

Public responses to our on-line consultation regarding Exeter City Council's consultation of their Design Principles for the redevelopment of the bus and coach station.

The City Council consulted on their Design Principles for the redevelopment of the Bus & Coach station until April 23 2012. However, the responses that could be made to the Council's consultation were limited so we developed our own questionnaire which was more comprehensive, and we invited the public to complete this, and add their comments. We said we would use this information to inform future response to the Council's proposals as they evolve. The responses will also provide us with information which will be of use as proposals are developed.

We allowed people to make 5 comments from strongly agree to disagree for each proposal. The responses are mainly positive, and are similar to the views of the our own planning sub-committee in our submission to the Council, which can be found on our website, along with other observations at <http://www.exetercivicsociety.org.uk>
We had 37 responses, the comments are summarised below.

	Principle	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree or not	Somewhat disagree	disagree
A	Development must be viable	17	14	4		2
B	Development must reinforce Sidwell Street, complement the High Street and Princesshay and form a gateway to the city centre	28	9			
C	The development will be a retail led mixed use development incorporating a new bus station	18	13	4	2	
D	Development must positively respond to site context including the urban grain, archeology and site levels	27	9	1		
E	Development must create a high quality public realm with active frontages	30	7			
F	Development must create a network of accessible open streets and spaces	30	5	2		
G	Buildings must be individual and of a high architectural quality, with landmark buildings and gateways formed at key locations using materials appropriate to the location	23	12	1	1	
H	Vehicular traffic, servicing and car parking must be accommodated in such a way as to	26	9	1	1	

	minimise their impact					
I	An accessible new bus station must be provided to agreed standards	30	7			
J	The development must adopt high standards of sustainable design and enhance biodiversity.	27	7	2	1	

The age profile of respondents was as shown below.

Age 20 - 30	Age 31 to 60	Age over 60
2	13	22

A. Development must be viable.

Concerns about profit first over needs of businesses, and to retain local shops. Essential bus station provided and development should ultimately be for public benefit.

B. Development must reinforce Sidwell Street and Complement the High Street and Princesshay and form a gateway to the city centre.

Sidwell Street has poor buildings – welcomes redevelopment – agree permeability is a good thing to new development area. Reduced traffic desirable and give pedestrians priority. Bus station should be good gateway to City centre, Retain character of shops in Sidwell Street and links to Newtown area.

C. The development will be a retail led mixed use development incorporating a new bus station.

Retain small businesses or give them affordable shops. Existing shops sell things not available in many large shops. Farmer's market needed. Theatre needed, or an arena. Concern that no demand for retail as there are empty shops elsewhere. Other areas could become ghettos. Bus station essential to link other parts of Devon to Exeter.

D. Development must positively respond to site context including the urban grain, archaeology and site levels.

Must be good access to differing levels, pedestrian friendly. Need car and taxi access to bus station for collecting and dropping off people (short stay parking?). Green spaces and trees desirable. Consider outward views to green areas such as St Leonards.

E. Development must create a high quality public realm with active frontages.

Support active frontages.

Support green spaces, water feature? Showcase Exeter as centre of Devon. Don't have too much glass as it will destroy old character of Exeter. Give people a reason to visit city, need public toilets, skateboarding area, art features, not too many alcohol outlets. Have a human scale with good landscaping, encourage wildlife, environmentally friendly.

Respect local character, local materials, be recognisably part of Exeter. Have good transparency, functions of buildings to be obvious, public spaces to be spacious not cramped.

F. Development must create a network of accessible open streets and spaces.

Harmonious spaces with free seating areas. Green spaces to encourage flowers and insects. Outdoor market, affordable shop rents, and consider how spaces will change throughout day. Public spaces to be free from the control of developers. Pedestrian focus and make Paris Street two way to take pressure off side streets.

G. Buildings must be individual and of a high architectural quality with landmark buildings and gateways formed at key locations using materials appropriate to the location.

General agreement with principle. Would like development to be better than Princesshay. Theatre / concert hall would make a good landmark and bring people into the city centre. Have a concourse for outdoor events. Encourage tall buildings as gateway to city giving it a modern feel. Don't have division with Sidwell Street. Would like modern buildings but not too up-market if this means high rents. Have good cycle and footpaths. Buildings to be low - no skyscrapers, consider energy efficiency.

H. Vehicular traffic, servicing and car parking must be accommodated in such a way as to minimise their impact.

Would like a vehicle free area but accepts buses needed. Have underground parking. Paris Street to be two-way to remove traffic from area. Consider zoned traffic use. Ease of traffic flow good, don't divert traffic to residential areas. Create additional traffic routes for cars and good pedestrian links. Encourage more park and ride. Pedestrianise Sidwell Street and Paris Street with London Inn Square bars and restaurants. Don't have vehicles driving through city centre. Use scheme as catalyst to redevelop whole area. Make centre user friendly for disabled.

Agree reducing impact of car but concern about closing existing roads. Local people need good road network to get around- avoid reductions to road capacity.

I. An accessible new bus station must be provided to agreed standards.

New bus station a high priority which links to local services, plus local services, stations and university (and Cranbrook). Redevelopment should focus on users of bus station, not politicians. Priority must be improved travel experience and not just to benefit Stagecoach. Must have toilets, level access, taxi rank, local information, comfort and be secure. Station to be covered with several pedestrian access points.

J. The development must adopt high standards of sustainable design and enhance biodiversity.

Energy and water saving features. Local materials and labour. Charging for electric cars.

Suggestions for development.

- * In general I think the principles proposed by the city council are very good. Although the consultation is about those planning principles, not about the eventual users, much informal conversation (including with councillors and officers) concerns the latter, and one senses that positions are being taken ahead of the official process. I would like to see small independent shops return to Sidwell Street – also market traders, it would be good to have an improved area for the market.
- * Ideally a large theatre with ample parking alongside would really put Exeter in a higher city league. With buses coming practically to the door, audiences would be drawn from a wide area. A city centre theatre is what we are crying out for, travelling to Plymouth to go to the theatre is a regular occurrence for me and many friends. It would be such an asset to the city.
- * My concern is that the bus station site will be remodelled into a leisure centre / swimming pool / shopping complex that will have none of charm beauty or elegance that is seen across neighbouring parts of Exeter. I am concerned that the council leaders have already decided this (I have been told that a committee has already been made for a swimming pool) and that their public consultation sought to approve an existing agenda rather than to inspire one.
- * Exeter needs a city centre professional theatre. The Northcott has served the city well but it has never been 'Exeter's theatre' it will always be part of the university. In three years time it may lose its funding again, and what better opportunity to move the company into a purpose built new building in the centre of the city.
- * Shopping centre, nightclub, bars, restaurants, perhaps a theatre. Perhaps an ice rink? Make it for people not cars, make for people other than shoppers. Make it for small businesses as well as large ones. Make it as green as possible. Make it somewhere we can be proud of in the future and where visitors will be pleased to sit and decide that Exeter was worth visiting.
- * My concern is that commercial interest will prevail over public interest, and that final solutions will not meet the long term community needs such as a community space. Also, increased commercialisation of the city centre for the benefit of land owners will not necessarily be in the interests of traders and people who use the area, often in preference to the High Street. Why try to make Sidwell Street upmarket when it is loved by many for its current character and offerings?
- * Crucial to the development is that no existing business forced out and that the current range of shops, both large and small specialist retailers, shops restaurants and cafes should continue to be accommodated in the development. A range of small retail units for local businesses should be a feature. It should be a condition that a proportion or all of these are let through the city council in order to guarantee diversity. Retaining an open-air market is also essential.
- * I think the idea of some sort of art venue should be championed here. Not an all-purpose community venue but a especially artistic one covering several of the arts. A theatre in the centre would be welcome.
- * Charity shops are a major part of the economy of Sidwell Street and Paris Street. They should not be pushed out by high rents.
- * I would like to be assured that there will be explicit needs of the disabled people, involving people with disabilities themselves rather than merely those who think they know what it's like to manage with a disability.