

## Full Council 17 October 2023

### Public Questions

#### **Question from Richard Ward - attending**

##### Alexandra Theatre

*'Can the leader of the council reassure Newton Abbot and District Musical Comedy Society (NADMCS), that the Council will do everything in its power to honour the clause in the previous lease agreements that permits NADMCS to use the Alexandra Theatre for 2 weeks per year with the option for a third week'.*

*This has enabled the Society to perform a pantomime, musical comedy and junior musical production for over 100 years in this grade 2 listed theatre*

#### **Response from the Leader**

The council recognises the contribution of NADMCS and is keen to see them able to continue their productions.

#### **Question from Matt Slater**

##### *Riverside Boatyard and Policy EN2 – Undeveloped Coast*

*I have been assisting the current owners of Riverside Boatyard, Teignmouth to design a viable sustainable facility which allows the site to be fit for purpose for years to come.*

*As part of this project, I have investigated the history of the site and note that there has been continuous industrial use here since the early 1830's which predates the construction of the railway. Having originally been developed as an industrial enterprise, there have also been elements of manufacturing, retail, residential and storage throughout the 20th century and at no point during this time has the site been dormant.*

*In terms of built form, I have copies of the original plans for the site together with photographs dating back over 100 years which illustrate that the area has been heavily developed with buildings covering the vast majority of the footprint.*

*The site was originally formed for industrial purposes and has operated in this manner for approaching 200 years. By its very nature it is 'developed'. I would be keen to understand the logic of including the most heavily developed site in Teignmouth within the 'undeveloped coast' designation?*

#### **Response from Executive Member for Planning**

Thank you for your question. Undeveloped coast is our most precious classification, and must be protected. We agree that the situation is unusual, and that it bears more investigation at a future date. The debate today is purely on items in the Local Plan Addendum.

### **Question from Anne McLarnon**

#### ***Riverside Boatyard and Policy EN2 – Undeveloped Coast***

*Having followed the previous planning application at Riverside Boatyard with interest, I was surprised by the Local Plan designation of the site as Undeveloped Coast.*

*It's clear that there has been continuous industrial use here since the early 1830's and as such, I could only conclude that the site had been previously designated by the Council as Undeveloped Coast erroneously. I expected that the most recent review of the Local Plan and representations made by the owner of Riverside Boatyard would give the Council the opportunity to regularize their previous omission.*

*However, having viewed the representation analysis by the Council I note that they concluded that the site should not be included within the settlement boundary. They state that the site is 'not considered to have been intensely developed' the below photograph taken in the 1960's suggests otherwise.*



*Their report goes onto suggest that there are 2 buildings on site, where there are 5 which can clearly be seen in the photograph below.*



*I am disappointed that the opportunity to correct a previous mistake has not been taken by the Council and would like to ask why the significant build form and historic use has not been considered by the as part of this review?*

### **Response from Executive Member for Planning**

**As before:** Thank you for your question. Undeveloped coast is our most precious classification, and must be protected. We agree that the situation is unusual, and that it bears more investigation at a future date. The debate today is purely on items in the Local Plan Addendum.

### **Question from Amy Stenner**

*I am writing to you in my capacity as the Manager of Riverside Boatyard in Teignmouth. I understand you will be discussing the boatyard's status as 'Undeveloped Coast' as part of your Full Council Meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> of this month.*

*I have read with interest the comments from the TDC Planning department as to why they feel that the boatyard should not have its status as 'Undeveloped Coast' removed, unfortunately their response shows a lack of understanding of the site as it is now and its long history of industrial use which dates back to the early 1830's.*

*The boatyard currently houses five independent businesses, all but one of which support the marine industry, in five dilapidated workshops (not two as the planning department have incorrectly stated in their representation). These workshops are verging on being not fit for purpose but there is no where else on the Teign Estuary*

*where these marine businesses can efficiently operate from. We have the facilities here at Riverside for vessels to be lifted from the water with our travel hoist and be kept on the hard and worked on.*

*As I'm sure you are aware the owners of Riverside are keen to redevelop the site, this would provide our tenants with new purpose build workshops which can only be of benefit to them as well as their customers.*

*The current status as 'Undeveloped Coast' is, in my opinion, incorrect and is hindering plans to turn this run-down brown field site into a facility for Teignmouth to be proud of and I would like to ask why the status remains despite the abundance of evidence which proves this status to be incorrect.*

### **Response from Executive Member for Planning**

**As before:** Thank you for your question. Undeveloped coast is our most precious classification, and must be protected. We agree that the situation is unusual, and that it bears more investigation at a future date. The debate today is purely on items in the Local Plan Addendum.

### **Question from Robert Phipps**

*I would like to raise my objection to the Riverside boat yards classification.*

*As being classed as undeveloped coast.*

*The Riverside boat yard was formally a gasworks site for the town and has had industrial buildings on it for some 200 years and I would argue the site has been misclassified as undeveloped coast.*

*Now we have an opportunity to put the record straight with Teignbridge local plan.*

*There is an overwhelming evidence as to why this industrial site should be reclassified. There are historical photographs showing large buildings occupying the site prior to the buildings that occupy the boatyard site at the moment.*

*Would you please clarify why this site is still classified as undeveloped coast when clearly it is not and has been in industrial use for over 200 years.*

*I would respectfully ask councillors to rectify this misclassification, while you have the ideal opportunity.*

### **Response from Executive Member for Planning**

**As before:** Thank you for your question. Undeveloped coast is our most precious classification, and must be protected. We agree that the situation is unusual, and that it bears more investigation at a future date. The debate today is purely on items in the Local Plan Addendum.

### **Question from Jack Thomas**

*I operate my company from one of the commercial units situated adjacent to the railway at Riverside Boatyard in Teignmouth.*

*As part of my business, I spend a fair amount of time on the River Teign and I'm very aware of the changing shoreline from the houses and quaysides of Teignmouth and Shaldon to the natural red stone and overhanging greenery of Coombeinteignhead and Netherton. I would be keen to understand why, this industrial site with 200 years heritage and without vegetation is considered in planning terms more akin with the open countryside to the west than the developed land which it clearly resembles to the east? From my perspective the designation makes little sense.*

### **Response from Executive Member for Planning**

**As before:** Thank you for your question. Undeveloped coast is our most precious classification, and must be protected. We agree that the situation is unusual, and that it bears more investigation at a future date. The debate today is purely on items in the Local Plan Addendum.

### **Question from Isobel Sellors**

*As a Shaldon resident for many years with views of the boatyard in Teignmouth, I have followed the progress of the previous application for redevelopment of Riverside Boatyard. I had hoped to see the replacement of this eyesore with a purpose built, quality development which sat comfortably within the landscape. Having read the decision notice following this application, I was surprised to see that the site was allocated as "Undeveloped Coast".*

*Below is a postcard where the picture is taken virtually opposite my house. It is plain to see that the boatyard is fully developed and has been for many years.*



*Can the committee please inform me how this site can be considered undeveloped?*

#### **Response from Executive Member for Planning**

**As before:** Thank you for your question. Undeveloped coast is our most precious classification, and must be protected. We agree that the situation is unusual, and that it bears more investigation at a future date. The debate today is purely on items in the Local Plan Addendum.

#### **Question from Stacey Cook**

*Development within Teignbridge in recent years has seen settlements encroaching into the Countryside on all fronts. The significant developments in Newton Abbot, Kingsteignton, Teignmouth, Dawlish and Exminster not to mention the urban creep on the outskirts of Exeter continue to erode our countryside. Government Guidance and National Planning Policy Framework encourages local authorities to be innovative in the redevelopment of brown field sites before building in the countryside. Given the significant history of the site and the opportunity to meet the Councils aspirations for tourism, economy and regeneration, Riverside Boatyard gives a unique opportunity to reinvigorate a previously developed site and bring development to an area of the district which is deeply in need of private investment.*

*Can I ask if the committee would agree to including this previously developed parcel of land within the development boundary of Teignmouth?*

#### **Response from Executive Member for Planning**

**As before:** Thank you for your question. Undeveloped coast is our most precious classification, and must be protected. We agree that the situation is unusual, and

that it bears more investigation at a future date. The debate today is purely on items in the Local Plan Addendum.

### **Question from Rob Sellors**

I have been a Shaldon resident for many years and from my property I have views of the Riverside Boatyard in Teignmouth.

I followed the application for the proposed redevelopment of the Boatyard with interest and was very much hoping to see the application approved, especially as this would have meant the removal of an unsightly, out of date site being transformed into a smart development with the emphasis on local people and a continuation of a modernised local boat industry and local trades/craftsmen which in my opinion needs wholeheartedly to be supported.

Having read the decision notice following this application, I was surprised to see that the site was allocated as "Undeveloped Coast" and I would very much like to know why this site is classed as undeveloped, when the postcard below (taken from a position very close to my house) clearly shows that the Boatyard is fully developed and has been for many years.



I await your response.

### **Response from Executive Member for Planning**

**As before:** Thank you for your question. Undeveloped coast is our most precious classification, and must be protected. We agree that the situation is unusual, and that it bears more investigation at a future date. The debate today is purely on items in the Local Plan Addendum.

### **Question from Tom Cook**

*My company is one of the five independent businesses which currently operate from Riverside Boatyard. All but one of these companies support the marine industry in Teignbridge, in five dilapidated workshops. These workshops are verging on being not fit for purpose but there is no where else on the Teign Estuary where these marine businesses can efficiently operate from. Without investment in this site, dereliction will occur in the near future and the business will be forced away from the district to the more maritime focused districts of South Hams, Torbay and East Devon with the loss of both jobs and facilities within the locality. Can the councillors reconsider the inclusion of the site within the development boundary to give the opportunity for redevelopment at the site?*

### **Response from Executive Member for Planning**

**As before:** Thank you for your question. Undeveloped coast is our most precious classification, and must be protected. We agree that the situation is unusual, and that it bears more investigation at a future date. The debate today is purely on items in the Local Plan Addendum.

### **Question from David Austin attending**

*Traffic regulation order consultation was carried out probably at great expense by Devon County Council in the summer. The results of this consultation have been published online for all to see. It is clear that the removal of parking in the section of Queen Street from Albany Street through to Courtenay Street, is not supported by over 70% of respondents. Can Councillors please explain why this democratic process has been roundly ignored?*

### **Response from The Leader**

*Officers have engaged and worked collaboratively with objectors, including businesses and other key stakeholders, to address concerns about businesses having sufficient loading provision. As a result of this work, an additional flexible loading bay is now proposed. Whilst this will have small impact on pedestrians using the expanded footway on the southern side of Queen Street, it is considered reasonable and will still afford significant benefits compared to the current arrangement. As a consequence of this amendment and engagement, all objections specifically relating to space for loading have been withdrawn.*

*The TRO consultation sits alongside a wealth of consultation and engagement that has taken place over three years and supported scheme development. Overall, and in light of the scale and high-profile, transformative nature of the scheme, DCC has received a proportionately low number of objections to the proposed TROs. This is testament to the volume of high quality public consultation that has already taken place. The recommendation to the Committee recognises this fact, alongside outcome of the Public Consultation in June 2022, which demonstrated support for pedestrian enhancements and the provision of new greening and seating. The scarcity of available highway means there is not enough width to deliver the*



*significant and transformational public realm improvements, whilst also retaining present levels of on-street parking provision and existing vehicle access. The strategic opportunities and benefits afforded by the scheme are considered to significantly outweigh the impacts of removing a proportion of on-street parking and vehicle access.*

*TRO consultations are not meant as a referendum on the scheme, and DCC expect that comments will largely come from those who still have outstanding concerns.*

*2. The Government, and even the Prime Minister himself has in recent weeks, confirmed that he recognises the importance of the motorcar to members of the public. He recognises that the public transport system is inadequate and is in disarray. He has therefore asked Councils to look again at policies which vilify the motorist. It is well recognised within the place management industry that plentiful and convenient parking is key to successful High Streets. Bearing in mind all of this information, why is it that Teignbridge District Council and Devon County Council are insisting upon the implementation of a scheme, which is contrary to Government guidelines, contrary to common sense and entirely at odds, with the majority view of the community and the business community?*

## **Response from The Leader**

It is true that Devon public transport leaves a lot to be desired, and that many local residents rely on their cars. However we need to rebalance our public spaces to enable more than just cars. Teignbridge and Devon will continue to provide plentiful and convenient parking whilst also making more space for pedestrians and non-car transport.

The scheme is being funded by Government money, and is very much in line with Government policy, albeit that the Prime Minister may be creating election slogans. The policy paper “Build Back Better High Streets” MCHLG, 2021, which resulted in the funding streams such as FHSF which support the transformational change we are proposing. “We want councils to take a proactive and ambitious approach to placemaking.”

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1005041/Build\\_Back\\_Better\\_High\\_Streets.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005041/Build_Back_Better_High_Streets.pdf)

Quotes from the aforementioned document:

“We will publish a revised Manual For Streets in early 2022, and consider how existing funding pots reference Manual for Streets’ principles. We want to see the Manual for Streets properly embedded in the design process, so that more high streets are designed with a sense of place and to be attractive to people walking, cycling and using public transport. 59. We want to see a grand programme of tree planting on high streets, supported both by our schemes and by local communities taking the initiative”.

”Green infrastructure can help drive more footfall to high streets, improving air quality, increasing opportunities for active travel, and driving economic recovery. For

example, the opening of Sheffield Peace Gardens and other public space improvements was shown to increase shopping visits by 35%, increasing spending by £4.2 million. In Piccadilly, Stoke-on-Trent, a £10 million investment to make the area more pedestrian-friendly led to 30% more footfall.“

“We recognise that a clean environment is good for our wellbeing, and good for the economy – and that delivering this on high streets is a vital part of delivering this ambition as well as contributing to our vision of building green, clean, high streets which attract visitors and make them feel safe and welcome, increasing footfall and appetite for new business. “

The aim of the Future High Streets Fund is to renew and reshape town centres and high streets in a way that drives growth, improves experience and ensures future sustainability. It will do this by providing co-funding to successful applicants to support transformative and structural changes to overcome challenges in their area.

“We will not accept bids covering town centre areas that are not facing significant challenges”

Our proposals have been accepted by govt, and therefore we can assume they are in line with current govt policy.

Latest govt advice “Long Term Plan for Towns” Oct 2023 Foreword by the current PM:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/651d637c6a6955000d78b2de/Long-Term\\_Plan\\_for\\_Towns.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/651d637c6a6955000d78b2de/Long-Term_Plan_for_Towns.pdf)

“The ease with which town residents can access high streets, jobs and local shopping centres is critical if towns are going to thrive into the future. This means offering sustainable transport options, linking different parts of the town with new infrastructure, safe ways in which people can walk or cycle into the centre, as well as ensuring public transport options are viable and attractive.”

“Interventions could include new infrastructure schemes; road improvements; new programmes to encourage cycling; and making the town centre more walkable and accessible.”

The Queen Street proposals are not against public opinion as expressed in 2020 and 2022 consultations.

*3. Newton Abbot town centre can be congested as has been acknowledged by Councillors. Could members please explain why the restriction of motorist access to many roads will help with this congestion. It will, of course either force all of the traffic onto fewer roads creating even greater congestion and pollution and this is of grave concern. It will simply siphon motorists and their trade out of Newton Abbot town centre and into nearby retail parks. Here as members will know, parking is plentiful, convenient and free. Teignbridge District Council plans to remove on street parking and also to potentially build on our car parks. How can Newton Abbot possibly compete therefore, with Kingsteignton Retail Park, The Willows, Fermoys, and*

*Trago? Could members please explain this strategy of diverting trade out of Newton Abbot town centre.*

### **Response from The Leader**

Newton Abbot traffic congestion requires a range of solutions to fix it. One small aspect to this is to encourage pedestrian and non-car access in our town centres. Another is to ensure that traffic flow round the outside of the town is carefully guided to the town centre car parks for convenient parking.

Evidence shows that restricting traffic in some roads does not result in an equivalent rise in traffic in other roads, but a net overall reduction in traffic as journeys switch to alternatives.

Studies have backed up the claim that reducing road space for motor vehicles through pedestrianisation schemes this is an effective way to reduce overall traffic. A 1998 study showed that reducing space for traffic led to an 11% reduction in the number of vehicles across the whole area. But one year after the implementation of LTN schemes in Outer London, residents were walking and cycling an average of 41 minutes per week more than they were before!

This leads to the conclusion that some people living locally walk or cycle instead of driving, leaving road space for those that need to use their cars.

There is currently ample car parking in Newton Abbot town centre, the prime aim of the works is to increase the attractiveness, of the town centre and increase footfall. Car parking capacity is not currently an inhibitor of economic activity, the quality of the town centre offer is. The town centre will not directly compete with out of town retail but needs to provide something different focused on culture, leisure, and increased dwell time.

“We found a very high correlation (98.7% chance of it being true) between low car dependency and high vitality in town centres. The towns with the lowest levels of car dependency were most likely to have the most vital shopping centres.” University of Winchester

### **Questions from Mary White**

*On BBC Spotlight yesterday Councillor Martin Wrigley said that blue badge holders would be able to park in the area between Albany Street and Courtenay Street. My understanding is that with a single carriageway, all parking has been removed from this area and for the blue badge holders who must now either park in Victoria Place or further back towards the war memorial. Could Cllr Wrigley please point me to the section of the road, traffic regulations, which details the blue badge parking in this area which is to have the pavements widened?*

### **Response from The Leader**

There will only be blue badge drop off and pick up in the section between Albany St and Courtenay St. But 3 new blue badge spaces opposite MDA offices will be provided and 2 new ones at east end of Queen Street.

There are significant improvements in the street for those with mobility problems including wider pavements, level raised tables at junctions. Also benches to allow people to rest.

*2. We understand that the so-called enhancements in the section of the road where the pavements are to be widened, are to be carried out in tarmac and not in quality paving, which is usually the characteristic of town centre enhancement schemes. Is this really what Newton Abbot deserves? Surely the strategically important market town of Teignbridge deserves better than this?*

### **Response from The Leader**

*The extra space, greenery and seating will enable people to be more comfortable in the space without so much traffic. This will result in increased footfall and more trade. Replacing tarmac with paving is unlikely to make a material difference to footfall.*

*3. We have been repeatedly told that such schemes have worked in other towns. One assumes therefore you mean budget schemes in secondary trading areas of towns. Could members please answer a question which has not been answered to date. We do know that such a scheme recently implemented in nearby Paignton has been a disaster and so please could members tell us in which town has such a scheme achieved demonstrable success? If this scheme is implemented, how and who will be policing it particularly as we have no visible Police presence in Newton Abbot, and Parking Wardens finish at 6pm*

### **Response from The Leader**

*Pedestrianised Courtenay Street and Teignmouth Triangle are good examples of success locally. There are many others nationally.*

*Street parking enforcement is a Devon County responsibility. It is carried out now with penalty tickets given, and this will continue as appropriate.*

### **Questions from Cllr Joyce - not attending**

*1 Will the Council confirm the value of the black hole in its pensions scheme and how it intends to address this in the next 5 years.*

### **Response from the Executive Member for Corporate Resources**

As with any Council that has a pension deficit there is an agreement with the pension administrator to pay contributions each year to eliminate the pension deficit. These are planned to be paid in the future to ensure the scheme is fully funded by 2040. In addition the Council has in previous years and will explore making additional contributions in future years which provide a positive return to address the Councils general budget gap. Details about the actuarial valuation of our pension deficit liability are detailed in note 40 of our accounts for 2022/23. The latest actuarial valuation of the liability differs to the cashable liability, the latter being valued at £16.7 million at 31 March 2022. We have since that date made annual contributions in excess of £1 million per annum.

*2- Will the council explain, in full details, why it was necessary to increase fees above the level of inflation as stated by the Government official levels of 9.3% for a second time in this financial year?*

### **Response from the Executive Member for Corporate Resources**

When our budgets were set in February we didn't anticipate the level of inflation we have experienced and the significant increases in costs to the Council. The original increases set in February were considerably below the double digit inflation we were incurring and so it was felt prudent to address the increasing budget deficit by realigning our fee increases to reflect what is happening with inflation. We have not increased every fee mid year and the overall increases we have made will still only bring in just over 3% extra income.

*3- Will the Council advise, in full details, how the proposed Queen Street refurbishment meets the regulations on discrimination, especially regarding those with disabilities, as according to the Councils own description, Blue Badge Holders will only be able to stop and drop rather than park. If you are a driver with a Blue Badge you will not be able to stop and drop, so this will be discrimination against a person or persons with a disability.*

### **Response from the Leader**

*New reserved bays are being provided for Blue Badge Holders, and there remains plentiful, convenient parking nearby as well as an efficient shopmobility service well run by the Newton Abbot Community Transport team.*

*The wider pavements and easier and flat access will help many of our residents spend time in our Town Centre.*