

EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

Exmouth Transport Partnership

Notes of the Zoom meeting held at 10am on Tuesday 23rd March 2021

Present

Tim Dumper	TD	ETC councillor, Chair
Lisa Bowman	LB	ETC Town Clerk
Pauline Stott	PS	ETC councillor
David Poor	DP	ETC councillor
Olly Davey	OD	ETC & EDDC councillor
Brian Bailey	BB	ETC councillor
Eileen Beech	EB	ETC councillor
Ian Kirvan	IK	ETC councillor
Fred Caygill	FC	ETC & EDDC councillor
Jayne Johnson	JJ	Kier, Planner & Public Liaison Officer for Exmouth Tidal Defence Scheme
Dave Ovenden	DO	DCC Senior Public Transport Co-ordinator
Christian Reed	CR	Stagecoach Southwest Commercial Manager
Andrew Ennis	AE	EDDC, Service Lead Environmental Health, Climate Emergency & Green Traffic Plans and Public Car Parks Manager
Jan Gannaway	JG	Active Travel Exmouth, & Sustrans
John Petty	JP	Active Travel Exmouth, & Exmouth Community Association
Lewis Ward	LW	GWR, Assistant Retail Manager
Tony Jackson	TJ	ALRUG (Avocet Line Rail Users' Group)
Tim Clatworthy	TC	ETC Receptionist/Administrator, notetaker

Apologies

Richard Elliott	RE	DCC Highways
George Shorters	GS	Exmouth Taxis Association
Cameron Robison	CR	DCC, Neighbourhood Highways Officer
Bruce de Saram	BdS	ETC & EDDC councillor
Alison Hayward	AH	EDDC, Project Manager for Place and Prosperity

1. Welcome and introduction of new members

2. Apologies

3. Notes of previous meeting of 15th December 2020

DP proposed and OD seconded the veracity of these notes.

4. Matters arising from previous meeting

It was agreed that matters arising would be covered elsewhere in this meeting.

5. To receive an update on the tidal defence work and the recent meeting with DCC re. seafront congestion – JJ

Tidal Defence works:

A dangerous cable was discovered under the Esplanade and WPD (Western Power Distribution) was obliged to close the road immediately without being able to give notice. The cable has been repaired and the current road closure is Kier's originally-planned one.

Morton Crescent camber: There was concern that the road camber here was sloping inland and would therefore lead to flooding; JJ explained that a lot of extra drainage had been inserted. However it was brought up that a planning condition to resurface the road to correct the camber had been agreed upon and should therefore be actioned.

Action: JJ to check for this planning condition.

Over the next two weeks Alston Terrace will close to allow installation of the floodgate, but Morton Crescent opposite the Grove will be opening to allow traffic through.

From Easter weekend, from Alexandra Terrace junction to the Premier Inn will be closed and a new zebra crossing will be added.

Kier thanked DCC for relaxing their proposed 2-week embargo on works (limiting them now to only the Easter weekend) as this would allow Kier to make substantially more progress.

Kier have tried their best to allow pedestrians & cyclists to continue using the seafront, but cyclists should dismount – or use the diversion.

The Royal Avenue tree replanting: This has been delayed as the specified tree species are out of stock due to Covid, but it is hoped they will be available by November, the next planting season. This will be explained in Kier's upcoming newsletter.

Seafront congestion:

There are short-term (Covid) and long-term (e.g. seafront bus services and cycleways) considerations.

There is considerable concern that in the current Covid circumstances, congestion will be a very serious public health issue, and a meeting was convened to discuss this and longer-term issues with LB, TD, JG, DCC councillors Jeff Trail and Richard Scott, and DCC's Neighbourhood Highways Manager, Tom Vaughan. DCC is striving to drive home the importance of social distancing on social media and also through new signage. Whilst it was suggested that the new signage is too small to be very effective, it had also been observed that with too many signs, none of them get noticed. Additional solutions (e.g. stands) put forward by other attendees of the meeting were turned down by DCC.

Looking to the longer term, reference was made to Cllr Stuart Hughes' article in the Exmouth Journal regarding the furthering of cycling opportunities in towns, noting that Barnstaple and Newton Abbot already received funding for this as they were categorised as 'cycle towns.' Citing Exmouth Neighbourhood Plan's aspirations, JG has written to Cllr Hughes to ask how this designation was achieved. However, it is already known that to achieve this status, a workable plan needs to have been drawn up. Consequently short-term experimental trials (to include creating new cyclepaths to better separate cyclists and pedestrians) were suggested to DCC at the above meeting in order to minimise the potential for seafront conflict between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, particularly as one category of users tend not to notice other categories nor the current warning signs. DCC was reluctant to pursue these experimental trials, citing likely adverse effects on access to the tourist economy, emergency services, and reassignment of traffic onto sensitive streets. A request for evidence supporting DCC's assessments has been submitted to DCC.

6. To receive an update on the bus shelter replacement scheme - LB

Replacement of Exmouth's bus shelters has been delayed due to the supplier going into liquidation. Fernbank still intend to replace those owned by ETC and EDDC over the next three years, starting with the Parade shelter as it has a broken roof, then prioritising those which can display advertising, as it is the revenue from the advertising which will pay for all the shelters.

Winterising shelters, e.g. adding sides, and also more comfortable seating as the majority of users are elderly, was suggested. It was explained that there are restrictions on the amount of space that a shelter can take up on a pavement, and that some shelter sites are too small for any additions. However, ETC has already asked Fernbank for full shelters, and where possible Fernbank may re-site shelters to allow for more room; this has already been earmarked for the Salterton Road shelter outside Tesco, to allow extra space for wheelchair-users.

It was requested that ETC's Town Maintenance Team help to clean those shelters which have become unsightly with dirt.

7. To discuss the scope to revisit the delivery of an integrated transport exchange - TD

The ITI was originally in EDDC's Masterplan as well as in ETC's Neighbourhood Plan, though the aspirations of the latter were not necessarily deliverable as stated in the Plan as they were dependent on partnerships. The ideal opportunity to site physical facilities by the railway station was lost when the land was sold to M&S. However an ITI may still be achievable in other ways, and the work that Roma Patten (ex-ETP) did to produce a potential business plan is still held by ETC. An ideal ITI would cater not only for more convenient train/bus/taxi transfers but also consider pedestrians, cyclists and 'Co-Cars' – hireable cars to allow long-distance travellers to continue their local journey by hiring a local car, instead of having to drive the whole way from e.g. Manchester. There is also a bicycle version, 'Co-Bikes.' AE confirmed there was space for this close to the station.

GWR still intends to support funding applications for improvements in the station area via ETC's CCIF bid, if and when the Dept of Transport opens up funding again post-Covid delays.

8. Stakeholder Reports

a) DCC Public Transport – Dave Ovenden

Current situation:

This is currently stable, and although social distancing requirements dictate that buses may generally only travel at most half-full, revenue shortfalls are compensated by the CBSSG (Covid Bus Services Support Grant.) However this may be phased out after social-distancing measures end, but there is a possibility of replacement funding from the Bus Back Better strategy.

Short-term view:

The summer Sunday 157 Exmouth to Sidmouth service will resume late May; and printed timetables will be available in June and will be delivered to ETH.

Long-term view:

The new BBB (Bus Back Better) strategy plans changes in the ways bus services are run, aiming to improve both services and infrastructure, aimed at making bus travel more attractive to passengers:

By this July, local authorities need to have detailed bus service improvement plans which will set targets for reliability and passenger growth. This will ensure continued Government funding to replace the CBSSG and therefore ensure bus services are kept stable.

BBB encourages partnerships with other bus companies, known as 'Enhanced Partnerships', and to improve infrastructure – e.g. more bus lanes – in return for better services from bus operators.

Fare-caps may be introduced, buses will be fitted with visual and audible 'the next stop is...' announcements, and nationally 4,000 electric and hydrogen buses to be brought into service by the end of this parliament (2024.)

b) DCC Highways

There was no representation from DCC Highways at this meeting.

c) Stagecoach – Christian Reed

Stagecoach intends to keep their current Exmouth services at 100%, and from 12th April will increase the 95 Sandy Bay service to half-hourly and also extend its provision later into the evenings. This service is not currently routed via the railway station, but the possibilities will be reviewed at the end of the summer.

The introduction of lower-emission buses has been delayed by covid.

CR requests that we record time and bus no. in any instances of buses (a) travelling down Featherbed Lane and (b) standing unattended at Greggs/Halifax, and inform Stagecoach.

d) EDDC Car/Cycle Parks and Electric Charging Points – Andrew Ennis

Campervans: Within a review of parking charges, EDDC is considering overnight charges for campervans as part of a campervan policy, to include the partial use of the lorry park at The Royal Avenue. A Campervan TAFF meeting to be arranged.

- **Action: LB to liaise with DCC and EDDC to convene a meeting of the Campervan TAFF.**

Electric vehicle charging: Ten bays have been identified for charging points, to be online within a year.

e) Exmouth Taxis Association – George Shorters

GS was unable to attend this meeting, but reported that the current demand for taxis is very limited. A number of drivers are furloughed but a number have gone to work in different areas. However, he expects taxis to be able to match the demand as it improves over the next few months.

The shutdown has delayed any increase in electric vehicles being used as taxis as a taxi has to be a large car, and there is limited availability at present and the prices are very high. However the Association recognises that electric taxis will be the way forward in due course.

f) Active Travel – Jan Gannaway

JG is in touch with Sustrans about bringing NCN2 through the town centre. They are certainly interested and she is hopeful Exmouth can benefit from their expertise in making improvements on the seafront.

g) GWR – Lewis Ward

Covid effects: Punctuality and cancellations have been affected, and these challenges are likely to continue into the summer. However there has been increased patronage since January, which has risen again since educational establishments reopened early March. More trains will be added to the network as more stages of lockdown are lifted.

St James' Park Station: Both platforms have now been extended, so all doors on each compartment can be used.

New contract: Big reforms are expected with the signing of a new contract.

h) ALRUG – Tony Jackson

Printed timetables are still not being provided as, with the ever-changing situation, they quickly become out of date.

9. Any other business

No further issues were brought up.

10. Dates of 2021 meetings: 22nd June; 28th September; 14th December.

The meeting closed at 11:58am.