

*County Council*  
Thursday, 2nd December,  
2021



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To: Members of Devon County Council

County Hall  
Exeter  
EX2 4QD

24 November 2021

## **AGENDA**

**5. Public Participation: Petitions, Questions and Representations** (Pages 1 - 2)

Petitions, Questions or Representations from Members of the public in line with the Council's Petitions and Public Participation Schemes.





## QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Thursday 2 December

### 1. QUESTION FROM P HILL Re: Exeter Street Charter

In the well publicised launch of the Exeter Street Charter (Nov 2018) the Leader gave a firm commitment to the visually impaired for the clearance of pavement obstructions (a statutory responsibility of the Highway Authority (DCC), further defined in the Governmental "Inclusive Mobility - A Guide to Best Practice on Access to the Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure").

However, the Council states (FOI) that there is no Charter implementation plan, no performance measures, and the Charter is the responsibility of EEC. As a result pavement obstructions have, undeniably, persisted (pre- and post-lockdown).

How did the Leader expect his commitment to the visually impaired to be honoured without effective management?

### REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES

Prior to the Covid pandemic a significant survey was undertaken to identify A boards and furniture causing obstructions on footways in the centre of Exeter in the middle of the day. These companies, in most cases, were spoken to face to face and handed a letter reminding them of their responsibilities. Where this was not possible, letters were sent. This action was successful.

An issue which became apparent was that a number of properties had street furniture on narrow sections of footways authorised by Exeter City Council, who have delegated powers to license Street Cafes. We discussed this issue with the City Council and I believe they were going to review those licenses. Subsequently during the Covid pandemic recovery, second tier authorities have been given additional powers to license pavement furniture.

Due to the reduced levels of pedestrian activity following the lock down, there has been a reluctance to enforce too strongly against the promotion of businesses in the city centre. Where a safety defect has been caused by such furniture, this will have been recorded and acted upon during regular safety inspections, which vary in their timings, and the inspection of ad hoc reports, in accordance with policy.

With levels of pedestrian activity increasing we have recently discussed a targeted inspection in the city centre to identify and remove such obstructions. If this approach is supported by local members we will arrange for this to take place.

In order to ensure a focus is maintained on this matter an agenda item will be added to future Exeter Highways and Traffic Order Committee meetings accordingly.

