

1. Supplement to the agenda for

Cabinet

Thursday 22 October 2026

2.30 pm

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

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Agenda item no. 4 - Questions from members of the public

Question No.	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 1.	Susan Collins, Hereford	Regarding the Merton Meadow Flood Alleviation Scheme and the active reviews into its additional funding and weather-related delays: Given that nearby commercial developments, such as the Asda superstore, successfully utilise under-car-park flood prevention and attenuation systems to manage water without losing surface footprint, why has Herefordshire Council chosen an expansive overground wetland scheme that completely eradicates critical city centre parking? Furthermore, what robust, alternative parking infrastructure will be fully operational before any current parking capacity at Merton Meadow is removed, to ensure Hereford's tourism and the city centre retail economy are not severely compromised. I personally believe this project will destroy the city's economy and lead to a site for anti-social behaviour and that further consultation with tax payers is required.	Councillor Biggs
Response: The council fully recognises that accessible parking is important to Hereford's businesses, tourism and city-centre economy. However, a key priority is to address the significant flooding risks and issues affecting surrounding residential and business areas. The Merton Meadow scheme was developed following public consultation, through which residents and businesses were invited to have their say on the future development of the site. The scheme will help address these long-standing flooding issues while supporting the regeneration of the city centre by enabling the land to accommodate hundreds of new homes. We are equally clear that further development proposals that could have potential impact on parking capacity will be mitigated. The council continues to monitor parking demand and assess opportunities for additional capacity across the city, including actively considering options to make better use of the county bus station and provide additional parking capacity there. These options will be considered alongside the evidence from the Herefordshire Parking Strategy, wider city-centre provision, and the business case, planning and decision-making processes applying to any future development.			

Supplementary Question:			
Supplementary Response:			
PQ 2.	Kate Seekings, HR4 0LQ	Three public questions at the full council meeting last week about the Hereford library were brushed off, despite some cabinet members already having attended the Hereford Stronger Towns meeting. I understand that at this meeting the board decided to withdraw their support for funding the library in the Shirehall, due to their lack of confidence in the Council's ability to deliver this capital project, even within the extended timetable and budget. However, there is no Cabinet agenda item today for the library. If Herefordshire Council insists it will have the final say on whether the new library and learning centre goes into an old courtroom in the Shirehall, who will be taking that decision, and when and how will it be communicated to Herefordshire Councillors and the public?	Councillor Bramer
Response: We are currently reviewing the detailed designs and corresponding cost plans in the context of budget and funding timelines. We will work closely with stakeholders to maximise the benefits delivered through these investments and ensure the best possible value is achieved within the available budget and funding deadlines. Our aim is to provide a further update on this work by the end October.			
Supplementary Question:			
Supplementary Response:			
PQ 3.	Jackie Morris, Hereford	If Herefordshire Council has the final say on the Shirehall library project, please confirm how the scheme will now be funded and delivered if the Hereford Stronger Towns board has reallocated the original funds to a Plan B or alternative projects across the	Councillor Bramer

		City, that can be delivered within the timescales and budget as required by the terms of the central government grant terms?	
Response: Under the operating arrangements for the Towns Fund, Herefordshire Council, as the accountable body, is responsible for taking final decisions on project changes. We will continue to work closely with the Stronger Hereford Board, UK government and other funding bodies and stakeholders, and will provide further details on the proposals and next steps once that process has concluded.			
Supplementary Question:			
Supplementary Response:			
PQ 4.	Mrs E Morawiecka, Hereford	Herefordshire has been described as an Electric car charging “desert” and is one of the worst counties for electric vehicle charging with just 200 public EV chargers, and the lowest rapid charger provision per person in England and Wales. Herefordshire Council’s electric vehicle strategy seeks to increase provision and use of council electric pool cars and vans and create opportunities to switch the delivery of council services to EV. This strategy is welcome at a time when diesel costs have increased dramatically and are likely to remain highly volatile, but the plan requires a comprehensive network of good, reliable and rapid charge points across the County. What investment is being undertaken to ensure that drivers of electric vehicles, particularly those undertaking Council work, are able to recharge across the County of Herefordshire?	Councillor Price
Response: The council recognises that a comprehensive, reliable and convenient charging network is essential to support the transition to electric vehicles across Herefordshire. Our Electric Vehicle Strategy forms part of the Local Transport Plan and supports both the wider countywide transition and the reduction of emissions from the council’s own fleet and services.			

Significant investment is being made to expand that network. Public charging is currently available at 10 council-owned car parks, offering a mix of standard and rapid charging for residents, businesses, visitors and people undertaking council work. To support delivery, the council has appointed two dedicated Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Officers through the Government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure programme. They are responsible for planning and delivering projects, securing investment and coordinating activity across the county.

More than £1.9 million has been secured and allocated for electric vehicle infrastructure projects. This comprises approximately £837,000 of capability funding for programme development and delivery, together with £1.124 million of capital funding to install and expand charging infrastructure. Several projects are now being progressed. Further chargepoints are planned in council-owned car parks, including rapid charging hubs where demand is greatest, with future installations expected to provide a mixture of standard and rapid chargers and a particular focus on increasing rapid charging provision. The council is also working with Midlands Connect and a consortium of local authorities through the LEVI programme. More than 200 postcodes across Herefordshire have been identified as potential locations for new on-street chargepoints, providing convenient long-duration charging for residents without access to off-street parking.

Taken together, these programmes represent a substantial investment and will significantly increase charging availability over the coming years. This will improve coverage across the county, support residents, businesses, visitors and those undertaking council work, and give more people the confidence to move to electric vehicles while contributing to lower carbon emissions and improved air quality.

Supplementary Question:

Supplementary Response:

PQ 5.	Jeremey Milln, Hereford	Under Section 40 of the NE&RC Act 2006, Herefordshire Council is statutorily bound under its 'Biodiversity Duty' to conserve and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of its functions. Yet Herefordshire Council is claiming to have made a start by clearing vegetation and other ground works for its proposed Southern Link Road. This in spite of the fact not all the pre-commencement conditions have been discharged on the original scheme and there has been no application for the supplementary and enabling works, let alone an Environmental Impact Assessment (the EIA screening opinion application was withdrawn). Surveys for many species of conservation interest (especially terrestrial invertebrates) have not been completed, nor has Natural England licensed works around identified protected	Councillor Price
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		species, such as Hazel dormouse and great crested newt.	
		What is the explanation for all this?	
Response: Where necessary, pre-commencement planning conditions for phase one have been discharged and all relevant ecological licences have been obtained. The preparatory works undertaken to date have been limited in scope, informed by ecological advice and carried out in accordance with the relevant planning conditions and with regard to the council's biodiversity duties. The biodiversity duty does not prevent all works that may affect vegetation or habitats, but it requires biodiversity to be properly considered when council functions are exercised. Works covered by the ecological licences have not yet commenced while the council carries out further investigations relating to land and other matters routinely involved in major infrastructure projects.			
Supplementary Question:			
Supplementary Response:			



Title of report: Travel Plan Strategy

Meeting: Cabinet

Meeting date: 22 October 2026

Cabinet member: Councillor Price, Transport and Infrastructure

Report by: Director Economy and Environment

Report author: Transport Planning Services Manager

Supplement to report - Political Group Consultation Comments

A political group consultation was held on 20th October 2026, and the following comments were made:

The consultation was attended by 17 councillors from across the Conservative Party, Green Party, Independents for Herefordshire, True Independents and Liberal Democrats groups.

The following discussion/feedback was noted below. Officers acknowledge the feedback and welcome the input, these comments will be considered as officers move forward with this work.

Green Party

- The principle of introducing a stronger travel planning framework was welcomed.
- Further information was requested on how financial bonds and travel plan obligations would be enforced where developers failed to deliver agreed measures or achieve targets.
- Members asked whether the framework could have been adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document, given the potential weight this could carry within the planning process and at appeal.
- Clarification was requested on the external consultation undertaken, including engagement with Active Travel England and local walking and cycling organisations.
- Members asked whether travel plan obligations would remain enforceable where roads and associated infrastructure were privately managed rather than adopted by the council.
- Concerns were raised about existing school access problems, including unsafe drop-off and collection arrangements, double parking, limited public transport and the lack of realistic alternatives for some rural families.

- Members asked how the new arrangements would support the timely expenditure and delivery of developer-funded measures.
- Clarification was sought on whether contributions from several developments in the same area could be coordinated or pooled to secure wider transport benefits.
- The creation of a dedicated travel plan team was welcomed, with members emphasising that sufficient staffing and delivery capacity would be essential.
- Members requested that Child Friendly Herefordshire be clearly embedded within the education travel planning process, particularly in relation to how children and young people move around their communities.

Liberal Democrats

- The proposals were supported in principle, but practical concerns were raised about narrow roads and insufficient off-road parking on new housing estates.
- Members asked how the council would ensure that estate roads remained usable where on-street parking restricted access and movement.
- Questions were raised about whether all the measures proposed through travel plans would be realistic, technically feasible and deliverable.
- Members referred to previous difficulties in securing changes to bus routes and delivering active travel infrastructure.
- Assurance was requested that any shortfall in developer funding would not result in additional costs falling on the council or local taxpayers.
- Members asked for the financial implications and potential costs to the council to be explained more clearly.
- Concerns were raised about coordinating travel plans where several developers were operating within the same area.
- Members suggested that governance and partnership arrangements would need to be clearly established for major strategic development sites, including arrangements for securing effective collaboration between developers.

Conservative Party

- Clarification was requested on how developer contributions would be calculated for different types and scales of development.
- Members asked what developers, residents and communities would receive in return for the required contributions.
- It was recognised that contributions could support tangible measures, such as guaranteed or subsidised bus services, which could also enhance the attractiveness of a development.

- Members emphasised that travel plans would need to be tailored to the specific circumstances and requirements of each development.
- It was confirmed that the points raised through the consultation should be considered ahead of Cabinet.

Independents for Herefordshire

- Members requested a clearer explanation of how the framework had been developed and how long the work had been under way.
- Clarification was sought on whether the framework established priorities between measures relating to buses, schools and other transport interventions.
- Members asked what practical difference the framework would make to individual developments.
- Concern was raised about whether travel plan contributions could reduce the funding available through Section 106 for other infrastructure, including education.
- Members also raised the potential effect of additional developer costs on development viability, housing costs and the council's ability to meet housing targets.

