

COUNCIL – 14 OCTOBER 2020

PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Questions to Portfolio Holders

(A) Question from Jill Borchers

Recently work has started on the new bus interchange as part of the regeneration of Stevenage Town Centre. As a result, a key cycleway route through the Town Centre has been completely blocked. There is no signage indicating this nor a diversion provided.

Access to the Town Centre is already very restricted - a local company report: "At Box Bike Delivery we find access to the town centre to make deliveries restrictive, difficult and, given the relatively small-size and proximity of the area, surprisingly time-consuming. As the resident population of the town centre grows and with more deliveries needing to be made, we would welcome any improvements to access for cyclists, including our cargo bikes, that could help the last-mile become a greener one.'

Stevenage Borough Council have declared a Climate Emergency and continue to promote the cycleway network yet appear to have paid no attention to maintaining a crucial cycle access route during extended building works. Why was this allowed to happen given your stated commitments to active travel?

Answer (Cllr John Gardner):

Work recently began on Phase 1 of the construction of the new bus interchange, including enabling groundworks and utilities services that run down the length of Old London Road. In order to maintain public safety at all times, which must be our top priority, there will at times be some disruption for pedestrians and cyclists. This included a temporary closure of the cycle route. Officers have now worked with the contractors to ensure that the diversion route is adequately signed.

We appreciate that the solution is not ideal, but it was necessary on this occasion, as safety of the public has to be main priority around construction sites. The completed bus interchange and other development sites around the town centre will deliver significant benefits to cyclists and pedestrians, but some short-term disruption is unavoidable, as would be expected of any roadworks scheme, for example. Officers will work with contractors to minimise the impacts of construction as much as possible, and will aim to provide diversion routes where closures of routes is unavoidable.