

Scrutiny Committee - Resources - 7 January 2016

Questions from Councillor Prowse

Question to the Portfolio Holder Under Standing Order 20.

Today's additional committee meeting to discuss the additional funding required to fund the new building of a new bus station is a necessary consequence of the changing pattern to the entire redevelopment. Given the recent decision by the County Council as a statutory consultee in connection with the proposed closure of upper Paris Street, as part of the redevelopment of the entire site, can the Portfolio Holder(s) answer the following question.

As Highways authority, the County Council has chosen not to want to initiate the actual 'Stopping Up' notice of the closure of upper Paris Street. It therefore falls upon the applicant to commence the process. Neither the applicant or Exeter City Council are the Highways authority. Are the Portfolio Holders aware that if there is ONE objection, it will be necessary for the Secretary of State for the Dept. for Transport to direct a public enquiry.

Not only is this an expensive and very prolonged process, who is to foot the bill?

ANSWER – *Councillor Sutton, Portfolio Holder for City development replied and advised that the planning applicant is Crown Estate and partners, not Exeter City Council, and they will be applying to the Secretary of State for consent for the road closure.*

The Secretary of State has the discretion to hold a Public Inquiry but is not obliged to. Without wishing to prejudge the Secretary of State's view, a Public Inquiry is only likely where there are substantial matters of objection (rather than it being automatically triggered by any objection) and where these objections are on matters not already considered in determining the planning application.

The cost of holding any inquiry would fall to the applicant. There are no fees and appears to be no provision for third parties to claim costs relating to an Inquiry.

There may be costs to Exeter City Council in terms of officer time to support the application, or if assistance is offered by providing a venue.

Under Standing Order 20, the Member had the opportunity to ask a supplementary question

Councillor Prowse enquired when the application for a Stopping up Notice would be forthcoming.

Councillor Sutton, in reply, was able to advise that she was unaware of such a notice, and of course other parties would be able to make an application.