

PUBLIC QUESTION RECEIVED for Place Scrutiny Committee – 9 November 2017 from Ms Maggie Emery

To Cllr Rosie Denham, as Portfolio Holder for City Transformation, Energy and Transport.

Stagecoach recently made changes to its H bus service in Exeter, as a result of which it no longer travels as far as Cowley Bridge. This has caused great inconvenience to residents in Duryard including those wishing to travel to the RD&E Hospital in Barrack Road.

Stagecoach insist that they undertook effective consultation, prior to withdrawing the H bus service to Cowley Bridge and West Garth Road. This is disputed by a large number of residents who have signed a petition against the changes with over 550 names on it. Everyone was dismayed at the loss of this important service.

We believe that Stagecoach must now undertake a proper and transparent consultation with all the affected residents, in a way which also allows the elderly residents to meaningfully take part. A door to door questionnaire, with proper lead in time and published results, must be undertaken. The results of this should then be openly discussed at a meeting or with the Local Transport Authority.

Will Exeter City Council use all the powers and influence at its disposal to support residents on this?

The Chair, Councillor Sills read out the question from Ms Emery relating to the bus service in Exeter. She was unable to attend the meeting. The Portfolio Holder City Transformation Energy and Transport, Councillor Rosie Denham responded to the question. She had been engaged in correspondence with a number of residents over recent months, had met locally with councillors and had an initial meeting with Stagecoach after the changes were announced, but before they were rolled out. Unfortunately the contact did not result in any changes to the proposals and the service was now in place. Residents had continued to feedback more effectively on the impact that was having on them.

Exeter City Council had limited powers to directly influence Stagecoach, but following a meeting with two of the local councillors, the County Council and in consultation with the Chair of the Exeter Highways and Traffic Orders Committee (HATOC) an item has been requested on the agenda of the forthcoming meeting on 20 November. Stagecoach would be in attendance and there would be the opportunity to raise the residents' concerns over the impact that the changes have had on them. Councillor Denham would continue to raise this matter with Stagecoach directly. She encouraged residents to also continue to share their experiences.

Councillor Denham confirmed that she had addressed the specific question about the changes to the H bus route, but there were issues with changes to bus routes across the city and particularly pertinent as the city continued to grow and travel patterns changed. It was important to ensure that all relevant data was used to inform Stagecoach and other transport providers to help with service design and develop more of a strategic approach. She hoped to meet with Stagecoach and Devon County Council to discuss.