

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Thursday 21 February 2019

1. QUESTION FROM Mr S MacDonald (NOT IN ATTENDANCE)
Re: Highways Site Visits

I would like to question why no highways officer is prepared to come to see us at Crockernwell to assess the danger my wife and I have been placed in following the removal of the white lines in the centre of the village.

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES

I understand that Mr MacDonald has previously been in touch with the Council on this matter. There have been numerous communications regarding the Speed Compliance Action Review Forum that made the recommendations regarding the road marking changes and also the rationale and reasons for the change in Crockernwell (road marking changes by the removal of the white line in a narrow section).

I do not believe that a site visit would change the current status.

Mr MacDonald has recently been given advice on potential ways forward, including contacting the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsmen (LGSCO), given the Council's own complaints procedure has now been fully exhausted, and furthermore, the mechanism by which to progress a request for double yellow lines.

2. QUESTION FROM Mr W Page
Re: Road Network Investment

DCC has continued to approve public money being spent on the road network in and around Exeter in recent years. £13.45 million was spent on the Bridge Road works at Countess Wear and £2.23 million was recently allocated for road widening at Moor Lane roundabout. What measures are used to evaluate these schemes as, despite the significant investment at Countess Wear, traffic on Topsham road is still regularly gridlocked? What tests does DCC use to reassure itself that money allocated to widening roads on the outskirts of Exeter is a better return on investment than walking and cycling infrastructure?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR DAVIS

Highway schemes like Bridge Road widening and Moor Lane roundabout were prepared to support delivery of major strategic housing developments at South West Exeter, Newcourt and the Monkerton parts of the city. Grampian-style planning conditions have been imposed on developments, preventing housing delivery to come forward until the schemes were in place. As well as developer contributions, both of these schemes were funded with a sizeable contribution from Government grant funding and therefore we needed to satisfy the Department that these schemes had a positive benefit cost ratio and represented good value for money. Since the scheme was completed, there has been a reduction in congestion on vehicles travelling southbound on Bridge Road in the evening peak.

A key part of the Bridge Road scheme was the substantial improvement to the Exe Estuary Trail cycling and walking route, which included a landmark bridge alongside the historic Countess Wear bridge. The Moor Lane scheme also forms part of a package of grant funding through the National

Productivity Investment Fund, which committed over £3m of funding towards strategic cycle improvements in Exeter, which are currently on site. The County Council therefore has a varied capital programme and continues to deliver a significant walking and cycling improvement programme, with over £20million of cycle projects delivered across the County since 2015.

3. QUESTION FROM Mr P Scott (NOT IN ATTENDANCE)
Re: Climate Change Research

Does the Leader of the Council / Cabinet Member and other Councillors support the view that Cllr Richard Hosking expressed to myself and three other constituents earlier this week (which we strongly disagree with), that:

- the views of the 3% of scientists who produce research underplaying the severity of climate change are more relevant than the 97% who produce research which stresses such severity;

We believe the opposite is true and eminent voices such as the UN Sec Gen, Pope Francis, David Attenborough and the vast array of senior, world leading, climate scientists should be listened to and acted upon with urgency.

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD

Devon County Council's Climate Change Strategy was revised and adopted by this administration in 2018 and commits the authority to supporting the UK in meeting its carbon budget targets by encouraging greenhouse gas reduction in Devon at the same rate as adopted nationally. It will do this by prioritising greenhouse gas reduction from its own activities, areas of influence and by encouraging others to do the same. At this meeting of Council, Members are considering Cabinet's recommendation of the declaration of a climate emergency in response to the Special Report published by the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change.

4. QUESTION FROM Ms S Ifould (NOT IN ATTENDANCE)
Re: Severity of Climate Change

Would the Council agree that any residue of doubt which individuals may hold about the severity of the impact of climate change is overridden by the need to act NOW as at least a responsible precautionary measure to secure a future for the next generation?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD

Devon County Council first produced a Climate Change Strategy in 2005, which was updated and revised in 2018. At this meeting of Council, Members are considering Cabinet's recommendation of the declaration of a climate emergency. This is in response to the Special Report published by the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change and specifically recognises the need for urgent, additional action to address this threat.