

## **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

25

### **MINUTES**

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

26

### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members made no declarations of interest.

27

### **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.

28

## **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.

29

#### **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

This page is intentionally left blank

## Communications Strategy: Interim Bus Plans

### Report for Programme Board November 7

#### 1: Aims and objectives

To work with stakeholders to produce and implement a clear strategy for communicating the temporary bus arrangements ahead of, and during, the closure of Exeter Bus Station at the end of March 2017.

To ensure passengers, businesses, stakeholders and the wider public are fully informed of the changes that will remain in place until the new bus station opens in December 2018.

To help minimise disruption through clear communications and help enable services to continue operating smoothly.

To clearly promote the message that Exeter is open for business as usual during the works, and establish a clear timetable for the changes which are due to take place.

#### 2: Strategy

The city council's communication team is working with Stagecoach, the Bus Users Group, passenger groups and other stakeholders to implement the strategy. While the operators are responsible for running bus services, the council will take a lead in highlighting how the temporary arrangements will help ensure continuity of services until the new station opens. The strategy will ensure that the temporary arrangements will be communicated as widely as possible through a range of communication channels and face to face meetings with affected businesses.

Information will be distributed by other district councils and the county council, as most passengers currently using Exeter Bus Station live outside the city.

Communication will emphasise the major benefit redeveloping the bus station will bring to Exeter.

The strategy will:

- Help co-ordinate preparations to minimise disruption and aid the public.
- Work with Stagecoach and other partners to help ensure continuity of services
- Communicate positive aspects before and during the work.
- Inform, engage, promote, influence and assure over all aspects of the plans.
- Use innovative techniques and technology to inform the wider public about the plans.
- Anticipate potential pitfalls or disruptions and minimise, divert or manage them.
- Ensure residents, businesses, staff, key partners and the wider media understand the plans.
- Implement communications with all parties and the media in a timely and coherent way.
- Engage residents and businesses in all consultations, events and participation opportunities.
- Ensure regular feedback in response to consultations and social media activity.
- Communicate with members, colleagues and partners on developments.

### **3: Communication channels**

Communications over the interim bus arrangements will involve:

#### **Social media:**

A series of short videos for social media are being produced. These have the potential to be shared directly among thousands of passengers. Social media video - boosted on Facebook and Twitter - explaining the interim arrangements.

#### **Media Releases:**

Including the Express & Echo, TV and radio and trade press.

#### **Exeter Citizen:**

On November 20 the winter Exeter Citizen is published, with full details of the proposed interim arrangements.

#### **Direct mail:**

Weekly email bulletins on what is happening are being sent out to subscribers of the council's GovDelivery service.

#### **Letter drop:**

In November a letter drop to all the businesses and residents in the main affected area of Sidwell Street will be posted. Letters will also be sent to businesses in Southernhay.

#### **Leaflets:**

Leaflets will be produced for passengers, in conjunction with Stagecoach. They will include a map and full details of what is happening, including a colour-coded key to the stands. They will be distributed at a number of prominent locations, in addition to the bus station, including the RD&E, tourist information, Civic Centre, train stations and public areas of large retailers like the cafés in John Lewis and M&S. Large employers like South West Water and Devon County Council, will also distribute them in staff rooms and canteens.

#### **Website:**

Full and updated details of the interim arrangements are on the council's website [exeter.gov.uk/busstation](http://exeter.gov.uk/busstation)

An interactive map highlighting the arrangements will be launched online.

#### **Large employers/ business groups:**

Information on the arrangements will be distributed by major business groups and forums, including Exeter Chamber of Commerce. Large employers will be encouraged to send the information to all members of staff on email.

### **4: Businesses and stakeholders**

Businesses at the top end of Sidwell Street will receive a face-to-face visit from the communications team to explain what is happening, and when.

Information will be given in a timely manner, ensuring those affected fully understand the process. Businesses will be given a dedicated person to contact and number to call if there are problems associated with the interim plans.

Briefings informing the public, traders and stakeholders will also be held to explain the changes. A workshop explaining the changes for accessibility groups was held at St Sidwell's Centre on November 2.

The complaints/issues contact number 01392 265880 will be widely distributed.

## **5: Message timetable**

Communications work over the interim arrangements is already well underway. A release was issued on October 21 explaining the plans, which was widely shared on social media and in the Express & Echo.

Meetings were recently held with Stagecoach and passenger groups to explain the plans and how best to communicate them.

Information has been sent to thousands of subscribers to the council's direct email update service GovDelivery.

Further media activity will take place following the HATOC meeting on November 14, which will consider granting permission for the highways works in Sidwell Street and Southernhay.

The start of work on the first of the temporary bus stand in December and January will be another big opportunity to promote the plans. Nearby businesses will also be kept fully updated of developments ahead of any work commencing, through face to face meetings.

A series of engagement days at Exeter Bus Station will begin in January. These will include handing out leaflets and talking to passengers. These will be held regularly from the New Year in the lead up to the closure of the bus station at the end of March.

Between February and March an intensive eight week media campaign of awareness will be launched, focussing on the Express & Echo and local media, backed up by social media. The distribution of leaflets will also be intensified.

There will be major publicity on the closure of the bus station on March 30, and the resulting temporary arrangements for passengers. A closing event at the bus station is expected. There is lots of scope for media activity which will help to promote the temporary arrangements, including nostalgia pieces on the end of an era for Exeter Bus Station (and the start of a new one) with old pictures and memories since it opened in 1964.

A large free-standing hoarding will be erected at the top of Paris Street (opposite John Lewis) which is colour coded to show how the existing bus station bays will be allocated temporary stands. One will also be in Princesshay. There will also be 'miniature' versions of the plans in each bus stand.

This page is intentionally left blank