

Supplement to the agenda for

Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee

Monday 23 September 2024

10.00 am

**Conference Room 1 - Herefordshire Council, Plough Lane
Offices, Hereford, HR4 0LE**

5. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Pages

3 - 10

Questions from members of the public – Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee, 23 September

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 1	Ms Carole Protherough Leominster	Para 16 of the report is welcome in that it acknowledges that providing safe routes to school can be better than funding driving children to school by car. As the “school run” increases congestion at peak times by up to 50% on some routes into Hereford, tackling this would significantly reduce city congestion at peak times much more than another £300million new road. However, parents will not encourage walking, cycling or wheeling if they do not feel routes to school are safe. Why then has Herefordshire Council put out for consultation upgrading the Aylestone Hill active travel scheme but failed to connect the Broadlands and Aylestone High school safely to the scheme and onto residential areas? What work was done around origin and destination of potential users of the scheme?	Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee

Response by Cabinet Member Transport and Infrastructure

Broadlands and Aylestone Schools are connected into the Aylestone Hill ATM scheme via widening of the existing footpaths and cycleways leading to and from the schools towards designated park and stride locations, as well as a continuous raised crossing area at the junction of the A465 and Broadlands Lane. This will reduce the speed of motorists entering and exiting Broadlands Lane and increase pedestrian and cyclist safety by increasing awareness and a change in priority. The scheme also introduces a toucan crossing along the highest pedestrian movement desire line and additional dropped crossing with tactile locations to ensure the scheme is as inclusive as possible for all users.

Extensive consultation has taken place with local stakeholders regarding the proposed schemes, including pupils/students, parents, staff members and Councillors. This has taken the form of in-person events, an on-line stakeholder session and a wider public consultation, which ran from 1 August to 20 September 2024. All of these have helped to improve the scheme by taking stakeholder considerations and concerns and incorporating them into the designs at detailed design stage.

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 2	Mr Jim Hardy Hereford	Much of the walking and cycling infrastructure built, or proposed, in Herefordshire, is poorly designed, often fails to comply with LTN1/20, is piecemeal and unconnected and fails to create a safe, comprehensive network for pedestrians and cyclists alike and so fails to encourage people to choose active travel over the car. What work has Herefordshire Council done, and what is it doing, with Active Travel England, particularly around the large urban extensions, to ensure that the County	Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee

		has good transport design capability and so can access higher levels of funding for delivering better and wider Active Travel transport infrastructure?	
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Response by Cabinet Member Transport and Infrastructure

In order to improve the standing of Herefordshire Council with Active Travel England, so that we can access extra funding, we need to have a published Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). We meet monthly with Active Travel England to ensure we are following their guidance correctly for both scheme design and build, along with strategic intentions for the county. We are working hard to deliver such an LCWIP. We are currently in the middle of an engagement exercise with key stakeholders, which has included an invite to all parish councils. The LCWIP will then need to be drafted and set up for consultation. This will then need Cabinet member approval to be published. Having a published LCWIP will enable the council to apply for greater levels of funding from Active Travel England, once funding is made available by the Department for Transport.

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 3	City Councillor Jeremy Milln	Among the active travel measures falsely considered contingent on a proposed SLR and so-called bypass in the appendices to item 7 of the Committee's agenda, are area-wide 20mph zones. Given road safety and vehicle speeds are the single biggest factor to the take up of walking and cycling, it is disappointing that today's Committee report makes no mention of 20mph particularly since Full Council, in passing the Motion to progress this where people live (and not just around schools) back on 6 th March 2020, gave the executive instruction to do so. How will this Scrutiny Committee seek to bring this work back on track in a timely way so that we may look forward to healthier, safer streets?	Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee

Response by Cabinet Member Transport and Infrastructure

Thank you for your question. The committee decided that at this meeting it would focus specifically on active travel. The introduction of 20mph limits is reported to have far wider benefits than encouraging the take up of active travel, and the committee is keen to explore those wider benefits too. It has therefore agreed informally that it will look at 20mph limits at some point in the future but has yet to agree a specific date in its work programme for this work.

In terms of 20mph zones, I can confirm that officers are considering where further such areas may be appropriate within the city of Hereford, so that we can undertake a full consultation with everyone who would be affected, so that we can take on board their views before deciding whether these schemes should be progressed.

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 4	Mr A Morawiecki Hereford	<p>The examples of many of the Active Travel Engineering Measures in Appendix 10 are underwhelming and much of the work done is poor quality and requires redesign such as the Aylestone Hill cycle lane scheme. This explains why Herefordshire Council continually fails to attract higher levels of government funding for Active Travel measures compared to many other equivalent authorities who realise the potential Active Travel has in improving health, environment, access to jobs and education, increasing spend in the local economy and promoting sustainable tourism. The report highlights that Active Travel is an afterthought compared to the focus and investment on road building.</p> <p>What is Herefordshire Council doing to improve the design, quality and investment in Active Travel schemes and progress them ahead of expensive, unfunded new roads such as the £300million Hereford “bypass”?</p>	Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee

Response by Cabinet Member Transport and Infrastructure

Herefordshire Council’s current development of a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) is the process by which local authorities set out their active travel infrastructure plans for the next five to ten years. This is currently in engagement stage; whereby parish council, and others are being asked for suggestions on routes for both walking and cycling, to build a coherent plan for the county. This plan provides a way by which the local authority can then apply for funding for infrastructure schemes, from government. A strong LCWIP will increase our ranking with Active Travel England, which will enable the council to access greater levels of funding; once it becomes available. The Department for Transport, to whom the council would apply for funding, are currently undertaking a spending review.

In terms of the comments around the schemes set out in Appendix 10, the purpose of this document was to provide examples of measures that have been delivered over recent years, from a whole street intervention, through to the implementation of simple signage. It should be remembered that things do change over time, including levels of funding and design standards, which Officers work within. Simple interventions such as new or better signage do have their place alongside more complex, engineered solutions such as the example of Canary Bridge, in helping to increase the numbers of people cycling or walking within the County.

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 5	Mr Peter McKay Leominster	In December 2022 I suggested two specific highway and path record issues for scrutiny, one being Greenways shown as Footpaths that come about due to use of the non-statutory term CRF that were intended to be shown as RUPP's, list attached, that has yet to be acknowledged and addressed, with use by others than walkers being extinguished in 2031. <i>(Additional funding could be sought due to incorrect Government guidance?)</i> Was passed to Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee who added Highway and Path Record to work programme. In February I asked if work programme wording could be reviewed to mention the specific issues, with that question being passed to Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee, who have not replied, looking at PROW issues in general, but not this specific issue. I ask if your committee would scrutinise this?	Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee

Response by Chair of Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee

Many thanks for your question. The Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee has a constituted remit that includes the topic of public rights of way. The committee recently looked at the matter of public rights of way, as agreed by the committee when it drafted its work programme earlier this year.

- o When drafting their work programmes, committees are mindful of the reasons why they choose to look at a particular topic. To begin with, they agree a number of objectives for their work. These objectives are usually strategic in nature, and rarely concern the day-to-day operations of a local authority service. As such, it would be unlikely to ever raise a matter such as a particular contested right of way or a single or set of route anomalies. When the committee chose to look at the matter of public rights of way, its priorities were to account for the current state of repair of the network, to scrutinise delivery models to manage and maintain the network, and to seek assurance that the council had allocated sufficient budget to keep the network in a good state of access and repair. Also, they took evidence from a number of interested local parties to ensure they had a broad picture on the overall PROW network from the point of view of users. Specific matters that you have asked it to look at were not raised at that meeting and it is unlikely that we will return to this matter in the near future. I will, however, refer the issues that you have raised with the service to the officer responsible for these matters.

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 6	Mrs Victoria Wegg-Prosser	Reference Item 7 of the Agenda concerning Active Travel Measures, I should be grateful for an answer to this question:-	Environment and Sustainability

	Hereford	Noting that the Southern Link Road has been re-cast as Phase 1 of the Hereford Bypass with no provision for any active travel measures in it, and no justification for it being described as a stand-alone road, could this Scrutiny meeting please recommend that the commendable enhancements and improvements to the quality off road route known as the Great Western Way (in the South Wye Transport Package within the Papers for Item 7) be proceeded with forthwith, and not allowed to languish again in procedural papers awaiting the 2025 Local Transport Plan.	Scrutiny Committee
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Response by Cabinet Member Transport and Infrastructure

The council fully recognises the traffic benefits of Phase 1 of the Hereford Western Bypass and the opportunities that will be created to support active travel opportunities into the city. Because of substantial changes to the political, environmental, social and other contexts in which infrastructure construction now operates, it is imperative that there is clear review of the active travel opportunities in the light of new transport practices and principles. The Council remains committed to active travel measures, and once the impacts of the proposed scheme upon the rest of the network is known – using a new strategic transport model – decisions can be made on the location and nature of the most effective active travel measures. There are suitable planning tools, made available from the DfT, such as the Propensity to Cycle tool that can be used to ensure active travel routes are optimised for a local population.

In reviewing the previous documents, we cannot find reference to The Great Western Way. It does not appear to be included in the South Wye Transport package as a possible active travel intervention. In the document “South Wye Transport Package: Active Travel Improvements Consultation” there is reference to the active travel improvements that were consulted upon in 2016. The full list was:

- 20 mph residential areas
- Belmont Road bus priority measures
- Belmont Road walking and cycling improvements
- Belmont Road weight restriction
- Belmont Road (West) walking and cycling improvements
- Better walking and cycling routes to Hereford Enterprise Zone
- Hoarwithy Road and Hinton Road walking and cycling links
- Holme Lacy Road —further walking and cycling improvements
- Walnut Tree Avenue / Hunderton Road traffic reduction

The Cabinet report of 14/12/17 states that “The package of measures in the consultation are inter-related and together form a comprehensive set of proposals to improve the South Wye Area whilst promoting active travel and effectively managing access of vehicles within the area”.

This process, of consultation of active travel measures for the new road scheme is forefront of mind, and as stated above, once the impacts of the new scheme are known, then decisions will be made on the active travel schemes that can be deployed to best effect.

If the questioner has more information regarding the Great Western Way, and the previous bypass scheme then we would ask that these are submitted for further consideration.

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 7	Ms E Morawiecka Hereford	<p>When assessing transport projects to determine best value for money, those schemes with the highest returns should be delivered first, particularly when capital funding is limited.</p> <p>With Active Travel projects delivering more benefits per £1 than new road schemes, these projects should be progressed ahead of road building schemes, particularly as they are often easier, quicker and simpler to deliver.</p> <p>The City Link Road project highlights that Herefordshire Council regularly treats Active Travel measures as an afterthought in transport schemes, as when the road budget was overspent, the full package of proposed non-road measures was not built eg Transport Hub and safe, segregated cycle lanes.</p> <p>Will the committee recommend that Herefordshire Council should follow Treasury guidelines on selecting transport projects, and that Active Travel measures be given priority ahead road schemes that have lower benefits and returns on investment?</p>	Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee

Response by Cabinet Member Transport and Infrastructure (Delivered verbally during the meeting of 23 September)

Thank you to Mrs Morawiecka for your question. Let's just bring this up to speed, it's no good going back over schemes that are many years delivered. The Transport Hub you mentioned is actually going to be delivered in 2025 and should be open by December 2025. It has caused itself ongoing problems for several years about land, etc, with Network Rail, which I've been very much involved with up until even this last week.

You mentioned segregated cycle lanes, there's a lot of those in the system for delivery ahead of any road building at this moment in time. There are the Ross Road cycle lanes that are in design and now out to procurement, they will be delivered also in 2025. We have the Aylestone Hill scheme at this moment in time, with consultation with regards to Broadlands and Aylestone Hill, that's for segregated cycle/walking lanes. These schemes are progressing, they will be delivered, they are funded and we will go down that road

I can't say any more than that, whether I agree with you or not that one scheme is better value for money than another, that's a debate that we can have on just about every project we ever entertain, but just to assure you that non-road measures are being delivered quite soon in the City of Herford. Thank you.

