

PUBLIC Questions for Place Scrutiny Committee – 14 March 2019

<p>Peter Cleasby Q1. What benefits did the Council expect would accrue as a result of the transfer of the leisure centres management contract from Parkwood Leisure to Legacy Leisure in June 2015; and will the Council please state whether each of these benefits has been realised and, in the case of financial benefits, quantify the benefits accrued to the Council (whether as additional income or savings)?</p>	<p>Councillor Bialyk as Portfolio Holder Health and Wellbeing, Communities & Sport responded to the public question</p> <p>Councillor Bialyk stated that from a financial perspective, the principal benefit surrounded VAT relief, which provided a fixed additional income to the Council in the form of additional management fee.</p> <p>He confirmed that this benefit was fixed at the time of transfer and has been realised</p> <p>As a charity, Legacy Leisure is also able to make grants available to individuals and clubs for community based activities that will improve quality of life or assist with the attainment of personal goals within sport and leisure. The information regarding recipients of grants is held with Legacy Leisure</p> <p>Mr Cleasby made a closing remark and thanked Councillor Bialyk for the response, but made a further request for the information. Councillor Bialyk stated that this information was a confidential matter and had been the subject of a Part 2 report, which is why he just was able to state that the benefit had been realised. Mr Cleasby welcomed the information that the community also benefited through various grants from Legacy Leisure, and it was important that the Council benefited from this. He stated that he understood that Parkwood Leisure also had some financial benefit from the arrangement too, and of course this benefited the leisure centre users.</p>
<p>Q2. What view does the Council take of the statement in Devon County Council's draft Exeter Transport Strategy that the target of 50% of all trips within the city being made on foot or bicycle "represents the most achievable way of freeing up</p>	<p>Councillor Sutton, Portfolio Holder Economy, Culture responded for Councillor Denham as Portfolio Holder City Transformation</p> <p>Mr Cleasby has raised a matter that has also been the concern of the City Council and is reflected in our response back to Devon County Council. At the heart of the City Council's pitch to Government in relation the Greater Exeter Industrial Strategy was the recognition that we need an innovative</p>

<p>capacity to facilitate the increase of car-based inward commuters from outside the city” (paragraph 1.47)?</p>	<p>approach to the problem of managing our highway network. The concept of a city development fund and the significant ask for transport infrastructure in the Industrial strategy reflected this concern. In stark terms transport was identified as the potential major barrier to the future growth of the city. The current system simply does not address the problem in a manner consistent with the vision we have for the city. The current approach is that the development sector is required to fund improvements to the network when there is insufficient highway capacity, thus developers pay for new junction and highway capacity. However, should the local transport authority successfully reduce the level of traffic on the highway network, the developers can argue there is capacity available for them to fill. In other words we are consigned to have to live with congestion. Whereas we would wish to reduce congestion and permanently shift car borne traffic from the network to encourage walking, cycling and use of buses. We need to see a different approach so that developments outside of the city do more to hold car borne traffic within their areas, such as providing greater self-containment in new developments. For example, Cranbrook and South West Exeter need to provide an attractive employment and service centre base, and hard infrastructure such as park and rides must be provided on our arterial routes into the city. The response submitted to the County Council reflects this concern. We are mindful of the challenges facing our rural communities who may not be well serviced by public transport and the needs of our businesses who need well connected communities to address labour market challenges. But it does illustrate the point that the city is continually driving the economy of the sub-region and is a stand out performer in the region, but it is far from clear the transport needs of the city region are understood as a matter of priority across the region. The County Council has to fight its corner with other authorities in the region and nationally. Hopefully, the case study that is being prepared with the National Infrastructure Commission will help raise the profile of the challenge we face and the urgency in securing resources to support our common agenda.</p>
<p>Q3. In relation to the proposal to reduce to 11 the number of Council-managed public toilets in the city:</p>	<p>Councillor Harvey Portfolio Holder Place and Commercialisation responded to the public question.</p>

<p>(a) How many respondents to the online survey used Question 14 (“any other comments”) to object to the proposal?</p> <p>(b) Does the £65,000 saving from the closures shown in the 2019/20 estimates include the costs of demolition, conversion to alternative use, sealing up or other maintenance of the toilets to be closed; and if not, what are the estimated costs of these works?</p>	<p>Councillor Harvey made the following responses</p> <p>(a) He advised that there were 328 out of 526 responders who commented against the proposal.</p> <p>Of those 23 people commented in favour of closing the public toilets. 174 people did not comment on Q14. There was also one inappropriate comment.</p> <p>(b) No those costs were not included and if the decision is given to close any public toilet on the list, then an individual assessment would be made for what it best for that location which might include any number of options, in conjunction with other programmes. Clearly as we do not know what the costs will be, as we do not know what the land will be used for.</p> <p>Mr Cleasby responded and thanked Councillor Harvey for the response. He said that he had noted that there were a small number of people who had commented against the proposal, even though there was no invitation to comment yes or no. He surmised they must have used the final ‘other comments’ box to do so. He said that the findings did suggest there were a fairly weighted opinion against the proposal, but it was clearly for the Council to take the consultation into account.</p>
<p>Lynn Wetenhall Devon County Council have produced a 10 year draft Transport Strategy for Exeter. This document has not appeared for discussion before any committee of either Devon or Exeter Councils, apart from Exeter Highways and Transport Orders Committee; this committee has no strategic role or say over transport matters. On 6th November 2018, Exeter HATOC were given a PowerPoint presentation about the draft strategy, with no advance report available. The</p>	<p>Councillor Sutton, Portfolio Holder Economy, Culture responded for Councillor Denham as Portfolio Holder City Transformation</p> <p>The Transport officers of the County Council shared their emerging thinking with the draft Exeter Transport Strategy in a number of forums prior to the formal consultation exercise, including work on the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan. This reflects the commitment the county council made to the city council in holding a number of informal meetings with the portfolio holder on strategic transport for the city. The emerging strategy was also shared with other leaders of the Greater Exeter district councils through the mechanism of the Greater Exeter Growth Board. Therefore it would be fair to comment</p>

<p>joint Transport Strategy Steering Group, with 3 sitting councillors across County and City Councils, discussed the strategy apparently very briefly, on 9th July 2018.</p> <p>Exeter City Council have not been offered any pre-consultation opportunity to help shape the draft Strategy beyond the above opportunities and a meeting of the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan council leaders and Chief Executives.</p> <p>Given that transport and related air pollution issues are so significant for the city, does Exeter City Council think that this extremely limited level of dialogue and Councillor engagement in shaping a draft 10 year transport strategy for Exeter is adequate to ensure that Councillors are fully informed and making choices based on evidence and understanding the range of options available?</p>	<p>that there were no surprises in the document that emerged. The Chief Executive & Growth Director, together with the Portfolio Holder for Transport and the Leader of the City Council, was broadly content that the direction of travel of the strategy reflected our corporate priorities, namely emphasising active travel, supporting walking, cycling and tackling congestion. The evolution of the policy approach also suggested a clear recognition that technology and innovation had an important role to play in addressing the challenges associated with congestion. This reflected the work of Exeter City Futures and the City Council's focus on data analytics and innovation. The Consultation exercise on the Draft Exeter Transport Strategy is being administered by Devon County Council and responses were invited by the County Council. The timetable for responding to the exercise was challenging given the numerous policy initiatives being progressed by officers during this period, but a response was cleared with the Leader of the City Council to meet the 28th February consultation deadline.</p> <p>It was noted that a copy of the consultation would be attached to this response.</p>
<p>Will Page I would like to table a question regarding an outstanding action from a ECC task and finish group.</p> <p>The action was to produce a best-practice guidance note to accompany the Sustainable Transport Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Has this action been completed?</p>	<p>Councillor Sutton, Portfolio Holder Economy, Culture responded for Councillor Denham as Portfolio Holder City Transformation</p> <p>Will Pratt, the Principal Transport Planning Officer at DCC advised that there are plans to produce a four page leaflet which signpost best will practice of pursuing a sustainable transport policy and the benefits. There is an example of this with information produced for the Devon Metro. This latest information to be made available to planning officers to offer, particularly to developers and planning agents to signpost best practice with examples from across the city and the benefits of travel planning for businesses.</p> <p>It is anticipated that this will happen in about a months or six weeks' time. William Pratt was due to meet up with Will Page and I sure would be discussing this further.</p>