



**QUESTIONS TO THE
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, CABINET MEMBERS
AND/OR
CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES**

Thursday 27 April 2017

1. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR GREENSLADE

Re: Barnstaple to London - Franchise Review 2018

Relating to the previous support of the County Council for direct rail services from Barnstaple to London can the Cabinet Member give an update as to when we can press the case in respect of the Franchise review expected in 2018?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR LEADBETTER

The Department for Transport has yet to formally confirm whether it will exercise its option to extend the current Great Western Railway franchise by one year from 2019 to 2020. The Department has indicated that it is exploring options for the franchise during 2017. On this basis it is expected that consultation with stakeholders on the franchise specifications will start later in 2017 or early 2018.

2. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR DEWHIRST

Re: Tourism Signs for Devon Businesses

Will the Leader join me in condemning the duplicitous dog-in-the-manger attitude of the Mayor of Torbay and his Council in asking Devon to install numerous large, non-standard brown tourism signs for Torbay businesses on Devon County Council land but refusing to allow two small brown signs to be erected near the start of the new South Devon Highway directing visitors towards an excellent Kingskerswell inn which they no longer pass due to the re-routing of the road into Torquay?

What action will he be taking to support and defend this longstanding business, which has been a welcome stop for tourists and locals in Devon and the English Riviera for many years?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HART

Due to the location of the Inn to the south of Kingskerswell village, a request was submitted to Torbay for permission to install named brown tourism signs to this Inn from the A3022 Riviera Way. This request was rejected by Torbay because it conflicts with their signing policy. It is regrettable that this request was rejected and lesser generic alternatives were offered instead.

The actions the Council have taken to support this business includes the provision of tourism signs to the Inn from the A380 South Devon Highway, agreed under a departure from Devon's signing policy. And the provision of local services signs on the South Devon Highway that identify the local facilities including food which are available to traffic bypassing Kingskerswell.

3. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR WESTLAKE
Re: New Pound Coins and Parking Meters

With the introduction of the new one pound coin, what is the timetable to adapt all the on street parking meters to accept the new coins in Devon.

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES

Orders have been placed to update on-street parking machines in Devon to accept the new £1 coins. It's expected to cost around £40,000 to update all of our on-street parking machines and it will be completed by the time the old coin ceases to be legal tender in October. Stickers will be placed on the machines to alert members of the public if the machine does not accept new coins and these will be removed as the machines are updated. Cashless parking options are now also available at our on-street machines, with the cheaper convenience charge of just 3p.

4. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR HILL
Re: Pavement Parking and Joint Working with the Department of Transport

Following the ongoing discussions between Devon County Council and the Department of Transport on the enforcement of pavement parking, would the Council consider an agreement with the Department of Transport on providing appropriate signage where a need has been identified.

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES

Signing is available in the new Traffic Signs and General Directions Document. The issue remains ensuring that our response to the issue is proportionate and sustainable. It is not practical to sign throughout communities. The Authority believes that a change to law, as was promoted in the Pavement Parking Bill, is the correct response to pavement parking.

5. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR HILL
Re: Pavement Parking and Responses from the Department of Transport

Would Councillor Hughes please give me an update on the response which has received from the Department of Transport, on the two letters he has written asking what progress being made by the Committee which has been set up to look into the matter of pavement parking.

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES

There has been no further correspondence from the Department of Transport on the matter. However the matter was discussed at the recent British Parking Association Summit in Birmingham and officers have committed to working with PATROL to pursue legislative change.

6. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT
Re: Speed Limits between Exminster and Kenton

With more vehicles and cyclists using the A379, what steps is the Council taking to review the speed limit between Exminster (Swan's Nest roundabout) and Kenton with a view to standardising to the same limit that applies on the road from Starcross to Dawlish (40mph)?

Why does the Council continue to believe that different speed limits are appropriate given the number of accidents and residential accesses on the A379 from Exminster to Kenton?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES

As you are probably aware this route has been the subject of a detailed route study in 2013.

There are currently no identifiable collision clusters, and no plans presently for a route safety scheme in this section.

The highways and Road Safety teams continue to monitor the route. As Councillor Connett has a concern relating to choice of speed by motorists, this is something that can be discussed with our Neighbourhood Highways Team and the site can be reviewed in our SCARF (Speed Complaint Action Review Forum) process.

7. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT

Re: Traffic Management Scheme – Powderham

What progress has been made with the long awaited traffic management scheme promised for Powderham, so that residents, cyclists, pedestrians, and drivers are safely able to use the road.

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES

The situation is currently unchanged from recent updates to the local member. The Powderham Estate is a key stakeholder in any changes to traffic management in the area. Officers have been advised by Norfolk Property Services that it is inadvisable to make contact with the Estate until ongoing issues with a tenant with regard to the Turf Locks to Powderham scheme have been resolved. The authority will look to make progress as soon as this has been achieved.

8. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT

Re: School Crossing Patrol Vacancies

How many vacancies does Devon County Council have for school crossing patrol officers (Lollipop crossings)?

What is the average length of time to fill a vacancy? What is the longest period a post has been vacant?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES

There are 103 School Crossing Patrol sites in Devon of which 85% are fully staffed. Recruitment for the 15 vacant sites that are funded by this Council is ongoing.

The length of time between resignation and having new patrol is often dependent on the enthusiasm within the wider school community as this is where many patrols come from. Recruitment is a problem common to many authorities in the South and South West who report they regularly experience long term vacancies from one year to over three years. The National School Crossing Patrol Survey 2016 carried out by Road Safety Great Britain confirms the national difficulty of recruitment and selection and notes on average local authorities have 15% vacancy levels on School Crossing Patrol sites.

The period between an announced vacancy and an applicant coming forward could be as short as 1-2 weeks but could, in some instances, be over five years. Two sites have been vacant since 2012. With this level of variation averages are meaningless.

9. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT

Re: Markings on Cycle Routes

Why doesn't Devon County Council maintain the coloured markings on cycle routes?

At the BP station at Matford, near Exminster, the markings are faded and it is unclear who has priority - cyclists and pedestrians on the path or drivers accessing the petrol station.

Despite reports of incidents, we seem to be caught in a squabble between the council's cycling team who says it's not their responsibility and highways who say they have no budget.

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES

Careful consideration is given to the replacement of coloured surfacing, to ensure that it is still the most appropriate form of demarcation. In this particular instance officers have been considering whether it might be more appropriate to install double give way markings and a clean up of the surface rather than a straight forward replacement of the surface. This change would be subject to audit. I have been given an assurance that either this or the replacement of the coloured surface will be undertaken, within the next 3 months.

10. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR HILL

Re: Homelife Care

Can the Cabinet Member please explain what systems are in place to monitor the service being provided by Homelife Care? If a client is unhappy with the service provided, what processes are there for a complaint to be made and, if so, is this information made available to the client?

Will the Cabinet be given a full report on the service which is being given by Homelife Care and is that provider staffed to provide the service required by the County Council?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR BARKER

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) are the regulator responsible for monitoring overall standards and Devon County Council works closely with them to address issues of quality or safeguarding. The CQC rates Homelife Carers as a good provider (CQC status) and has had no safety issues reported at this time.

Devon County Council require the Primary Providers (Devon Cares, Mears Care or MiHomecare to maintain oversight of their sub-contractors. There are regular contract monitoring meetings with providers.

People who receive care are given an information pack by the provider when their service starts. It includes details of how to raise concerns (or compliments) and what to do if there is not a satisfactory response. In the first instance, the provider of the service would be responsible for resolving any concerns within their own complaints procedure.

If the Council receives a complaint it is raised with the Primary Provider who would address the issue with their sub-contracting partner.

Members of the public or any professional may also lodge their complaint with the Care Quality Commission, which is responsible for inspecting and regulating personal care providers.

Performance is routinely reported to the People Scrutiny Committee, these reports include information about complaints and compliments. The primary providers are responsible for the performance of their sub-contractors

Care providers are required to ensure they have the right staffing to meet the needs of care and support packages that they accept and that they are suitably trained and supported. The CQC consider this as part of their inspection work.

11. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR YOUNGER-ROSS

Re: Income from Parking Meters

Can the Cabinet Member say how much money the Council receives from parking meters per annum, what the breakdown is of this per area and how much of this is estimated to be by overpayment and people paying when they do not need to.

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES

The income from on-street parking is reported each year in our annual parking report. Our most recent report for 15/16 is on our public web pages.

For that year, the income was £2,741,912.

If Councillor Younger-Ross could identify which area he is particularly interested in, I will arrange for the officers to provide the requested information.

With regards overpayment, this is not something our system reports on so I cannot provide a figure. However, overpayment is clearly an issue around customers having the correct change.

We do not want people to overpay and are promoting cashless payment options which are also available at our on-street machines, with the cheaper convenience charge of just 3p which hopefully makes this a more appealing option.

12. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR YOUNGER-ROSS

Re: Teign Estuary Trail / Teignmouth to Dawlish Cycle route

Can the Cabinet Member give an update on the Teign Estuary Trail and the Teignmouth to Dawlish Cycle route.

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES

The authority continues to pursue the strategy of prioritising the two end sections between Dawlish – Teignmouth and Kingsteignton to Bishopsteignton. The intermediate section between Bishopsteignton and Teignmouth presents considerable challenges and will require further work to achieve a viable solution.

Good progress has been made in designing and consulting on the scheme between Dawlish and Teignmouth. Officers are continuing to work with landowners and stakeholders to design an acceptable and viable scheme on the Kingsteignton to Bishopsteignton section, exploring various alternative options.

This Council will continue to work with partners to explore a range of funding opportunities.

13. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR HANNAN

Re: Cuts to Services

Who said on 18 May 2016, ‘Still this Government does not seem to understand that cuts have their consequences’?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CLATWORTHY

I would like to remind Councillor Hannan that while this item gives an opportunity for Members to ask questions it is not a quiz show! I am not prepared to guess, but the quote chimes with comments both I and the Leader have made in recent years and if that is what Councillor Hannan is inferring then I welcome his acknowledgment of the strength of feeling within this Cabinet to continue fighting for a fair funding settlement for Devon, which also demonstrates that this administration is prepared to challenge the establishment too!

14. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR GREENSLADE
Re: Mannings Pit and Highways Advice

There has been a number of controversial planning applications in the area surrounding the North Devon District Hospital in recent times. Traffic impact and the lack of recognition of the future growth, due to the Ilfracombe southern extension, being a matter of concern in terms of the highways advice given.

Now a recent application (Mannings Pit), yet to be determined, refers to the traffic impact arising from the future Ilfracombe southern extension.

Therefore if this is being considered for this upcoming application should it not have been considered for the other applications in this area and, due to the lack of consideration for the other applications, should the previous highways advice be reconsidered?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR BROOK

All recent major applications in the area surrounding the North Devon District Hospital have been approved by North Devon Council's Planning Committee. There is no mechanism or legal process for the County Council's view as Highway Authority to be reconsidered.

National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) suggests growth associated with committed development should be considered i.e. that which is likely to take place within three years.

Despite the NPPG implication that the Ilfracombe Southern Extension did not strictly require consideration due to not being considered committed development, in the planning applications near to the Hospital the traffic impact of the Southern Extension was considered by the application of background traffic growth.

In relation to the "Mannings' Pit" application the initial officer response on behalf of the County Council as Highway Authority was that a lack of information had been supplied regarding cumulative traffic impact, including a lack of consideration of the Ilfracombe Southern Extension because the submitted Transport Assessment does not include either specific reference to the Southern Extension as committed development, nor the use of background growth data.