



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

Thursday 20 July 2017

**1. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR DEWHIRST  
Re: Parking Enforcement**

At Council on Thursday 12th May 2016 the Cabinet Member for Highway Management, in response to a question asking if enforcement by Devon County's Civil Enforcement Officers was fair, replied that enforcement met the "needs of local communities" and felt that enforcement was not "unreasonable".

Can he therefore explain in what way the needs of a local community like Kingskerswell, pleading for enforcement in the vicinity of the school at school opening and closing times, are met by Officers enforcing parking regulations at the weekend in other parts of the village? Would he answer the question posed a year ago – is parking enforcement by Devon's Civil Enforcement Officers fair?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES**

*I am aware that the matter has already been discussed by the Councillor and officers.*

*The Council allocate resources, across a significant number of communities, depending on need. For a community such as Kingskerswell this would typically be twice a week, but there are occasions when this is not possible due to competing priorities.*

*In Kingskerswell there is a continuous need to ensure safe and clear passage of vehicles by maintaining the double yellow, "no waiting at any time" restrictions throughout the community, this includes Sundays and would be the key focus in addition to limited waiting bays that operate Monday through to Saturday.*

*The current approach prioritises resources, and is both fair and effective. I am sorry that Kingskerswell do not feel that they have had the service that they need. I am aware of recent requests for additional enforcement and the Council is now prioritising resource for Kingskerswell for a period (2-4 weeks) so hopefully this will become more evident from Monday to Saturday and parking behaviour will improve.*

**2. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR DEWHIRST  
Re: Parking Enforcement Criteria**

Can the Cabinet Member for Highway Management name any community in Devon that has had 50% of their Civil Enforcement visits in the last year on a Sunday or even over the weekend? If there are any communities that meet this criteria, please can he explain why?

### **REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES**

*As I have explained the team has needed to prioritise resource and not been able to maintain the attendances to Kingskerswell during the week in the manner that they would have wished. Resource is now being released to the community during the week.*

*The restrictions in place to ensure safe and clear passage of vehicles remain as relevant on a Sunday as any other day.*

### **3. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR DEWHIRST**

#### **Re: Timings of Civil Parking Enforcement in Kingskerswell**

Civil Enforcement Officers visited Kingskerswell 61 times in the last year – 5 times on a Saturday and 30 times on a Sunday when residents, school governors and local Councillors are pleading for enforcement around the school during school opening and closing hours. Does the Cabinet Member, therefore, see this community as “easy pickings”?

### **REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES**

*No community is seen as “easy pickings”, penalty charge notices can only be issued when a vehicle is parked in contravention.*

*Resource is now being released to the community during the week. There will be a focus on the issues identified around the school.*

### **4. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR WRIGHT**

#### **Re: Notice of Motion – Government Response**

Is the leader content with the reply from Kevin Woodhouse of DEFRA, dated 5 June, to my notice of motion approved almost unanimously by this council on 27 April, which called on government ministers to retain the same environmental protections as we leave the EU, as currently exist under EU legislation.

The reply from Mr Woodhouse states: *“The environment is a natural asset that provides us with numerous benefits such as clear water, clean air, food and timber, flood protection and recreation.*

*“Regarding future policy, until exit negotiations are concluded, the UK remains a full member of the EU and all right and obligations of EU membership remain in force.”*

### **REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HART**

*The Government has said that says it is committed to safeguarding and improving existing environmental protection.*

*At present, I am content with the reply from Mr Woodhouse, notwithstanding any future exit negotiations, which have yet to start.*

### **5. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR SHAW**

#### **Re: Bus Services in Seaton**

Seaton has the largest proportion of over-65s in Devon but is further from the RD&E and other acute hospitals than any other town in Eastern Devon. First Wessex are making drastic reductions in the X52, the only direct bus service from Seaton and Beer to the RD&E, while Seaton's own community hospital beds are threatened with withdrawal by NEW Devon CCG. Will the Council provide financial support to this service, to allow it to continue to operate at peak hours, providing a reasonable window for visiting the acute hospital while also enabling workers and students to continue travelling into Exeter?

## **REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD**

*First have confirmed that they intend, from 4th September, to reduce Service X52 from five to two buses each way, Monday to Saturday, leaving Seaton at 1000 and 1200, Beer 1008 and 1208; returning from Exeter at 1120 and 1320. This compares with five buses each way at present.*

*Usage of the X52 has steadily declined, with passenger numbers on the peak-time bus into Exeter normally being in single figures. Stagecoach operates Service 9A on an hourly basis between Exeter, Sidmouth and Seaton, then on to Lyme Regis. This is also operated commercially, at no cost to the authority. Doubtless due to the wider choice of travel times, the 9A has evidently captured a large proportion of passengers along this route corridor.*

*The Stagecoach 9A does not serve Beer. Stagecoach have been requested – both by ourselves and Beer Parish Council - to consider covering Beer but have declined. Beer is the only Devon community relying solely on the X52 for a direct link to Exeter. There are alternatives being the Axe Valley service to Seaton (mostly hourly) or Sidmouth (up to six per day) for connections, or, less directly, the hourly Axe Valley service to Axminster to connect with the train.*

*It's not possible to guarantee direct links to the Hospital from all directions. Unless the Hospital lies on their line of route, passengers from most places within and outside Exeter have to change buses in Exeter, the most convenient option being the City Service H every fifteen minutes from the City Centre or Heavitree Road.*

*For access to Health, TRIP Community Transport Association provides transport to medical appointments for people who are unable to use public transport or where public transport is not available.*

*There are around eight students from Beer attending Exeter College. However, these are not the direct responsibility of the Council. Exeter College purchases bus passes for them via this Council's system. In the absence of a suitable service it is for the College to decide which other options to pursue and officers have been in contact with them.*

*With regard to possible County-funded reinstatement of the current frequency, there has been a tender for a peak-time journey to and from Exeter, with the result that our lowest-cost option purely for the peak-time buses would be £50,960 a year. On the basis of current numbers, it would not meet the Council's criteria for funding.*

## **6. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR PROWSE**

**Re: Weed and Highways Vegetation Overgrowth – in the City of Exeter**

The Leader will be aware that the current three year agreement between this authority and Exeter City Council lapses in March 2018. As agreements go it has worked well considering the adverse publicity the two Councils received in 2014 for failing to deal with the situation. Given the invaluable contribution from those engaged in the Community Payback scheme as a result of a programme of works supplied by this Council does the Leader agree that the successful three year agreement should be re-evaluated and rolled out for another three year period?

## **REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES**

*The collaborative approach to weed and verge maintenance has worked successfully in the last three years. The joint approach to utilising resources has helped provide an effective service with the reduced funding availability. The Council would welcome an opportunity to re-evaluate a further agreement with Exeter City Council and in conjunction with the Exeter Board.*

## **7. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR PROWSE**

**Re: Exeter City Bus Station**

Exeter is a recognised Transport hub for this County. The Council will be aware that on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2016 planning permission was given to re-develop the site and to provide a bus station fit

for purpose and more importantly to allow greater expansion of public use of the bus transport system to alleviate the dire congestion this City suffers. Given that there is no statutory requirement for any Council to build bus stations would the Leader not agree that to achieve any of the aspirations in the Local Transport policy (3) so far as this City is concerned, would the Council not consider a financial contribution?

#### **REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HART**

*Since 2015, the level of Local Transport Plan funding directly available to this Council has been significantly reduced. This has seen a shift in the way the Council prioritises its transportation schemes with funding focused on forward design and/or match funding infrastructure projects that help deliver strategic housing and employment sites.*

*Such schemes in many cases cannot be funded alone by developer contributions and/or Local Transport Plan monies and this Council has a strong track record in securing Government grants for a number of the city's major transport priorities. In recent years, this has included £5.8m towards Bridge Road widening, £0.7m for Newcourt Rail Station, £8m for Tithebarn Link Road and pedestrian / cycle bridge, £1m for the Sandy Park junction and over £12m for improvements to M5 Junctions 29 and 30. Together, these have supported growth in housing at Monkerton, Newcourt and Cranbrook and jobs at Science Park.*

*In 2015 the Council made an Exeter Bus Station bid for funding through the Growth Deal 3 process but it was not shortlisted by the Heart of the South West LEP. The provision of a modern, high quality bus station as part of the redevelopment of the existing site remains an integral part of Exeter's transport strategy and this Council will continue to work closely with the City Council to seek future funding opportunities.*

#### **8. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR PROWSE Re: Persistent Offenders - Penalty Charge Notices.**

The Council will recall my question that relates to are policy with drivers who are persistent offenders for non-payment of Penalty charge notices in this County. I gave evidence at the time that would warrant positive action. Given that I asked for a progress report last October (a year after the original question) what action has the Cabinet Member for Highways taken?

#### **REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES**

*The Parking Service have continued to work to address the issue of persistent evaders.*

*The processing team have been liaising with DVLA, in particular sharing details of foreign vehicles where there is a pattern of offending and the vehicle is remaining on foreign plates is permitted by law.*

*Additionally, the Council are in contact with the Devon & Cornwall Police Vehicle Investigation Unit on the same issues and have provided them with a list of the foreign vehicles where there are no keeper / driver details. This is updated on a monthly basis. Now contact has been established the team will also be providing the Vehicle Investigation Unit with details of persistent offenders where the DVLA have no registered keeper details.*

*The outcome of the DVLA and Police investigations can be the clamping and removal of vehicles. Our Civil Enforcement Officers are being provided with details of the vehicles of interest along with a contact number for the Vehicle Investigation Unit, so issues can be flagged as vehicles are located.*

*The Parking Service are also investigating opportunities to utilise third party contractors to remove vehicles, possibly as part of a campaign. Options will be presented to Cabinet later this year.*