

EXETER HIGHWAYS AND TRAFFIC ORDERS COMMITTEE

21 April 2023

Present:-

Councillors D Barnes (Chair), T Adams, M Asvachin, Y Atkinson, S Aves, R Hannaford, A Leadbetter, P Prowse and C Whitton,

Exeter City Council

Councillors B Denning, M Pearce, A Sparling and T Wardle

* **91** **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 January 2023 be signed as a correct record.

* **92** **Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

No item was raised as a matter of urgency.

* **93** **Petitions/Parking Policy Reviews**

The Chair was presented with a petition from Mr T Crocker MBE comprising 186 signatories, residents in the Heavitree, St Loyes and Wonford areas impacted by the closure of Dryden road. The petition requested that a comprehensive review of the E9 Dryden Road Scheme be conducted, with a view of reopening Dryden Road for all vehicular through direction, in both directions.

The Chair confirmed that the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport would respond to Mr Crocker within 15 working days.

* **94** **Bus Services in Exeter**

The Chair reported that Mr P Knight, Managing Director, Stagecoach South West had submitted his apologies for the meeting.

Members requested that the following questions be relayed to Mr Knight:

(i) Councillor Asvachin: Concern about the malfunction of electronic notices in the High Street (by the Next store) in regard to notification of a late bus and would Stagecoach confirm that the operation of the electronic notice board is operated by Stagecoach and not Devon County Council (a Stagecoach driver at the time had indicated that the Notice was operated by DCC)?

(ii) Councillor Sparling: Has Stagecoach seen any change in passenger numbers since the recent fare increases have been implemented or did it see

an increase in flexi ticket sales prior to the increase and has any progress been made on reinstating the £1 child add on fare?

(iii) Councillor Sparling: With regards to reliability statistics, how late does a bus have to be in order to be recorded as such and does Stagecoach only record the reliability of buses that are running or is the bus removed from the statistics if it is cancelled?

(iv) Councillor Sparling: Are there any improvements to evening services in the pipeline and has Stagecoach seen any reduction in passenger numbers since reducing evening services to hourly? Also, will there be a bus servicing the new Marsh Barton train station in the evenings as the Green service is currently only available during the day?

(v) Councillor Pearce: School bus service cuts - timing of the announcements poorly served the residents of the City, many of whom had just made applications for school places based on the accessibility of the school via a bus. What is being done to look at the reinstatement of this vital service? And will the services be advertised again and an alternative operator sought (for the County Council)?

(vi) Councillor Pearce: night bus services - will the service be reintroduced? And the same question for the County Council: will the service be advertised again and alternative operators sought as this is a very important service for the night time economy within the city and also for the safety of residents?

(vii) Councillor Adams: Will the £2 fare continue; and how has patronage been impacted for shorter journeys with recent price increases.

Councillors Pearce and Leadbetter also passed on their thanks to Stagecoach for the increase in service levels on the 57 route.

Members also expressed concern about the non-attendance of a Stagecoach representative to this meeting and requested that the Chair writes to Mr P Knight urging their future attendance.

* **95** **Air Quality in Exeter**

The Committee considered the Report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport (CET/23/30) on air quality management in the Exeter. Exeter City Council (ECC) was responsible for monitoring and reporting on local air quality management, including producing an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP). The County Council's role was to support the AQAP as transport-related pollution was one of the main contributors to poor air quality. The Report drew upon information from Exeter City Council's latest Air Quality Annual Status Report based upon monitoring data from 2021 and reported to their Executive in September 2022.

There were two national objectives for levels of nitrogen dioxide. These were for the average level over a whole year, which should be below 40 micrograms per cubic metre, and the average level for one hour, which should not exceed 200 micrograms per cubic metre, on more than 18 occasions during a year. Local authorities were told that this one-hour standard was unlikely to be exceeded where the average level over a whole year was below 60 so this measurement was a commonly used proxy. The annual average objective applied to residential, hospital and education sites. Monitoring conducted by the City Council was not representative of typical or average conditions across the city. Instead, most of the monitoring sites were indicative of the worst-case locations.

Based on 2022 report findings, the number of sites which exceed the objective had reduced significantly since the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) was declared (a reduction from 32 exceedances in 2009 to one in 2021). The highest level and only exceedance was measured on the Heavitree Road corridor at East Wonford Hill. Here, levels had been previously well above the objective level but in 2021 were significantly lower at 42.2 micrograms per cubic metre.

The Report highlighted the overall improvement in air quality in Exeter, the reduction in traffic volumes across the city since 2015 and progress in delivering against the Air Quality Action Plan remedial measures to encourage mode shift and reduced reliance on private car for peoples' daily needs.

Members' discussion points with the Officers included:

- there was a clear numeric decline in traffic flows and associated improvement in air quality and that Electric vehicles would have made a positive contribution and that HGVs, including buses had an adverse disproportionate impact on the pollution levels;
- officers undertook to review with GWR the disability access arrangements and any proposals in regard to the Exeter, St Thomas, rail station and improved services in Cowick Street planned under the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) proposals;
- the relatively persistent high levels of pollutants in and around York Road and the Mount Pleasant junction in connection with signal timings and engine idling; and Officers undertook to investigate the opportunities to address this through the BSIP funding arrangements;
- an undertaking from Officers that the annual Air Quality Management Report would be reported to a future meeting, following Exeter City Council's annual Executive report, with the most updated and current data reported jointly by Exeter City Council and Devon County Council Officers;
- confirmation of cooperative working between the Exeter City Council (as the lead Authority) and Devon County Council, under the statutory duty to cooperate requirements and noting the opportunity for further collaboration through joint working groups (as well as the Enhanced Bus Partnership arrangements) for example;

- concerns by Members at the current levels of pollution and disproportionate impact on vulnerable younger and older residents and whether the current limits were appropriate to ensure a safe and healthy environment; and the impact of ongoing congestion on the City's fragile road network and pressures on the bus network and patronage; and the impact as a result of the new and substantial residential development in and around the City, noting that this may result in a need for a review of the current AQ monitoring points; and Officers undertook to liaise with Exeter City Council to provide more mapping information on the current locations and consider requests for new locations;
- a response to the current DEFRA consultation on the draft revised Air Quality Strategy was being made by Public Health colleagues on behalf of the County Council; and
- further School Streets trials could be rolled out if schools were interested; however this would be subject to resources and availability of external grant funding and the support of School staff and governors.

The Chair thanked the Officers for the wide-ranging report and noted the significant improvements being made through active travel schemes and initiatives.

* **96** **Review of the redundant Library van bay, Lower Kings Avenue**

In accordance with Standing Order 23(2) Councillor P Prowse had asked that the Committee consider this matter.

The Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport confirmed that the request would be considered as part of the next annual local waiting restrictions programme.

* **97** **Review of the limited waiting spaces, Thornton Hill and adjacent streets**

In accordance with Standing Order 23(2) Councillor P Prowse had asked that the Committee consider this matter.

The Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport confirmed that the request would be considered as part of the next annual local waiting restrictions programme.

* **98** **Enforceability of 20mph zones in Exeter**

In accordance with Standing Order 23(2) Councillor P Prowse had asked that the Committee consider this matter.

The Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport confirmed that a review about 10 years ago checked that all 20mph restrictions in Exeter were compliant and enforceable.

It was also confirmed that additional powers being applied for to the Secretary of State which allowed local authorities to enforce 'moving traffic offences' under new arrangements introduced from 31 May 2022 did not permit speeding offences to be included. Enforcement of the 20 mph zones would therefore remain solely with the Police.

* **99** **Actions taken under Delegated Powers**

The Committee noted the Report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport (CET/23/31) on actions taken under delegated powers.

* **100** **Dates of Next Meetings**

24 July and 30 October 2023 and 11 January and 17 April 2024.

Confirmation of dates of all meetings available on the Council's website:
<https://democracy.devon.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=168&Year=0>

NOTES:

1. *Minutes should always be read in association with any Reports for a complete record.*
2. *If the meeting has been webcast, it will be available to view on the [webcasting site](#) for up to 12 months from the date of the meeting*

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

The Meeting started at 10.30 am and finished at 12.21 pm