

*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**

7. **Questions from Members of the Council** (Pages 1 - 6)

Answers to questions from Members of the Council pursuant to Standing Order 17.





## QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND CABINET MEMBERS

Thursday 2 December 2021

### 1. **QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR HODGSON** **Re: COP26 UN Summit**

What does the Cabinet Member believe was achieved at COP26 UN Summit in Glasgow? How will policies and resources at DCC be reallocated to accelerate the actions required of all Local Government tiers to achieve Net zero carbon by 2030 in line with keeping global temperatures 1.5 degrees or less below pre-industrial levels?

### **REPLY BY COUNCILLOR DAVIS**

Clearly, COP26 did not achieve everything we hoped it might. However, there were positive aspects deserving of recognition and optimism. One of these is that 42 countries, including the UK and the world's four largest emitters – China, the USA, the EU and India – signed up to the Breakthrough Agenda. These countries have committed to working together to mobilise finance at scale to make the transition to a clean economy faster and to make solutions to improve resilience more affordable and inclusive. The goal is for low-carbon solutions to be the 'new normal' by 2030, including for power generation, vehicles and steel production. That's just 8 years away.

Although the agreement did not define the precise roles for all tiers of government, there is a general recognition of the role that can and should be played by local government. This authority is leading the Devon Climate Emergency partnership that is preparing a Devon Carbon Plan with representation from across Devon. An Interim Plan is already being implemented. We are working with others to provide over 400 electric-car charging bays, prepare the Bus Service Improvement Plan, reopen the Dartmoor Line, encourage changes in business practice through the Green Innovation Fund, support communities to act through the Community Energy Fund and provide opportunities for nature through the Natural Capital Challenge Fund. We are also continuing to reduce our own emissions by refurbishing our buildings, installing renewable energy, purchasing electric vehicles and working with our suppliers.

However, we know much more needs to be done. Collaboration with communities and business is vital and we will work with government to put in place the necessary powers, policy and funding to help accelerate the transition.

# Agenda Item 7.

## 2. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR PROWSE Re: HMO Licences and Residents Parking

It is abundantly clear that the issues of HMO licences and or conversion of houses into HMOs know no bounds in Exeter. Such applications are dealt with by Exeter City Council (ECC) as Planning Authority. Unless mistaken, such applications and or conversions after the introduction of a Residents Parking zone will NOT qualify for the issues of residents parking permits. This is the policy of DCC.

- A) It is evident that the two Council's do not share details of these applications unless there is a significant highways impact and even then the process of removing such an address from the Traffic Order is not straight forward process.
- B) How can this be improved?

### REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES

Our Policy provides adequate opportunity to address issues around properties that are converted or change use to a House Of Multiple Occupation (HMO), and we will never issue more permits than were originally allocated (typically this would be a maximum of 2). In some instances eligibility for permits will be removed.

In response to concerns from residents the information on our webpages including eligibility for each address and advice to students coming to the university has been improved. When new residents or tenants move into our permit parking zones they can check our online database for eligibility at their new property. Likewise, if other residents believe there is an error in eligibility this can be check and flagged if they believe an adjustment is required.

None the less, greater visibility of the issue of HMO licences (and conversion of properties to HMO status) would be welcomed and we are keen that Exeter City Council share data in this regard.

It is suggested that Exeter City Council provide a list of HMOs currently granted or licensed to allow an audit to be carried out by our permit team. Going forward a quarterly spreadsheet on these changes shared between Authorities would allow adequate opportunity for our database to be updated to accurately updated and manage the issue (or removal) of permits for these properties.

**3. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR HANNAFORD**  
**Re: North Devon to South Wales ferry link**

What is the official Devon County Council view and policy position on the proposal to re-establish the historic North Devon to South Wales ferry link?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR DAVIS**

The North Devon to South Wales ferry link had planned to run in 2010 but did not come to fruition. As we are yet to see details of any proposals, Devon County Council does not have a policy position on re-establishing the North Devon to South Wales ferry link; however it is referenced within the transport strategy of the North Devon and Torridge adopted Local Plan. The principle of the service sits well with our Devon Carbon Plan transportation aspirations as it would help reduce vehicle kilometres and promote alternative modes of travel to Wales from Northern Devon.

**4. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR**  
**Re: North Devon to South Wales ferry link and Strategic Transport Plan**

Now that this matter has again been officially raised in Parliament will we be factoring this into our Strategic Transport Plan?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR DAVIS**

Opportunities to provide new ferry links to South Wales is referenced in the transport strategy of the North Devon and Torridge adopted Local Plan and there is a specific Coast and Estuary Policy to support diversification of Ilfracombe's role as a ferry port to South Wales. We are interested to find out more details and will arrange a meeting with North Devon Council to understand what additional support may be needed. See response to Q6 regarding its inclusion in any strategic transport plan.

**5. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR HANNAFORD**  
**Re: North Devon to South Wales ferry link and aims and ambitions of Devolution Deal to improve Devon's connectivity diversity**

Will we be adding this into the aims and ambitions of our Devon Devolution Deal to improve Devon's connectivity diversity?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR DAVIS**

As we do not have details of the proposals, there are no current plans to add this into the aims and ambitions of our Devon Devolution Deal; however, the principle sits well with aspirations to take a coordinated approach to transport including connections outside Devon, supporting local regeneration in coastal and market towns and the transition to a zero-carbon economy.

# Agenda Item 7.

**6. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR HANNAFORD**  
**Re: North Devon to South Wales ferry link and potential funding**

Would there be any potential funding to access locally, regionally or nationally to potentially progress this idea, working with the private sector through the climate change emergency agenda in terms of reducing road journeys and carbon reduction?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR DAVIS**

The County Council will shortly be commissioning an International Gateways and Ports Study along with Cornwall, Torbay, Plymouth and Somerset through the Peninsula Transport Sub National Transport Body. Such a study is the first step in collecting the evidence to help develop the case for transport infrastructure investment that will support better strategic connectivity into and out of the south west region. I would be happy to request that this proposal is included in the scoping for this work.

**7. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR HANNAFORD**  
**Re: North Devon to South Wales ferry link and work with other key players**

How could we work with other key players to use this project as an important opportunity help regenerate North Devon in a strategic and systemic way?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR DAVIS**

As this is a Local Plan policy, the County Council will work with North Devon Council to understand what support may be needed. Depending on what support may be needed, there are a number of existing initiatives focusing on Ilfracombe. Our economy team, through its COVID economic recovery work, will be identifying 8 initial Devon coastal and market towns including Ilfracombe to provide regeneration and project business case development support to. There is also the Ilfracombe Regeneration Board, which has Town and District Council involvement.

**8. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR HANNAFORD**  
**Re: North Devon to South Wales ferry link and journey times**

Is it still the case that such a journey could be done on average within an hour?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR DAVIS**

2009 proposals for a fast-ferry service indicated a journey time of 30 minutes.

**9. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR HANNAFORD**  
**Re: North Devon to South Wales ferry link and support for the MP for North Devon's campaign**

Can we actively support the member of Parliament for North Devon's campaign, by formally writing to the First Minister of Wales, Secretary of State for Wales , Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities , Transport Secretary ,and the Prime Minister , to officially explore and assess the viability , sustainability and economic benefits from this project for both Devon and Wales?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR DAVIS**

Once we understand more details on the proposals, we will meet with North Devon Council to jointly agree next steps including any discussions with the Member of Parliament for North Devon.

**10. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR BAILEY**  
**Re: speaking on agenda items**

Does the Leader of the Council consider that Devon County Councillors should be able to speak on agenda items relating to important matters in their ward at council meetings?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HART**

The provision for this to happen is clearly outlined in the Constitution.

Standing Order 25 outlines that a Member of the Council may attend a meeting of the Cabinet or a Committee of the council of which they are not an ordinary member and having given 24 hours' notice may attend and speak but not vote on an item on the agenda for that meeting.

In terms of Development Management, any Member of the Council may attend, without notice, a meeting of the Development Management Committee to speak (but not vote) about a planning application or other matter which is on the agenda and which affects his/her electoral division.

