

CABINET

14 February 2020

Present:-

Councillors J Hart (Chair), S Barker, R Croad, A Davis, R Gilbert, S Hughes, A Leadbetter, J McInnes and B Parsons

Members attending in accordance with Standing Order 25

Councillors F Biederman, A Dewhurst, B Greenslade and R Hannaford.

* 456

Minutes

It was **MOVED** by Councillor McInnes, **SECONDED** by Councillor Croad, and

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2020 be signed as a correct record.

* 457

Items Requiring Urgent Attention

There was no item raised as a matter of urgency.

* 458

Announcements

The Chair welcomed Mrs Mayes who was attending the Cabinet meeting in her capacity of co-opted member of the Council's Standards Committee to monitor compliance with the Council's ethical framework.

The Chair exercised his discretion in varying the order of business of the meeting and brought agenda item 10 (questions from members of the public) forward to be taken immediately following item 6.

* 459

Petitions

There was no petition from a Member of the Council or public.

* 460

Question(s) from Members of the Council

In accordance with the Cabinet Procedure Rules, the relevant Cabinet Member responded to 1 question from a Member of the Council on progress and an update on the situation at Appledore Shipyard (negotiations, business plan, work programme, leadership and funding, roles and responsibilities and expected reopening date).

The Cabinet Member responded orally to the supplementary question arising from the above.

[NB: A copy of the questions and answers are appended to these minutes and are also available on the Council's Website at <http://www.devon.gov.uk/dcc/committee/minutes.html> and any supplementary questions and answers may be observed through the webcast of this meeting – see Notes below]

* 461

Question(s) from Members of the Public

In accordance with the Council's Public Participation Rules, the relevant Cabinet Members responded to 8 questions from Members of the public on the following issues;

- Safer cycling routes, the South Devon Cycle Link petition and incorporation of a direct route via Littlehempston into the Council's Cycle and Multi Use Trail Strategy;

- Bulliver Bridge Crossing and why the bridge was closed to the public;
- Zero Carbon Target's and Cycle Path from Totnes;
- Opening of the Bulliver bridge and fulfilment of intended purpose and use by the local community;
- Discussions with South West Water, security assessments and Bulliver Bridge;
- Funding in relation to new cycle paths in the South Hams and safe cycle access from Totnes to Staverton and Littlehempston;
- Reducing reliance on cars, Bulliver Bridge and car-free options; and
- Campaign to share Bulliver bridge, local support and addressing security concerns.

A copy of the questions and answers would be forwarded to those not present at the meeting.

[NB: A copy of the questions and answers are appended to these minutes and are also available on the Council's Website at <http://www.devon.gov.uk/dcc/committee/minutes.html> and any supplementary questions and answers may be observed through the webcast of this meeting – see Notes below]

FRAMEWORK DECISION

462 **Revenue Budget, Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020/2021 - 2023/2024 and the Capital Programme for 2020/2021 - 2024/2025**

(Councillors Biederman, Dewhurst, Greenslade and Hannaford attended in accordance with Standing Order 25(2) and spoke to this item).

The Cabinet considered and had regard to:

- (i) the Report of the Chief Executive (CSO/20/04) summarising the outcomes of and comments/observations made at consultation meetings with representatives of Devon's Business Community, Trades Unions, representatives of Older People and the Voluntary Sector;
- (ii) the discussions of the Council's Scrutiny Committees held on 20th, 23rd and 28th January 2020, the recommendations being summarised and attached to the agenda (CSO/20/05);
- (iii) a revised 2020/21 Budget Impact Assessment, which had been circulated to all Members of the Council prior to the meeting and available at <https://www.devon.gov.uk/impact/budget-2020-2021/> undertaken as part of the budget's preparation;
- (iv) the Report of the County Treasurer (CT/20/19) (also circulated prior to the meeting in line with Regulation 7(4) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012)) on the Revenue Budget for 2020/21, Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2023/24 and Capital Strategy 2020/21 to 2024/25, including an assessment of the adequacy of reserves, a range of prudential indicators concerning the financial implications of the capital programme and an assessment that identified risks associated with the budget strategy, together with how the risks would be managed. The budget book contained details of the County Council's revenue and capital budgets together with associated financial and operational information.

The Cabinet noted the role of the Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee on 28th January 2020 (Minute *171) in reviewing and endorsing the Report of the County Treasurer (CT/20/18) on the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy for 2020/21, prepared in accordance with the revised Treasury Management Policy Statement and revised CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management. The Treasury Management and Investment Strategy set out the minimum revenue provision (MRP) policy, capital expenditure funding, prudential indicators, the current treasury position, debt and investments; prospects for interest rates; the borrowing strategy; and the investment strategy.

The Committee had commended the Treasury Management Strategy 2020/21 to the Cabinet.

The Cabinet noted that the Council's financial plans had been drawn up with reference to the County Council's major policies and objectives, the County Council's performance framework, demographic changes occurring within the County; and consultation with local residents, businesses and other stakeholders.

The final Local Government financial settlement for 2020/21 represented an increase on 2019/20 of 1.6%. The Final Settlement had been confirmed at £103.2 millions which was an increase of £1.7 millions on 2019/20. 2020/21 was expected to be the start of a new multi-year funding settlement that incorporated the outcome of a new Comprehensive Spending Review, Fairer Funding Review and Business Rate Changes - this had not happened and the settlement for 2020/21 was for one year only and there was no information on what the authority's funding would be for 2021/22 and beyond.

The authority was experiencing significant demand and cost pressures within Social Care services, but the most significant concern was within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Special Educational Needs (SEND).

The Report of the County Treasurer (CT/20/19) comprised in detail:

- Revenue Budget Overview;
- Statement on the Robustness of the Budget Estimates, the Adequacy of Reserves and Affordability of the Capital Strategy;
- Capital Strategy and Programme Overview 2020/21 - 2024/25;
- Service Budgets;
- Fees & Charges;
- Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020/21 - 2023/24;
- County Fund Balance and Earmarked Reserves 2020/21;
- Treasury Management Strategy 2020/21 - 2022/23 and Prudential Indicators 2020/21 - 2024/25;
- Risk Analysis of Volatile Budgets; and
- Abbreviations.

The Cabinet Member for Resources Management additionally commented on the uncertainty faced by Local Government in the absence of a four year settlement and the lack of clarity for financial planning which in turn meant more risk for Local Government finances. In that respect, reserves of £100 millions (minimum) should be kept, a balance that was in line with other like Councils.

Both the Cabinet Member and those attending under Standing Order 25 paid tribute to the work of the finance staff both in terms of the budget setting process and the monitoring activities that took place throughout the year.

The Report outlined that detailed budgets had been produced within the Targets set by Cabinet on 15th January 2020 and were shown on pages 35 to 85. These budgets on pages 35 to 85 complied with the targets set by Cabinet which totalled £541.2 millions, including funding for budget pressures of £50.6 millions that mainly related to additional expenditure to allow for service growth to cater for demographic changes such as increased children and adult service users and unavoidable cost pressures. Savings and income initiatives of £7.5 millions were required to set a balanced budget.

The targets set for each service area had been subject to different pressures and influences. Cabinet had noted in January that the target for Adult Care & Health had increased by £7.7 millions, for Children's Services an increase of £2.5 millions. The increased targets also included £60,000 for additional legal support within Corporate Services and £1 million within Highways, Infrastructure and Waste to help with drainage issues on the Highway network.

The budget for Adult Care & Health was £260,258 millions, a net change of £23,714 millions or 10.0%. For Children's Services, this was £146,845 millions, the net change being £11,538

millions (8.5%). Community, Public Health, Environment & Prosperity was £39,713 millions, with the net change of £925,000 or 2.4%. For Corporate Services £37,160 millions, a net increase of £2,479 millions (7.1%) and in relation to Highways, Infrastructure Development & Waste £57,508 millions, an increase of £2,790 millions (5.1%).

The Council not only received Core Funding but also specific grants that related to particular activities and these were detailed in Key Table 5 on pages 12 and 13. The most significant specific one being the Dedicated Schools Grant which had to be spent on schools and related expenditure. For 2020/21 the Dedicated Schools Grant had increased to £539.4 millions from £510.2 millions in 2019/20. In spite of this increase Devon's schools remained some of the most poorly funded by Government.

The Capital Programme Overview 2020/21 - 2024/25 was outlined at pages 18 onwards, the aim of the five year programme (£493 millions) being to strike a balance between investment in the infrastructure needed to support service delivery, and affordability. For 2020/21, the capital programme showed an increase of £34.4 millions (£26.4 millions net increase after reductions) and this increase was detailed in Table A. The Cabinet Member for Resources Management added there was no additional borrowing to deliver the schemes.

As part of the budget-setting process, the Council had to consider the risks inherent in the budgets set and the adequacy of the measures put in place to manage those pressures. A risk assessment had been undertaken of the main volatile budget areas, the most significant high-risk areas arising where increased demand for services provided cost pressures and the scale of budget required significant management action. Service management teams had, however, identified a number of strategies aimed at mitigating the pressures as set out in the Report. It was also important that active budget monitoring and management remained in place.

The settlement had set the Council Tax increase that would trigger the need for a referendum at 2% for 2020/21, with social care authorities allowed a 2% social care precept. A Band D Council Tax would, if the proposed budget was approved, increase by 3.99% to £1,439.46. The Council Tax requirement for the Council was £423,095,396.52.

The Cabinet acknowledged that a Budget 2020/21 Impact Assessment had been prepared previously and taken into account by Scrutiny Committees as part of their earlier deliberations together with any specific impact assessments undertaken as part of the budget's preparation or in relation to service reviews: to ensure all Members had all relevant information in having regard to the responsibilities placed upon the Council to exercise its Public Sector Equality Duty under s149 of the Equality Act 2010 when considering the proposed budget, its impact and any mitigating action required, prior to making a decision. The preparation of Impact Assessments was a dynamic process and individual assessments for specific proposals may have to be developed and updated with time. The Impact Assessment had been made available to all Members of the Council for the purpose of the Scrutiny meetings, this Cabinet meeting and the County Council on 14 January 2020. A revised version was provided to all Members of the Council on 5 February 2020.

The County Treasurer felt that the budget proposed by the Cabinet represented a sound and achievable financial plan for 2020/21. The total level of reserves and balances had been based on a comprehensive risk assessment and were judged as adequate to meet all reasonable forecasts of future liabilities. In addition, the Capital Strategy and associated capital programme was affordable and the risks associated had been assessed appropriately.

The Cabinet was therefore assured that the budget before it was an effective and balanced budget, which could be commended to the Council.

The matter having been debated and the other relevant factors set out in the County Treasurer's Report and/or referred to above, including the separate risk analyses set out therein:

it was **MOVED** by Councillor Barker, **SECONDED** by Councillor Hart and

RESOLVED that the Cabinet be recommended to:

- 1) Have full regard to the responsibilities placed upon the Council in the exercise of its Public Sector Equality Duty under s149 of the Equality Act 2010 (as set out in the 'Budget 2020/21 Impact Assessment' circulated previously for the purposes of this meeting, and specific impact assessments undertaken as part of the budget's preparation) in considering the proposals and their impact, before making a decision;
- 2) Have regard to the views of the Council's Scrutiny Committees, the Devon Education Forum, the Business Community, the Voluntary Sector, and the Trades Unions and other consultees on the budget (set out elsewhere on the agenda);
- 3) Note the Final Settlement Funding of £103.197 millions;
- 4) Approve the budgets (pages 35 to 85) within the targets set;
- 5) Recommend to Council the Net budget of £530.054 millions as set out in Key Table 1 on page 8;
- 6) Recommend to Council that a 2% Adult Social Care Precept is set as set out in Key Table 2 page 9;
- 7) Recommend to Council that the Council Tax requirement be set at £423,095,396.52 as set out in Key Table 2 page 9;
- 8) Recommend to Council the precepts required from each District Council and the levels of County Council Tax for each of the eight property valuation bands consequent upon the budget as amended by adjustments in collection in the current year, as set out in Key Table 2 on page 9;
- 9) Approve that changes to existing charges be agreed by the appropriate Cabinet Member in consultation with the Treasurer;
- 10) Approve the introduction of the new charge in Highways, as set out on page 86;
- 11) Note the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020/21 - 2023/24 as set out on pages 87 to 100;
- 12) Note the risk assessments set out on pages 137 to 149 and in particular, the risks associated with containing costs and maintaining service provision against a background of significant budget reductions;
- 13) Take account of the risks outlined on pages 137 to 149 in determining the final service budgets, levels of reserves and Council Tax figure to be recommended to the Council;
- 14) Note the County Fund Balance and Earmarked Reserves 2020/21 as set out on pages 101 to 107;
- 15) Recommend to the Council the Capital Strategy and Programme Overview 2020/21 - 2024/25 set out on pages 18 to 33;
- 16) Recommend to the Council the Capital Programme for 2020/21 of £114.5 million and its financing as shown in Summary Table C on page 24;
- 17) Approve, for planning purposes, the indicative Capital Programmes for 2021/22, 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 shown in summary Table C on page 24. These levels will be reviewed

in the light of the overall level of revenue and capital resources available to the Council for each year;

18) Recommend to the Council that it adopts the Treasury Management Strategy 2020/21 - 2022/23 as set out on pages 109 to 125;

19) Recommend to the Council the Prudential Indicators for 2020/21 to 2024/2025 contained pages 109 to 125;

20) Recommend to the Council the Minimum Revenue Provision Strategy for 2019/20 as set out on pages 109 to 125; and

21) Delegate to the County Treasurer the authority to effect movements between the separately agreed limits for borrowing and other long-term liabilities;

[NB: All Members of the Council had been granted a dispensation to allow them to speak and vote in any debate on the setting of the Council Tax or Precept or any fees and charges arising therefrom as a consequence of simply being a resident of or by virtue of being a resident of or a land, business or property owner in the administrative County of Devon, or by being a parent or guardian of a child in a school on any matter relating to school meals and school transport or in relation to the setting of members' allowances or by being a parent or guardian of a child in a care or in receipt of a state pension. The Impact Assessments referred to above are available at:

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/impact/budget-2020-2021/>

KEY DECISION

* 463

Admission Arrangements and Education Travel Policies: Approval to admission arrangements for subsequent academic year and Transport Policy

(Councillors Biederman, Dewhirst and Hannaford attended in accordance with Standing Order 25(2) and spoke to this item).

(Councillor A Davis declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in this matter by virtue of payment for post 16 transport to a local school).

The Cabinet considered the Report of the Head of Education and Learning (CS/20/04) on the approval to Admission & Education Transport Policies for 2020-21 and 2021-21, circulated prior to the meeting in accordance with regulation 7(4) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

The proposed amendments to each policy were outlined in the Report, but the full policies could be viewed from the links in the Report or found at <http://devon.cc/lapolicies>, with the changes annotated in red.

Cabinet were being asked to approve the following;

- Published Admission Numbers (PAN) for community and VC schools for 2021-22 (Appendix One)
- Catchment areas for community and VC schools for 2021-22 set (Appendix Two)
- Admissions timetable for the next year (Appendix Three)
- Normal Round Co-Ordinated Admissions Scheme for 2021-22 (Appendix 4)
- In-Year Co-Ordinated Admissions Scheme for 2020-21 (Appendix 4)
- Education Transport Policies (Education Transport Policy and Post-16 Education Transport Policy) for 2021-22 (Appendix 5)

The Local Authority (Devon LA) had a statutory responsibility to propose, consult on and determine admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled (VC) schools and co-ordinated admission schemes for the normal round of admissions to all state-funded

schools. Consultation in Devon was held ahead of the statutory deadline for annual determination by Cabinet. Schools that were their own admissions authority were responsible for their own arrangements and determined by the schools themselves.

This Report highlighted the outcome of the consultation on primary and secondary school admission arrangements for 2021-22 and the co-ordination of primary and secondary school admissions and to seek approval to the schemes. Admission to special schools and fee-paying independent schools was outside the of scope these arrangements.

The number of responses received remained low. Devon's arrangements had been consistent for a number of years with substantive amendments being introduced gradually and with consultation and feedback from schools suggested they were largely content with matters such as oversubscription criteria, Published Admission Numbers, catchment areas and the application process. A number of responses were received with regard to specific, local admissions issues, detailed at www.devon.gov.uk/admissionarrangements which was in common with neighbouring Local Authorities.

In previous years, the Education Transport Policy had been included in the admissions consultation. The arrangements proposed for 2021-22 for statutory age children and Post-16 students were those previously determined for 2020-21 with changes proposed to the wording to improve understanding, but no proposed changes to policy.

Equality of access to education opportunities was a fundamental feature of school admission arrangements and the education transport policies. All the policies for consideration had been subject to an Equality Impact Needs Assessment, at www.devon.gov.uk/admissionarrangements. All Local Authorities needed to ensure that schools complied with the admissions code and had to be prepared to challenge practice that was neither legal nor inclusive.

The Cabinet noted that the proposals ensured that the Council had met its statutory responsibilities in respect of school admissions. The approach was to provide a comprehensive support service for own admission authority schools and academies to minimise instances where admission authorities introduced unlawful and unfair arrangements, whether or not inadvertently. The aim was to enable parents to have confidence that the admissions process in Devon was fair, transparent and consistent, regardless of the school's designation.

The matter having been debated and the other relevant factors (e.g. financial, sustainability (including carbon impact), risk management, equality and legal considerations and Public Health impact) set out in the Chief Officer's Report and/or referred to above having been considered:

it was **MOVED** by Councillor McInnes, **SECONDED** by Councillor Hart, and

RESOLVED

(a) that it be noted that the admission arrangements were proposed and consulted upon by the Local Authority; and

(b) that the following policies be approved;

- (i) Published Admission Numbers for community and VC schools for 2021-22 (Appendix One);
- (ii) Catchment areas for community and VC schools for 2021-22 set (Appendix Two);
- (iii) Admissions cycle timetable drawn up for the admissions arrangements cycle, set out at Appendix Three;
- (iv) The Normal Round Co-Ordinated Admissions Scheme for 2021-22, the In-Year Co-Ordinated Admissions Scheme for 2020-21 (appendix 4); and

- (v) Education Transport Policies (Education Transport Policy and Post-16 Education Transport Policy) for 2021-22 (Appendix Five)

[NB: The Impact Assessment referred to above may be viewed alongside Minutes of this meeting and may also be available at: <http://www.devon.gov.uk/admissionarrangements>].

MATTERS REFERRED

* **464** **Referral back of Cabinet Decision (Littlehempston Cycle and Foot Path (Cabinet Minute *450 / South Hams HATOC Minute 84)**

In line with paragraph 10.3 of the Cabinet Procedure Rules, Councillor Hodgson had asked that the matter of 'Littlehempston Cycle and Foot Path' (Cabinet Minute *450 of 15 January 2020) be referred back to this meeting for further consideration.

At its meeting on 15 January 2020, the Cabinet had considered the views of the South Hams Highways and Traffic Orders Committee who, at their meeting on 29th November 2019, discussed the issue of public access across the South Devon Railway (SDR) pedestrian bridge (Minute 84 referred). The South Hams Highways and Traffic Orders Committee had resolved that '*given the lack of progress over time, Cabinet be recommended to investigate the public use of the pedestrian railway bridge by compulsory purchase if necessary, given its importance and benefit as a public amenity*'.

Cabinet subsequently considered the matter on the 15th January 2020 and resolved that '(a) that no further work is undertaken on investigating whether the footbridge could be used by the public and the development of a multi-use trail to Littlehempston; and (b) that Compulsory Purchase Order should not be pursued as it cannot be justified, for the reasons outlined below.

- *the scheme need is not a compelling case in the public interest in terms of transport, safety, or economic development;*
- *the scheme is not included in the County Council's Cycling and Multi use Trail Strategy and there is no current funding allocation; and*
- *24-hour public access through the footbridge impacting on South Devon Railway Station and the Rare Breeds Farm would have significant security issues. The Council would need to make provisions in order to effectively increase the security in the area, adding an additional cost to the scheme which would not be in the public's interest.*

The Leader of the Council commented (at the start of the meeting) that given this matter was now the subject of a Notice of Motion at the Council meeting on 20th February 2020, it would be premature to make a decision and proposed that the matter be deferred.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that this matter be deferred as it would be debated as part of the pending consideration of the Notice of Motion by the Council.

STANDING ITEMS

* **465** **Minutes**

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Hart, **SECONDED** by Councillor McInnes, and

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the following be endorsed and any recommendations to Cabinet therein be approved:

Devon Education Forum – 22 January 2020.

* 466 **Delegated Action/Urgent Matters**

The Registers of Decisions taken by Members under the urgency provisions or delegated powers were available for inspection at the meeting in line with the Council's Constitution and Regulation 13 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012; a summary of decisions taken since the last meeting had been published with the Agenda for this meeting. Decisions taken by Officers under any express authorisation of the Cabinet or other Committee or under any general authorisation within the Council's Scheme of Delegation set out in Part 3 of the Council's Constitution may be viewed at <https://new.devon.gov.uk/democracy/officer-decisions/>.

* 467 **Forward Plan**

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, the Cabinet reviewed the Forward Plan and determined those items of business to be defined as key and framework decisions and included in the Plan from the date of this meeting onwards reflecting the requirements of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 (at <http://democracy.devon.gov.uk/mgListPlans.aspx?RPId=133&RD=0>)

NOTES:

1. *These Minutes should be read in association with any Reports or documents referred to therein, for a complete record.*
2. *Notice of the decisions taken by the Cabinet will be sent by email to all Members of the Council within 2 working days of their being made and will, in the case of key decisions, come into force 5 working days after that date unless 'called-in' or referred back in line with the provisions of the Council's Constitution.*
3. *The Minutes of the Cabinet are published on the County Council's website.*
4. *A recording of the webcast of this meeting will also be available to view for up to 12 months from the date of the meeting, at <http://www.devoncc.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>*

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

The Meeting started at 10.30 am and finished at 11.12 am



QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL Friday 14th February 2020

1. **QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR HANNAFORD** **Re: Appledore Shipyard Update**

Can the Cabinet Member update Members on the situation at Appledore Shipyard to include issues such as the ongoing negotiations led by the South West Business Council, Business plan and future work programme of the potential new owners (Santos Marine), the role of Central Government in terms of leadership and funding, the role and responsibilities of the Council and the Local Enterprise Partnership and expected reopening date.

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR GILBERT

We continue to work closely with all interested parties (including South West Business Council, the Local Enterprise Partnership and Government) around the reopening of Appledore Shipyard, seeking a sustainable and viable future for the yard and securing long-term employment and economic benefits for the local area.

Officers have worked extremely hard with the proposed operator, local partners and Government over recent weeks to facilitate next steps, with talks ongoing over how a public investment might be best secured to support the re-opening of the yard. This is however a complex process, led by Government, requiring significant legal and financial rigour.

With regards the plans and work programme for the site, the Council isn't currently able to comment on this in detail due to the commercial nature of elements of the plan received from the operator. With regards roles, responsibilities and opening dates, Devon County Council continues to engage with Government and the operator over next steps.



QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC Friday 14th February 2020

1. QUESTION FROM JAMES RISEBERO (NOT IN ATTENDANCE)

Re: Littlehempston and Incorporation into Council's Cycle and Multi Use Trail Strategy

The combined population of the villages north of Totnes is upwards of 10,000 people and, contrary to the general perception, the terrain between Newton Abbot and Totnes via Littlehempston is unusually gentle by Devon standards and is highly useable as a cycle route. I know this because I cycle it regularly and have also undertaken detailed terrain analysis using mapping software which I would be happy to share with Devon County Council. The route via Staverton and Huxhams cross adds approximately an additional 100m of elevation gain onto the overall journey, involves a dangerous crossing on a hill at the junction with the A384 and takes potential users off in a loop of several miles which we believe would be enough to dissuade most people from using it. Given that there is a strong desire for safer cycling routes in our area, backed up by over 3,400 signatures on the South Devon Cycle Link petition, is it not time that Devon County Council incorporates the direct route via Littlehempston into its Cycle and Multi Use Trail Strategy, at least as a means of signalling its 'in principle' support for a greener and safer transport network in South Devon?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES

I recognise there is a strong desire for the Totnes to Newton Abbot cycle route. However, there is a similar desire for safe multi-use trails that are accessible to all for a number of other routes across the County. Our current programme is heavily oversubscribed, so we are focused on completing our core network before we add any further schemes to the programme.

2. QUESTION FROM KRIS PRATT (NOT IN ATTENDANCE)

Re: Bulliver Bridge Crossing

I was there when the bridge was opened and it was hailed as public access to the north side of the river dart for both walkers and cyclists. It was also expected that cycle tracks would be extended to surrounding villages and Newton Abbot avoiding the main A381, in a similar way to the cycle path that was being constructed to the then Dartington Ciderpress Centre at the time.

I would like to know why 50% of public funds were used to build the bride and the bridge is then subsequently closed to the public? Does the Cabinet feel this appropriate? if so why?

Taking the above into consideration, I would have thought that South Devon Railway would have been only too glad to have worked with the local community in this matter, this appears not to be the case.

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES

The funding and agreements for the bridge were reached several decades ago with multiple bodies involved. Bulliver Bridge is entirely owned by South Devon Railway and they are solely responsible for its upkeep. I cannot comment on what was envisaged at the time.

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3. QUESTION FROM MARTIN BJERREGAARD (IN ATTENDANCE)
Re: Zero Carbon Target's and Cycle Path from Totnes

As a business owner in Littlehempston where we have embodied ISO14001 and the Government's zero carbon target. On average our business and family use at least 8 car trips a day to/from Totnes! Surely a cycle path using an existing bridge that does not impact on the railways would be a big step forward towards mitigating the climate emergency. How is Devon County Council supporting small businesses as ours with these climate focussed targets at the same time as using infrastructure that is already in place?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES

Devon County Council has committed to addressing the Climate Emergency. We are working with a group of public, private and voluntary organisation partners across the County. In May 2019, the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group was formed. The first element is to undertake a Citizens Charter which will in turn lead to a programme of actions encompassed in the production of a Devon Carbon Plan.

4. QUESTION FROM BRIDGET WEST (NOT IN ATTENDANCE)
Re: Bridge and Use by Local Community

At the bridge's opening ceremony, the West Country Tourist Board Chairman, Michael McGabey made a welcome speech to the then Tourism Minister, Ian Sproat. In this speech he made the following reference that

"The new bridge ... is an excellent example of the type of tourist development which encourages walking, cycling, and the use of public transport."

With that in mind do you not think that Devon County Council and South Devon Railway have an obligation to at least consider in detail how this bridge might fulfil its intended purpose and be shared with, and used by, the local community?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES

South Devon Railway have been in existence for 50 years, demonstrating its sustainability as a local tourist attraction. The Bulliver Bridge was opened in 1993 to provide pedestrian access to the South Devon Railway and subsequently Totnes Rare Breeds Farm. I cannot comment on what was envisaged at the time.

5. QUESTION FROM NICK OLDRIDGE (IN ATTENDANCE)
Re: Discussions with South West Water and Bulliver Bridge

Our cycle path campaign group has been in discussions with South West Water, the principle landowner involved in this potential project. South West Water have recently completed a detailed security assessment and providing these needs can be satisfied, have now stated they have no objection to our proposals. With a climate emergency declared and Totnes experiencing a growing congestion problem together with air quality issues, is it not time to conduct a similar assessment of the security issues relating to sharing Bulliver Bridge?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES

There have been a series of meetings at various levels with the owners of Bulliver Bridge. Their assessment is that the opening of the bridge to the public is a safety and security concern.

6. QUESTION FROM DAVID HENDY (NOT IN ATTENDANCE)
Re: Funding for Cycle Paths in the South Hams.

In the last 10 years it appears no funding has been provided for new cycle paths in the South Hams (Fol Requests 9651381, 1308048).

In the absence of year-round access to Bulliver Bridge, which would have provided safe cycle access opportunity from Totnes to both Staverton and Littlehempston, has there been any reported intention to provide new cycle paths in the South Hams?

If so, would DCC be able to supply a copy of a report detailing

- the intention
- the budget,
- fund ring-fencing, and
- work locations?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES

There are number of rural multi use trails, which the Council has been delivering in recent years including the Plym Valley (partly in South Hams) Exe Estuary Trail, the Wray Valley Trail and the Drake's Trail. These have a good spread across the County but take several years to develop and deliver due to limited dedicated funds for cycle and multi use trail infrastructure. In the South Hams, we have also supported schemes where there is scope for funding from new development to assist with delivery of local cycle links. Examples of this are Kingsbridge Hill to Old Toll House and Ashburton Road A385 from Puddavine to Dartington Lane which to link new sites which is already a good link from Dartington to Totnes Town Centre next to the river and past the industrial estates and Morrisons etc.

7. QUESTION FROM JONATHAN MORRIS (NOT IN ATTENDANCE)
Re: Reliance on Cars, Bulliver Bridge and Car Free Transport

As a Parish Council, we are striving to reduce our parishioners' reliance on cars and are encouraging more journeys by foot and bicycle; with all the obvious health, environmental and economic benefits these provide. Bulliver Bridge is the only physical connection between Littlehempston and Totnes and represents the only car-free option between the two communities. In light of this, can we please ask: what is the Cabinet's Plan B for offering safe and car-free transport between Littlehempston and Totnes, if this bridge scheme is not supported?"

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES

For parishioners who are able to walk there is a regular bus service on the A381 (service 7 & 177).

For school children there is a school bus to Totnes (secondary) and Berry Pomeroy (primary).

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**8. QUESTION FROM STUART DORMAN (NOT IN ATTENDANCE)
Re: Bulliver Bridge Support and Addressing Security Concerns.**

I live in Littlehempston and have to make numerous trips into Totnes every day to take and collect children from school, youth clubs and other activities and well as my wife travelling to her office in Totnes, myself travelling to Totnes station several times a week and regular shopping trips etc. There are many other families in the surrounding villages in the same situation. The alternative cycle routes (via Staverton or the A381) are simply not viable and are highly dangerous for children.

Over the years the campaign to share the Bulliver bridge has received personal support from Sarah Wollaston, Ben Bradshaw, Norman Baker (as Minister for Transport) and Malcolm Shephard (as Chief Executive of Sustrans). It has also received support from all the local parish councils, all the local schools, the Totnes leisure centre, the Doctors surgery, a host of local businesses and thousands of local residents. With South West Water now coming on board, does the council not agree it is time for some discussion around the whether the security concerns of the South Devon Railway can be appropriately and sensitively dealt with?

It seems crazy that with the current climate emergency we are all forced to drive our cars into our local town several times a day when a direct route (less than a mile) is available with a little cooperation from the railway. How can something that will benefit so many people be blocked by so few?

I hope that you are able to represent the many people in this community that will benefit from this.

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES

Whilst it is recognised that there is a strong desire for the Totnes to Littlehempston cycle route, there is a similar desire for safe multi-use trails covering a number of other routes across the County that are not in our current programme. Despite this, there have been a series of meetings at various levels with South Devon Railway, who are the owners of Bulliver Bridge. Their assessment is that the opening of the bridge to the public is a safety and security concern.