segregated area to help passenger queue management.

- 2) There is a pedestrian priority across all of the neighbouring streets to allow people to move from transport modes and to access the bus station. Can it be established who will be responsible for this – Exeter City Council, Devon County Council Crown Estates R - *James Halse confirmed that the off-site works would be overseen by Crown Estates.*
- 3) It also became apparent that at the end of the last Programme Board meeting, that with Crown Estates' development likely to complete well after the new Bus Station, that the main access to the Bus Station for most passengers will be via Sidwell Street. What will Exeter City Council, Devon County Council and Crown Estates do to improve the upper part of Cheeke Street pavements and to install appropriate signage when the Bus Station opens for business? R - *James Halse confirmed that the necessary signage would be in place.*

It was also noted that the minutes of the Leisure Complex and Bus Station Programme Board were available on the City Council's web site.

The Chair also referred to an email received from Bob Crawley from the Bus Users Group over access to the Bus Station. It was noted that Howard Smith (Planning Officer) had replied directly to him and included detail on the cycle routes to deter any such route through the Bus Station.

Members approved the Communications Strategy.

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DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the date of the next meeting would be Wednesday 25 January meeting at 5.30pm in the Civic Centre.

(The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 7.15 pm)

Chair