

THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF EXETER CITY COUNCIL

Guildhall
Thursday 12 October 2017

The Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor (Cllr Robson)
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Cllr Hannan)
Councillors Bialyk, Branston, Brimble, Denham, Edwards, Foale, Foggin, Gottschalk, Harvey, D Henson, Mrs Henson, Holland (part of meeting), Keen, Lamb, Lyons, Mitchell, Morris, Morse, Musgrave, Newby, Owen, Packham, Pearson, Prowse, Sheldon, Sills, Spackman, Sutton, Vizard, Wardle, Warwick and Wood

23 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ashwood, Baldwin, Hannaford, Leadbetter and Thompson.

24 **MINUTES SILENCE - CLIVE TARR**

The Council observed a minutes silence in memory of Clive Tarr a former Councillor who had recently passed away.

25 **LEISURE COMPLEX AND BUS STATION PROGRAMME BOARD - 28 SEPTEMBER 2017**

Minutes of the meeting of the Leisure Complex and Bus Station Programme Board - 28 September 2017 were taken as read.

The Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, Communities and Sport presented the minutes of the Leisure Complex and Bus Station Programme Board - 28 September 2017.

The Leader proposed the recommendations from the Leisure Complex and Bus Station Programme Board 28 September 2017 in respect of the way forward for the Leisure Complex and Bus Station, with the amendment to recommendation (3) that the bus station will close by the end of February 2018, at the latest, as agreed with the bus company. This was seconded by the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, Communities and Sport.

The Leader stated:-

- that the point of tonight's meeting was to discuss the Council's ongoing commitment to redeveloping the bus station and to outline how the Council would progress plans for the future of the site.
- The recent decision by Crown Estates to pull their retail scheme presented the Council with some challenges and tonight was an update on how the Council would deal with these challenges. The Council's commitment to building a new leisure centre and new bus station was as strong as ever. Some people were saying this was a time to stop and reconsider everything, but anyone who had seen the state of the bus station or used the Pyramids recently would know that these facilities were not good enough for Exeter, and were in desperate need of replacing.
- This was what the people of Exeter elected the Labour Group to deliver, and this is what the administration intended to do. Redeveloping this site had been Council policy for the last 20 years. It had taken this administration to get the plans to this stage, and it would be this administration that delivered it.

- The decision by the Crown Estates to pull out had presented the Council with some challenges but also some new opportunities. The Council now need to do some design work to change the interface between the developments and what the Crown Estates had planned. The Leader stated that he was very proud of the design of the new leisure centre and new bus station and this would not change. The Council would look to retender next spring to find a contractor, with work on the leisure centre and bus station starting in the winter of 2018, and opening to the public in 2020.
- The Council would be looking for new development partners for the longer term, and had already been contacted by interested parties and was no longer tied just to retail, as the Crown Estates wanted. The site lent itself to a mixed use development including offices, housing, social housing, retail, cafes and restaurants with some public open space and it would not be student housing. Whilst some people had called for the bus station to remain open for the foreseeable future if that happened all the momentum that had been built up would vanish and severely weaken the chances of anything happening at the site therefore there was a commitment to closing the bus station.
- The Council would de-risk the site, which meant demolishing the station, cleaning everything up and making it as attractive as it could be for future developers. The Council wanted to start this process straightaway and close the bus station at the end of October but this would not be possible and it would take at least three months to tender for contractors to demolish the bus station. Therefore, it would remain open until early next year, this had been agreed after a meeting with the Managing Director of Stagecoach
- This was the reason why there was an amendment to change recommendation (3) of the Leisure Complex and Bus Station Board to read 'that the bus station will close by the end of February 2018, at the latest, as agreed with the bus company'. The precise closing date would be revealed in the coming weeks.
- Demolishing the bus station and de-risking the site made it much more attractive to future developers, this was another example of the public sector working to attract major private sector investment into the city centre a strategy which had served the city so well over recent years. Exeter had become one of the fastest growing cities in the UK, with one of the most successful economies. This did not happen by chance. The Council was committed to protecting our city centre – where 20,000 people work - against all the threats it faces, from internet shopping and out of town development.
- Despite the recent disappointments the Council have had to deal with, it remained committed to seeing this through to delivering better leisure facilities, a better bus station and a better city centre. Everyone who cared about Exeter as much as the administration does should be working with it to ensure that this happened.

Councillor Newby proposed the following amendment to recommendation (3) “to keep the Bus Station open, and allow Stagecoach and other Operators to continue using it, until further notice”. This was seconded Councillor Holland.

In supporting the amendment, some Members, whilst recognising that the Bus Station site needed to be redeveloped, felt that it should not be at any price and that the closing of the Bus Station should not have a time limit on it to ensure that the project was not rushed and all options could be considered.

Those Members not supporting the amendment felt that it was important to have a time table to work to and, by closing the Bus Station by the end of February 2018, it

would expedite the process with regards to de-risking the site by enabling tenders to be brought for the demolition of the Bus Station.

The Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, Communities and Sport stated that it was anticipated that a recommendation would come back to Council in December this year with details of the contract and costs to demolish the Bus Station and de-risk the site. There was a good business case for the development of the site with the Leisure Complex bringing income into the Council by way of rent and business rates. The Pyramids Pool was in a poor state of repair and needed replacing, the Leisure Complex would be a sustainable Passivhaus building. It was important for the Council to maintain momentum and realise its vision to redeveloping this site.

The amended recommendation (3) was put to the vote and lost.

In accordance with Standing Order 27(1), a named vote on the amended recommendation was called for and the voting was as follows:

Voting for:

Councillors Henson D, Mrs Henson, Holland, Mitchell, Musgrave, Newby and Prowse.

(7 Members)

Voting against:

Councillors Bialyk, Branston, Brimble, Denham, Edwards, Foale, Foggin, Gottschalk, the Deputy Lord Mayor, Harvey, Keen, Lamb, Lyons, Morris, Morse, Owen, Packham, Pearson, Sheldon, Sills, Spackman, Sutton, Vizard, Wardle, Warwick and Wood.

(26 Member)

Abstain:

The Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor

(1 Member)

Absent:

Councillor Ashwood, Baldwin, Hannaford, Leadbetter and Thompson.

(5 Members)

The Leader, in supporting his proposed recommendation with the revised recommendation (3) to close the Bus Station by end of February 2018, stated that the administration was looking at future opportunities for the site and a full consultation had taken place on the plans to date. In response to Members' concerns regarding traffic congestion within the city whilst the Bus Station was closed he commented that, whilst the highway network was the responsibility of the County Council, this Council would work with the County Council to help address the traffic congestion issues. This was only a set back and was a knock on effect of 'Brexit'. He asked that all Members support his recommendation including the amendment to recommendation (3) to close the Bus Station by end of February 2018.

Whilst the majority of the Members supported the recommendation to close the Bus Station by the end of February to 2018 to ensure that good progress was made with the tendering process and de-risking the site, other Members felt that there should not be a time limit on the closure to give more time to consider the options for the site.

All Members supported recommendations (4), (5) and (6).

Council acknowledged that the Leisure Complex and Bus Station Programme Board held on 28 September 2017 had resolved to note:-

- (1) the position as regards Crown Estate/TH Real Estates, including the Development Agreement being set aside; and
- (2) the current procurement process to appoint a main contractor/builder is being stopped; and

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Leisure Complex and Bus Station Programme Board held on 28 September 2017 (as amended and set out below) be received and adopted:-

- (3) the bus station will close by the end of February 2018, at the latest, as agreed with the bus company;

This was carried: For 26 Members; Against 6 Members; Abstention 1 Member; Absent 6

- (4) to undertake an impact analysis of Crown Estates and TH/Real Estates withdrawal, including developing design solutions for the interface elements;
- (5) to investigate any opportunities for the interim use of the remaining site (subject to the need to de-risk the site for development); and
- (6) to look at a permanent solution for the remaining site.

In accordance with Standing Order 27(1), a named vote on the recommendations (4), (5) and (6) was called for and the voting was as follows:

Voting for:

Councillors Bialyk, Branston, Brimble, Denham, Edwards, Foale, Foggin, Gottschalk, the Deputy Lord Mayor, Harvey, Henson D, Mrs Henson, Keen, Lamb, Lyons, Mitchell, Morris, Morse, Musgrave, Newby, Owen, Packham, Pearson, Prowse, Sheldon, Sills, Spackman, Sutton, Vizard, Wardle, Warwick and Wood.

(32 Members)

Abstain:

The Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor

(1 Member)

Absent:

Councillors Ashwood, Baldwin, Hannaford, Holland, Leadbetter and Thompson.

(6 Members)

(The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 7.23 pm)

Chair