

EXETER HIGHWAYS AND TRAFFIC ORDERS COMMITTEE

20 November 2017

Present:-

Devon County Council:-

Councillors E Brennan (Vice Chair), H Ackland, M Asvachin, Y Atkinson, S Aves, E Brennan, A Leadbetter, P Prowse and C Whitton

Exeter City Council

Councillors R Denham, D Harvey, R Newby and T Wardle

Apologies:-

Councillors R Hannaford

COUNCILLOR BRENNAN IN THE CHAIR

* **20** **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2017 be signed as a correct record.

* **21** **Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

There was no item raised as a matter of urgency.

* **22** **Bus Services in Exeter**

(Councillors K Owen and K Mitchell (both Exeter City Council) attended under Standing Order 25 and spoke to this item expressing their concerns about the reductions to services, the H service in particular and the impact on residents and the consultation exercise undertaken by Stagecoach)

Mr Williams, Commercial Director of Stagecoach South West, attended and spoke at the invitation of the Committee on developments affecting bus services and the network in and around Exeter since the last meeting, as follows:

- the update: Network changes took place from 3 September 2017 as indicated at the previous meeting. They were the first real changes Stagecoach had made to the Exeter City routes for quite some time, and were arguably long overdue as the way people travelled had changed over time. The Company had carried out detailed analysis of passenger flows, and took into account the impact of traffic congestion and its impact on reliability and suggestions from customers. The key benefits of the changes were:
 - o an improved Sunday service of every 20 minutes on routes E, F, R and S;
 - o an improved Monday-Saturday frequency to the Rydons on route J of every 20 minutes;
 - o Routes B and F2 extended to Pinhoe providing new links to Morrisons, Stoke Hill, Cowick Street, Exwick and Matford, replacing the extension of routes J/K beyond Whipton Barton;
 - o improved reliability on the Red Park & Ride in peak periods and a number of other routes;
 - o improved afternoon frequency between Exeter and Exminster;
 - o West Garth Road served by route 5 instead of route H;

- o reduced frequency on route P to every 30 minutes (with a further minor change from the start of January to correct an issue in the morning rush hour);
- minor changes following customer feedback which had included: 24 September 2017 route B gained two additional early morning journeys for commuters; and from 3 January route P was being changed slightly in morning peak to address a reliability problem prior to the built in recovery time;
- from 16 October 2017 route 4 gained an additional very early morning journey and a Sunday evening journey to serve the new Lidl distribution centre shift patterns;
- further changes were planned in partnership with the County Council and housing developers during 2018 to build on the network as new housing developments came on stream around Monkerton and Tithebarn Lane, with Exeter Science Park, East Exeter Growth Point and Broadclyst;
- delayed closure of Bus Station: the Company had lobbied to minimise the period of disruption to the public, and the impact on associated highway works needed to be reviewed, as the operation of the bus station was reliant on the highway works associated with the development; and loss of the plans to improve bus priority from St David's to avoid York Road;
- increasing congestion again was a particular issue in the run up to Christmas that caused unreliability on the network that the Company was powerless to control;
- the need for increased parking charges to encourage people out of cars;
- bus lanes blocked with parked cars in the morning peak causing delays to services – Pinhoe Road and Heavitree, which needed greater enforcement, particularly at this time of year;
- Tan Lane and inappropriate car usage; and
- Heavitree Road – missing no right turn into Clifton Road.

Further issues and/or observations identified during the course of discussions included:

- The reasons for changes: firstly, the significant drop in the consumer fuel price and record levels of new car purchases from September 2015 which led to more people switching to the car, both leading to a fall in passenger numbers and an increase in congestion. As a result the Company was left with little choice but to adjust its services accordingly. Secondly, the County Council had made a £1.2m reduction to services which it supported financially;
- the Company's changes to the Exeter network followed detailed analysis of passenger flows, combined with information received from staff and the public. The Company had carried out a consultation with passengers in June 2017 to encourage as much feedback about the network in general as possible, prior to putting the changes together;
- where patronage had been low, or the level of service far higher than could be justified by the number of people using the service, the Company could not justify continuing the status quo; It made no economic sense to run buses purely to meet aspirational needs, when in reality there were other areas where buses were busier;
- that no area had been left without a regular service as a result of the changes, albeit some with fewer buses per hour and others with increased services.

Changes to Route H

- the analysis carried out by Stagecoach had shown that the level of usage to Cowley Bridge and the University had been relatively low, partly due to there being other options;
- Route D provided the very popular direct link to the University which remained unchanged, whilst the 5 and 55 group of routes provided regular buses along the main road. The H route simply provided unique links from Cowley Bridge to St David's and the University, but this represented a small proportion of a low number, and when compared that to other parts of the City, very few places actually had direct links to these places. The majority of passengers interchanged in the City Centre into the high frequency direct services that would continue to serve these locations. Even usage from Cowley Bridge to the University had reduced as fewer students lived in Cowley Bridge as more bespoke student accommodation was available;

- to replace the section of the H route that would no longer be served, route 5 had been diverted to serve West Garth Road. These journeys, which only went to/from Crediton compared to the 5A/5B/5C that served much larger areas, had the capacity to accommodate passengers from Cowley Bridge without causing too much inconvenience to through passengers; and essentially the service 5 would serve West Garth Road, the 5A/5B would continue to serve St David's and the 5C ran direct to/from Crediton. The service 5 ran broadly hourly on Mondays-Saturdays, and included an evening and Sunday service.

Mr Williams concluded that the Company appreciated that any reduction in frequency in a given area was not going to be welcome news, but Stagecoach had tried to ensure that the area remained well served in the most affordable way.

The Neighbourhood Highways Group Manager reminded Members that concerns about enforcement of restriction in bus lanes for example should be submitted to the Traffic Management Parking Enforcement Team or reported on line at <https://new.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/report-a-problem/>

The Chair thanked Mr Williams for his update and detailed response to questions and referred to the need for ongoing monitoring of the changes. The Chair also referred to the need for further discussion with Hospital and University representatives and Mr Williams indicated that he was happy to engage and meet with Members as appropriate.

* 23

Annual Local Waiting Restriction Programme

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste (HIW/17/89) on the annual local programme for the HATOC area for the funding and delivery of waiting restriction schemes for 2017/18. It was anticipated that approved restrictions would be implemented by the end of the current financial year.

Further proposals relating to Members' Divisions would be considered as part of next year's programme.

For next year's programme detailed mapping information would be included on-line as part of the public consultation process.

Members noted that concerns about enforcement should be submitted to the Traffic Management Parking Enforcement Team or reported on line at <https://new.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/report-a-problem/>

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Brennan, **SECONDED** by Councillor Atkinson and

RESOLVED

(a) that work on the annual waiting restrictions programme process for 2017/2018 be noted;

(b) that the recommendations contained in Appendix III of Report HIW/17/89 be approved and the proposals implemented where relevant, subject to:

Elm Grove, (Wearside and Topsham): a site visit be arranged and that the decision on the matter be delegated to the Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste in consultation with the Chair and local County Councillor;

(c) that the proposals detailed in Appendix 1 of the Report which attracted no objections be implemented as advertised.

* **24** **Traffic Sensitive Streets Review 2017**

The Committee noted the Report of the Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste (HIW/17/70) on the process for a full review of the traffic sensitive streets network across the County to be completed by 1 April 2018. When a street was designated 'Traffic Sensitive', timings of street works could be better regulated to ensure free flow of traffic so far as was reasonably practicable (i.e. no works on major roads during peak morning and afternoon traffic flows) under powers conferred by the Traffic Management Act 2004/Section 59 New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 to co-ordinate works activities on the road network.

Members' views on proposed designations could be discussed with the Highways Neighbourhood Team prior to public consultation.

* **25** **Congestion Charges**

In accordance with Standing Order 23(2) Councillors Hannaford and Asvachin had requested that the Committee consider, in accordance with Standing Order 23(2), the feasibility of congestion charges noting the impact on pollution and air quality and other negative impacts of increasing congestion in the City.

Members noted that the Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee had constituted a Task Group on air quality/pollution which would consider options for congestion charging and be reporting to that Committee in due course.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Whitton, **SECONDED** by Councillor Brennan and

RESOLVED that a following publication of the Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee Task Group Report on air quality a report be submitted to this Committee on Congestion Charging.

* **26** **State of Playmoor Drive - Update on repair**

In accordance with Standing Order 23(2) Councillor Leadbetter had requested that the Committee consider this matter.

This matter was withdrawn from consideration at the request of the local Member.

* **27** **Review of the cycle path signage around the city and also to add new signage from Newport Park to the junction of Higher Wear Road to prevent potential accidents.**

In accordance with Standing Order 23(2) Councillor Newby had requested that the Committee consider the extent and visibility of signage in the area for road users in particular both cyclists and pedestrians.

The Neighbourhood Highway Group Manager undertook to arrange a visit to the site with the local Members to review the signing seeking the views of the Exeter Cycling Campaign if necessary.

* **28** **Petitions/Parking Policy Reviews**

There was no petition from a member of the public or the Council relating to Exeter City.

* 29 **Actions Taken Under Delegated Powers**

The Committee noted the report of the Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste (HIW/17/90) on actions taken by the Chief Officer under delegated powers.

* 30 **Dates of Meetings**

16 January, 26 April, 30 July and 6 November 2018 and 14 January and 9 April 2019

The County Council Calendar of meetings was available on the website:

<http://democracy.devon.gov.uk/mgCalendarMonthView.aspx?GL=1&bcr=1>

***DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**

The Meeting started at 2.15 pm and finished at 4.30 pm

