

Minutes of the meeting of Council held at Council Chamber, The Shire Hall, St Peter's Square, Hereford, HR1 2HX on Friday 8 March 2019 at 10.00 am

Present: Councillor DB Wilcox (chairman)
Councillor PJ Edwards (vice-chairperson)

Councillors: SP Anderson, PA Andrews, BA Baker, JM Bartlett, WLS Bowen, TL Bowes, H Bramer, CR Butler, ACR Chappell, E Chowns, MJK Cooper, PE Crockett, PGH Cutter, BA Durkin, CA Gandy, KS Guthrie, EPJ Harvey, TM James, PC Jinman, AW Johnson, JF Johnson, JLV Kenyon, JG Lester, MD Lloyd-Hayes, PP Marsh, RI Matthews, RL Mayo, MT McEvelly, PD Newman OBE, FM Norman, CA North, RJ Phillips, AJW Powers, PD Price, P Rone, A Seldon, NE Shaw, J Stone, D Summers, EJ Swinglehurst, A Warmington and SD Williams

Officers: Chris Baird, Richard Ball, Annie Brookes, John Coleman, Matthew Evans, Andrew Lovegrove, Alistair Neill, Stephen Vickers and Claire Ward

50. CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

The Chairman opened the meeting and proposed a reordering of the items on the agenda for the meeting, to consider the climate emergency motion following the council tax setting report. The two further motions would then be debated and determined. Council agreed the reordering of the agenda.

51. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors DW Greenow, J Hardwick, DG Harlow, EL Holton, SM Michael, AR Round and LC Tawn.

52. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The monitoring officer confirmed that those members liable to pay council tax did not have a disclosable pecuniary interest.

There were no declarations of interest.

53. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 February be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

54. CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Council noted the Chairman's announcements as printed in the agenda papers.

A petition concerning the climate emergency was handed to Councillor Price.

The Chairman outlined the following during his announcements:

- Thanks were offered to the M.E.P Anthea McIntyre for the showcasing of Herefordshire at the European Parliament. Hereford College of Art was also commended for its involvement in providing the exhibition in Brussels;
- The unveiling of the memorial to the munitions workers at the Hereford Archives and Records Centre (HARC) on the afternoon of 8 March;
- The civic service on care and caring takes place on 17 March in the Cathedral; and
- A letter from the SAS which offered the Chairman to include the blazing sword emblem of the regiment on his chain of office.

55. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Pages 11 - 20)

A copy of the public questions and written answers, together with supplementary questions asked at the meeting and their answers, is attached to the Minutes at Appendix 1.

56. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL (Pages 21 - 24)

A copy of the Member questions and written answers, together with supplementary questions asked at the meeting and their answers, is attached to the Minutes at Appendix 2.

57. COUNCIL TAX SETTING

The report was introduced by the deputy leader who moved the recommendations contained in the supplement. The meeting was referred to the supplement which contained the precept agreed by Hereford City Council. All precepting authorities had indicated their precepts which formed part of the council tax setting decision for the Council.

The Leader seconded the recommendations and explained that a comprehensive debate at the previous meeting of Council had set the budget.

The points below were raised in the debate which followed:

- The police and crime commissioner's precept had been scrutinised by a working group of the police and crime panel. A member explained that the precept increase of 9.94% had been set to recruit additional police officers and a commitment had been made by the commissioner to limit the precept increase for the following year to 3%;
- A member felt that the proposed police officer recruitment would not compensate for the reduction in the number of officers since the introduction of police and crime commissioners and that the precept of the commissioner was evidence of ineffective scrutiny;
- There was concern that precept increases were above the rate of inflation and this was attributable to significant cuts in central government funding for Herefordshire Council since 2010. *The deputy leader explained that precept increases over the last 10 years fell between the RPI and CPI indicators of inflation. It was acknowledged that the increase in the precept was greater than desired but it was not out of step with increases in other areas;*
- There was concern about the variation in the level of precepts agreed by parish councils in the county. It was considered whether large increases could be attributed to the delegation of responsibilities from the council. It was felt that an analysis of the variation and those reasons for it should be undertaken to

determine if there were strategies parish councils could employ, such as sharing services, which could help in the delivery of local services.

- It was noted that the council tax setting report was a technical exercise which the Council was required to undertake annually.

The recommendations in the supplement were put to the record vote and carried by 42 votes in favour and 1 against.

For (42): SP Anderson, PA Andrews, BA Baker, JM Bartlett, WLS Bowen, TL Bowes, H Bramer, CR Butler, ACR Chappell, EE Chowns, MJK Cooper, PE Crockett, P Cutter, BA Durkin, PJ Edwards, CA Gandy, KS Guthrie, EPJ Harvey, TM James, PC Jinman, AW Johnson, JF Johnson, JLV Kenyon, JG Lester, MD Lloyd-Hayes, PP Marsh, RI Matthews, MT McEvilly, PD Newman, FM Norman, CA North, RJ Phillips, AJW Powers, PD Price, P Rone, A Seldon, NE Shaw, J Stone, EJ Swinglehurst, A Warmington, DB Wilcox, SD Williams.

Against (1) D Summers.

Abstentions (0)

58. NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDERS

The Chairman outlined a correction to the title of Councillor AJW Power's motion. The motion should have been titled 'climate emergency' in the report.

Motion 1 – Climate Emergency

Councillor AJW Powers outlined an alteration to the motion to replace the words '*its own*' with '*this council's*' in recommendation a).

The seconder and Council agreed to the alteration and to debate the altered motion.

In moving the motion Councillor AJW Powers made the following points:

- Councillors often look at the local picture without considering the bigger picture. The perception that nothing could be done was lazy.
- The motion called on Herefordshire Council to take the lead with partners to make a change; to set targets and allocate resources to address the climate emergency;
- 30 other areas and cities had passed motions to declare a climate emergency and commit to take actions in response to the climate emergency;
- The large turnout at the meeting and the involvement of students and young people in the extinction rebellion was inspiring. The motion focused on the future of all young people and it was important that the younger generation showed the council what it must do to respond to the climate emergency.

The following principal points were raised by members in the debate:

- The installation of LED streetlights in Herefordshire was raised and the saving of a significant level of carbon over 10 years. The council would publish a list of those measures it had undertaken and proposals for the future.
- It was important that cross-party work was undertaken on actions and that the public was involved. It was acknowledged that some of the actions would result in

unpopular decisions which would have to be understood in the context of responding to the climate emergency.

- It was important that all members of the community and young people were involved in determining future actions of the council.
- The motion contained details of what would be done going forward but the council had established plans over the previous 12 years. Meetings of local bodies regularly discussed sustainability and had items on agendas at meetings.
- Through planning policies the council needed to ensure that construction in the county meets the highest standard, including the installation of insulation.
- It was commented that prior to 2011 the relevant committee at the council received regular reports on progress with carbon reduction actions being taken.
- Work needed to be undertaken on collecting rainfall and electricity generation and such notions needed to be proposed to house builders.
- The rubbish evident in hedgerows in Herefordshire was raised.
- The motion was a signal of intent which would ensure that the council considered the climate emergency in all work that it undertook and decisions it made.
- The Wye Valley AONB regularly considered environmental issues including Ash die back which was caused by climate change.
- The motion would provide an overarching commitment to carbon reduction. All actions of the council should be informed by a priority to reduce carbon emissions.
- The need to work in partnership with parish councils was raised particularly on those functions which had been delegated from the council.

Councillor PD Price proposed an amendment to the motion to add an additional paragraph as follows – *f) The council requests the executive to arrange a full day interactive seminar for all councillors this year to be briefed on and discuss the options that might be open to Herefordshire Council to expedite its carbon footprint reduction aspiration and improve further the natural environment of Herefordshire.*

The amendment was seconded by Councillor MT McEvilly.

Councillor AJP Powers and Councillor PP Marsh accepted the amendment subject to the wording '*as soon as possible*' replacing the words '*this year*'. This change was acceptable to the proposer and seconder of the amendment and was therefore incorporated into the original motion and became the substantive motion.

The following principal points were raised in the debate on the substantive motion:

- It was noted that there was consensus across the Council for the motion;
- It was important that all members reflected on their personal carbon footprints and as individuals and community leaders set an example.
- Concern was raised regarding the number of bio digesters and maize which was grown as a feed crop. The growth of maize was felt to contribute to soil erosion in the county.
- The Council needed to show leadership and it was important that developers were encouraged to build environmentally friendly homes and that planning policies included the requirement to include the installation of charging points for electric cars.
- The staggering of school drop off and pick-up times would help ease congestion in Herefordshire.
- In the new Council term, following the elections, a full audit of what the Council has achieved was needed to assess what had been accomplished and what more was required.

- The proposed western bypass as a method of growing the economy of Herefordshire was a 19th century solution. In order to address the impact of fossil fuels, the building of new roads was counter-productive.
- Climate change was a worrying trend and a significant threat.
- Electric charging points installed by the council needed to be properly maintained and those that were currently not working required repair.
- The 'stop the drop' and the 'Great Herefordshire Spring Clean' were raised and the work that was going on with parish council to improve the county.
- The amendment was supported and would ensure that new members were engaged in the work being undertaken and would understand the issues. A better forum was required for members to understand and discuss the issues.
- There was an urgent need for the council to address carbon reduction.
- In response to the public questions there was concern that the council's primary priority was on economic growth but there was not sufficient understanding as to how the economic model would align with measures to address the climate emergency.

In seconding the motion Councillor PP Marsh made the following points:

- The legacy of this Council should be to address climate change.
- The next steps needed to be defined and how the council would work with businesses, the voluntary sector and local communities.
- There was common ground for the motion across the chamber.
- The actions required in response to the motion would be a long haul and would require a re-imagining and re-engineering of the delivery of services. Innovation and ingenuity were important and work with the new university could help determine actions the council could take.
- The use of grants and loans should be assessed and how they could be used to advance the principles of the motion.

In closing the debate Councillor AJW Powers explained that action needed to be taken now; there was no longer any room for delay. There may be additional costs to the council in addressing the climate emergency but such investment would be in response to the concerns of the public.

Councillor AJW Powers proposed a recorded vote which was supported by more than eight members of the Council.

The motion was put to the recorded vote and was agreed unanimously.

For (43): SP Anderson, PA Andrews, BA Baker, JM Bartlett, WLS Bowen, TL Bowes, H Bramer, CR Butler, ACR Chappell, EE Chowns, MJK Cooper, PE Crockett, P Cutter, BA Durkin, PJ Edwards, CA Gandy, KS Guthrie, EPJ Harvey, TM James, PC Jinman, AW Johnson, JF Johnson, JLV Kenyon, JG Lester, MD Lloyd-Hayes, PP Marsh, RI Matthews, MT McEvilly, PD Newman, FM Norman, CA North, RJ Phillips, AJW Powers, PD Price, P Rone, A Seldon, NE Shaw, J Stone, D Summers, EJ Swinglehurst, A Warmington, DB Wilcox, SD Williams.

Against (0)

Abstentions (0)

RESOLVED: that –

This Council declares its recognition of the climate emergency and calls on the executive to:

- a) **Commit to an accelerated reduction of the Council's carbon emissions, with the aspirations to be carbon neutral by 2030; and to change its energy supply to 100% renewable source;**
- b) **Produce a successor to the current Carbon Management Plan (2019-2023) within the early months of the new Council;**
- c) **Work with partners to produce an action plan, covering all relevant council strategies, and to submit this plan via Scrutiny to Cabinet by the end of 2019;**
- d) **Call upon our 'Re-Energise' partners to match or better the council's commitment; to publicise their response and to lead on working with the public to promote and encourage carbon reduction in all aspects of the county's life;**
- e) **Provide the necessary resource for officers to deliver on the council's carbon reduction commitments, and to monitor and report annually on the county position; and**
- f) **The council requests the executive to arrange a full day interactive seminar for all councillors as soon as possible to be briefed on and discuss the options that might be open to Herefordshire Council to expedite its carbon footprint reduction aspiration and improve further the natural environment of Herefordshire.**

There was an adjournment at 12.21 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 12.38 p.m.

Motion 2 - Minister for Borderlands

Council considered a motion concerning a minister for borderlands.

In moving the motion Councillor EPJ Harvey made the following points:

- Herefordshire was a county which lived on the edge of the border with Wales.
- Devolution of powers had resulted in a number of borderland issues but these were not acknowledged in parliament or the regional assembly.
- There were different education and health arrangements on either side of the Welsh border. Access for people in the West of the county to education in Wales was hampered. Access to health facilities in Herefordshire came from Wales but no additional funding was available.
- Legal and customary differences compromised the establishment of partnership and joint arrangements with authorities and providers in Wales. Access to internal investment was also problematic.
- Brexit was likely to exacerbate borderland issues.
- The motion sought to encourage all authorities on the border to investigate ways of working with Welsh partners and to lobby for greater recognition of the issues.

The following principal points were raised by members in the debate:

- A minister for borderlands could be an advantage for Herefordshire to highlight the positive contributions made by the county.
- It was noted that farmers bought and sold produce across the Welsh border.
- A member raised the prospect of the reconstitution of the Council of Marches.
- A member was concerned that the motion did not make reference to the Welsh Assembly or the memorandum of understanding that existed. It was important

that work with the Welsh Assembly was undertaken to address cross-border issues.

- Some members were concerned that the proposal for a minister for borderlands would introduce an additional layer of bureaucracy. Work across the border already took place with the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership and arrangements currently in place were felt to be sufficient to manage cross-border working.
- Cross-border working took place at a local level and the functioning of the AONB was presented as evidence of partnership arrangements.
- Some members referred to a gap in representation of border communities which a minister for borderlands would address. Regional arrangements in the West Midlands were felt to be dominated by large urban areas such as Birmingham.
- The motion represented an interesting proposal which should be investigated and encouraged.

In seconding the motion Councillor A Seldon made the following points:

- The distinctions between the systems and arrangements on either side of the border were acknowledged. The respective healthcare systems were posed as an example.
- It was important that a minister in government had strategic oversight of the issues affecting border communities;
- The proposals would not inhibit or hinder the functioning of other authorities or arrangements.
- The proposal would enhance cross-border opportunities and Herefordshire would be used as a point of access for the border.
- It was recognised that greater liaison was required on both sides of the border which the proposal in the motion would help to facilitate.

In closing the debate Councillor EPJ Harvey explained that the motion did not propose significant change but asked for recognition that there were border issues and press for a minister for borderlands to advocate and lobby on behalf of borderland communities. Recognition of borderland concerns started in Northumberland with issues across the border to Scotland. The motion before Council would encourage local authorities on both sides of the Welsh border to recognise cross border issues.

The motion was put to the vote and carried by a simple majority of the Council.

RESOLVED:

This Council:

- recognises that local authorities located immediately adjacent to the national borders for England, Wales and Scotland face particular challenges associated with devolution, region initiatives, planning cross-border health, education, public transport, infrastructure investment, economic growth.

- warmly congratulates the northern communities submitting their bids to the recently announced 'Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal', covering the cross-border local authority areas of Northumberland County Council, Scottish Borders Council, Cumbria County Council, Carlisle City Council and Dumfries and Galloway Council.

- supports the principle of proposing the appointment of a 'Minister for Borderlands'; and resolves to join Northumberland County Council in writing to Her Majesty's Government, namely the First Lord of the Treasury (Prime Minister), the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government and the

Secretaries of State for Scotland and for Wales to support a request the creation of such a position in government.

- resolves to encourage all borderland council's on the England-Wales border to add their support to this Ministerial appointment and to lobby the LGA for its support to this request, through its recently created 'People and Places Board'.

Motion 3 – Eastern River Crossing

Councillor JLV Kenyon introduced an alteration to his motion and requested that the altered motion below was discussed and determined by Council:

This council asks the executive to consider including in the forthcoming core strategy review a consideration of options for a route corridor for a full city ring road for Hereford to include an Eastern city bridge.

The seconder and Council agreed to the alteration and to debate the altered motion.

In moving the motion Councillor JLV Kenyon made the following points:

- A full city ring road would be an excellent opportunity for cycling in the city. A ring road could prioritise cycling, electric charging points and electric buses.
- Currently there were no protected routes around the city. The land on which an Eastern route could run had been subject to previous planning applications.
- There was a possibility of an Eastern route that was built by developers.
- The proposal of an additional bridge to the East of Hereford had the support of the local MP Jesse Norman as a method of reducing congestion in the city.

In seconding the motion Councillor SD Williams explained that he was supportive of methods to improve transport in Hereford.

The following principal points were raised by members in the debate:

- A member explained that support had been expressed for an Eastern river crossing had been expressed at consultation events for the Hereford Area Plan (HAP). The HAP should consider approaches to Hereford from either side of the city.
- A member stated that businesses were reluctant to move to Hereford because of congestion; it was important to keep options open and protect an Eastern route to alleviate congestion.
- A member considered the motion to be contrary to the earlier motion approved by Council to declare a climate emergency; alternative forms of sustainable transport should be investigated rather than proposals for new roads.

In closing the debate Councillor JLV Kenyon highlighted the support from the Green party for a Leominster bypass.

The motion was put to the vote and carried by a simple majority of the Council.

RESOLVED: That – this council asks the executive to consider including in the forthcoming core strategy review a consideration of options for a route corridor for a full city ring road for Hereford to include an Eastern city bridge.

59. LEADER'S REPORT TO COUNCIL

The Leader introduced his report and received the following question:

- The prospect of the inclusion of a raised crossing on the Belmont side of Haywood Lane in the South Wye Transport Package (SWTP) was proposed which would avoid the need to close the lane during works at a later date. *The Leader confirmed that a written response would be provided.*

The Leader announced that the Council had completed the purchase of the Royal National College for the Blind in College Road, Hereford. The campus would continue to be used as a centre of excellence and offered flexible space. The purchase represented the acquisition of a strategic asset in line with the corporate objectives of the Council. It supported further and higher education in Herefordshire.

The Leader continued to receive questions below:

- An update on the work of the executive to implement sustainable principles into the development partnership was requested. *The Leader confirmed that an update would be provided in the list of projects and initiatives undertaken by the Council to respond to environmental issues.*
- The review of car parking concessions was welcome in principle, to investigate cheaper parking at times of the day to improve footfall, but there had been questionable consultation and decision-making and no obvious means of measuring its success. Assurance was sought that there would be a proper level of planning, consultation and measures for success in future. *The Leader did not accept the premise that there had been problems with the decision taken. The review had sought to find best policies for the council and consultations were often criticised. The review had been a positive move and the criticism was difficult to understand.*
- Assurance was sought that the minerals and waste plan consultation would take account of the climate emergency and consider anaerobic digestion and crops for biomass. *The Leader confirmed that any review undertaken would take account of the policies and priorities of the Council.*
- A member felt that the decision, SWTP - southern link road was cover for the allocation of £1million to the SWTP at the end of the financial year without proper decision-making and against the constitution. Assurance was sought that the decision would be properly dealt with through the constitution and with a proper cabinet member key decision. *The Leader explained that written clarification on the matter would be provided.*
- The rebuilding of Peterchurch School was raised and the requirement for similar improvements at Kingsland School. *The Leader explained that as the cabinet member for children and young people he launched the capital investment strategy which was working to improve educational facilities in Herefordshire.*

60. DATE OF NEXT MEETING AND PROGRAMME OF ORDINARY MEETINGS OF COUNCIL 2019/20

In announcing that the next meeting of Council would take place on 24 May 2019, following the elections, the Chairman thanked all the retiring councillors for the work they had done for the County during their time as councillors.

Council agreed meeting dates for the forthcoming municipal year as below:

12 July 2019
11 October 2019

14 February 2020
6 March 2020
22 May 2020

The meeting ended at 1.45 pm

Chairman

Agenda item no. 5 - Questions from members of the public

| Question Number | Questioner | Question | Question to |
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| PQ 1 | Mrs Monkley, Much Marcle | <p>According to government National Statistics (<i>Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Statistics 2017 UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions, National Statistics</i>), agriculture accounted for 10% of total UK greenhouse gas emissions in 2017.</p> <p>In the light of the present and accelerating climate emergency, given that Herefordshire is such a farming based community and is therefore contributing more than the average to this figure, will the Council agree to set up a working party of Councillors, local farmers and climate change mitigation experts to design a county plan to reduce Herefordshire's agricultural greenhouse gas contributions and to devise and implement farm-based carbon sequestration measures please?</p> | Cabinet member infrastructure |
| <p>Response: As I mentioned in my response to public question 6 at the February meeting of Council, I have asked the General Scrutiny Committee to build into their work programme in 2019/20 consideration of the policy options and practical actions available to us to help in the global action needed to address climate change, and I hope that they will consider this work a priority. It will be a matter for the scrutiny committee to determine how best to engage with relevant experts and local stakeholders.</p> | | | |
| <p>Supplementary Question: Can you assure me that you understand the existential threat posed by climate change and provide reassurance that the council will seek to reduce agricultural carbon footprint through sequestering of carbon?</p> | | | |
| <p>Response from Cabinet Member to supplementary Question: Herefordshire Council has worked well with the farming community, particularly through the nutrient management plan, which has engaged many partners to look at farming practices and how to better farm and look after soil in the future. Provide assurance that the council does and will continue to do this work and with the farming community and will take this up with the National Farmers Union and other organisation that we work with to ensure they are aware of the assistance the council can provide.</p> | | | |
| PQ 2 | Dr Geeson, Hereford | With respect to the Motion on Climate Change, the changing weather patterns we are beginning to experience (for example with unseasonal heat, cold, droughts, floods or high winds) are likely to interrupt crop-growing cycles and make it much more difficult to ensure the successful provision of food crops to feed the UK population. Do Councillors recognise that the especially fertile Grade 1 and 2 agricultural land of Herefordshire is nationally rare, and therefore this very important and valuable asset should be kept for food production and not be built on? | Cabinet member infrastructure |

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| <p>Response: Herefordshire Council recognises the value of good quality agricultural land and is aware of the advice in the National Planning Policy Framework that indicates that where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrably necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a higher quality.</p> <p>In order to meet adopted housing targets and the associated key elements of strategic infrastructure in Herefordshire it has been demonstrated that there is a need to develop on agricultural land close to its largest settlements. The potential capacity of the urban areas falls well short of that needed.</p> <p>The quality of farmland available, including around the urban areas is such that utilisation of some of the best and most versatile agricultural land (grades 1, 2 and 3a) will be required in accommodating necessary development. This is particularly so around Hereford where very significant areas of agricultural land around the city falls within the best and most versatile categories. It is also the case that much of the remaining land lies within areas subject to other significant constraints on development, such as being within the functional floodplain or being subject to national or international environmental designations. A balance has to be struck between competing needs and protections to enable necessary development yet minimise any negative impacts, so it would not be practical to place a blanket ban on development of higher-grade agricultural land.</p> | | | |
| <p>Supplementary Question: In September 2018 the Office of National Statistics projected that household numbers in Herefordshire during 2011-31 would increase 10,660, which is 35% less than the 2015 core strategy figure 16,500. Does the council recognise the needs to review housebuilding targets and review the intended sacrifice of grade 1 and 2 land that will be needed instead to secure future food production and security?</p> | | | |
| <p>Cabinet Member response to supplementary question: A review of the core strategy would begin in 2019 which would examine housebuilding numbers. Grade 1 agricultural land should be protected where possible. There was a lot of grade 1 and 2 agricultural land around Hereford and if there was to be further development it was likely to be on better quality agricultural land. Housebuilding figures and development allocation would be looked at through the review of the core strategy.</p> | | | |
| PQ 3 | Ms Shore, Hereford | The 8th March is International Women's Day, an appropriate day to ask a question about Herefordshire Council's 2018 Equality Analysis of the workforce and councillors. The median gender pay gap, although improved from 2017, is 12.8% lower for women than men. This means that a woman employed by the council earns, on average, 87p for every £1 earned by her male colleagues. What is the Council's action plan for reducing and eliminating this inequality? | Cabinet member finance and corporate services |
| <p>Response: As noted in the publication <i>Personnel Today</i>, tackling a gender pay gap can be a slow and difficult process, taking time and resources. The causes of a gender pay gap are a complex mix of work, society and family, so employers will only be able to influence some factors, which might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A perception that higher level roles are less flexible (eg. flexible/reduced hours, working from home); • Risk of bias at recruitment stage and nature of recruitment literature; • Promotion and progression of female employees to higher level roles; • Instilling confidence in the female workforce to advance in the organisation. | | | |

We have a number of actions in progress targeted at these factors. These include:

1. All recruitment literature and web pages to have a statement about flexible working options;
2. Providing recruitment training for managers to include equality considerations and unconscious bias;
3. Carrying out further detailed analysis of the statistics to identify areas for targeted work, and engaging with our workforce to identify possible actions;
4. We have in place family friendly policies and will continue to promote these to existing and prospective employees and promote the shared parental leave policy with a view to encouraging uptake by male employees;
5. A programme to review all our policies and procedures to ensure they are fit for purpose, clear and accessible.

Supplementary Question:

What is the timescale for the detailed analysis; will the findings be made public; and once the analysis has been carried out, how will the Council translate the results into an action plan? What are the measures that are in place to promote the Council’s family friendly policies to existing and prospective employees?

Cabinet Member response to supplementary question:

More women and under-represented groups should stand as councillors. The median gender pay gap is by definition an average; employee gender bias for roles at the council can reflect societal norms and the closing of the gap will not be achieved easily. The ethos of the council is to reward competence irrespective of gender. Recruitment is undertaken on the basis of competency and for some roles there may be a gender bias in the applicant pool however it would not necessarily represent value for money to enforce quotas even if gender pay gap was closed more rapidly. There was a need to prioritise retention of staff, particularly women who have children to ensure career progression is not prejudiced. As an authority the council was committed to appropriate representation to reflect the society in which we live.

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| PQ 4 | Ms Sharp, Hereford | The public have heard that the budget for the Active Travel Measures for the South Wye Transport package has been cut from £8million and is now down to £5million. What budget is available for the walking, cycling and bus proposals included in the Hereford Transport Package currently being consulted on? | Cabinet member infrastructure |
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Response:

The estimated cost of active travel measures that, together with the Southern Link Road, will form the South Wye Transport Package and as set out in the Strategic Outline Business Case (which can be seen on the council’s website) was £5m so it is not correct to say the budget for the element of the package has been cut. I am due to take a decision on 8 March in relation to our commitment to investment in active travel measures in the South Wye area alongside the delivery of the new road. The Strategic Outline Business Case for the Hereford Transport Package can be seen on the council’s website and sets out an estimated £29m of possible walking, cycling, public transport and public space improvements alongside a new bypass scheme. We are currently consulting on this issue and the feedback we receive will inform the further development of potential improvements; cost estimates will be updated as this work progress. This is the normal process for scheme development and fully in accordance with Department for Transport business case stages.

The report informing the decision that I will be taking on 8 March is available on the council’s website and provides information about the process of selection. The measures recommended for inclusion in the full business case will be effective in meeting the objectives of the South Wye Transport Package because:

- Together they are considered to maximise the benefits of investments across the area;

- They would constitute value for money;
- The walking and cycling infrastructure would improve access to the HEZ, city centre and other local destinations, which will encourage uptake of these modes;
- The walking and cycling infrastructure and reduced speed limits would contribute to a reduction in the severity and incidence of road collisions and would improve the perception of safety of active travel modes;
- The uptake of walking and cycling would contribute to a reduction in traffic noise and reduce air pollutants associated with vehicle traffic and improve public health; and
- They support many actions in the Living Streets Groundwork for the Hereford Walking Strategy document.

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| PQ 5 | Mrs Morawiecka, Breinton | The original need for the Southern Link Road was supposedly to open up new land for housing, with property developers contributing £5million to the new road cost. With cuts to so many local services and no funding available for sustainable modes of transport for schools, why is the taxpayer now expected to foot the full £30million bill for this road scheme? | Cabinet member infrastructure |
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Response:

Your statement that the original need for the Southern Link Road was to enable housing growth is incorrect. Whilst delivery will assist in unlocking land for much needed housing, the aims of the South Wye Transport Package are:

Economic:

- Reduce congestion and delay
- Enable access, particularly to developments such as the Hereford Enterprise Zone

Environmental:

- Reduce the growth in emissions such as CO2, NOx and PM10s
- Reduce traffic noise

Health:

- Encourage physical activity
- Reduce accidents

The Strategic Outline Business case set out both growth funding and local contributions for this £35m package and indicated possible sources for local contributions. That business case enabled Herefordshire Council to secure £27m funding from the Department for Transport (DfT). Cabinet has confirmed a local contribution of £8m which would be funded from local transport plan funding allocations or other funding sources. This remains the case as has been set out in published decision reports, and will be confirmed in the final full business case when submitted to DfT later in the year.

I would also challenge the assumptions made in the question that the funding could be used to support other local services; there is a significant difference between the use that can be made of non-recurring capital funding and the requirement for ongoing revenue funding to sustain local services. We always explore funding options to ensure that public resources are directed to best effect and that essential services for our residents can be maintained.

The question also explicitly references the lack of funding available for sustainable modes of transport to schools. Central government ended its funding of that work in 2011. Although we no longer have a ring-fenced budget to support this work we continue to fund relevant activity through existing schemes such as Destination Hereford.

PQ 6

Ms Setterfield-Milln,
Hereford

As a Sixth form college student who cycles daily to college I am aware that 80% of Hereford's traffic congestion is due to people making short journeys within our city boundary.
Making walking and cycling safer and public transport cheaper and more efficient would help reduce our carbon emissions substantially, getting people out of their cars and living healthier lives. If you declare a Climate emergency please can you commit Herefordshire to taking bold decisive action with real sustainable transport investment such as a tram system? That would be an excellent use of the £50 million just received from selling off all our county farms. Thank you.

Cabinet member
infrastructure

Response:

Firstly, thank you for making your journey to college each day by bike – every individual's contribution matters. Because making walking and cycling safer and more attractive and supporting public transport can help reduce short, car based journeys this is already reflected in the objectives of our Local Transport Plan.

I don't recognise the figure of 80% of traffic congestion being caused by short journeys, as this is not data that we collect. You will see a range of transport statistics set out in the Hereford Transport Package consultation information and the sources of this data. These statistics confirm that 49% of commuting trips within Hereford of less than 5km are by car, and that walking makes up less than 20% of all journeys - a pattern of travel we wish to change. We continue to fund improvements to the physical infrastructure to encourage people to walk, cycle or use public transport both through our public realm annual plan and as part of wider transport projects such as delivering the Hereford Bypass, which will assist in reducing congestion, and improving air quality in the city. We also continue to provide subsidies to support maintaining bus services, despite cuts in our funding from central government.

Whether or not Council declares a climate emergency, I can assure you that we will continue to invest in sustainable transport and other measures to protect the environment. I cannot confirm that this investment would include a tram system in Hereford as any such scheme needs to be deliverable within the existing built environment and economically viable. However there are other options that can be considered which take account of technological developments such as electric buses, or autonomous vehicles, and we will continue to explore these options.

Because of your interest in this issue, I would like to encourage you, and anyone else with an interest, to respond to the Hereford Transport Package consultation currently underway that closes on 11 March. All suggestions put forward will be considered, alongside our evidence base. We hope to be able to confirm a final package later in 2019. You will find the consultation at: <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/HTP>

Supplementary Question:

If the Council agrees the climate emergency motion will it abandon the western bypass and focus on active travel measures?

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| Cabinet Member response to supplementary question: There was a need to grow the economy in Herefordshire for young people in the county to have a future. To enable growth, infrastructure and housing was required, which included a bypass. Active travel measures in Hereford would facilitate walking, cycling and public transport. In the Hereford Transport Package (HTP) Consultation there was commitment for £29million in active travel measure in Hereford. | | | |
| PQ 7 | Mr Milln, Hereford | 20 mph vehicle speed limits in residential areas are shown to reduce car use and road accidents, particularly those of our children, although it is clear such orders are not being adequately enforced at the moment. They also encourage walking and cycling, although the Council's current HTP consultation on walking, cycling, bus and public space fails to mention the 'Twenty is Plenty' programme as advocated by the Green Party (among others). With climate change an emergency, will this Council step up implementation of the scheme? | Cabinet member transport and regulatory services |
| Response: This council has delivered many 20mph schemes in Hereford city across residential areas, adjacent to primary and secondary schools and on city centre shopping streets, and remains committed to delivering further schemes. The current Hereford Transport Package consultation is focused on key movement corridors in the city and how these could be improved to produce safe and continuous routes for walking and cycling in Hereford as well as opportunities for public transport improvements. Whilst the current consultation boards do not make specific reference to possible 20mph zones it is anticipated that these and other traffic management schemes such as weight restrictions would form part of a package scheme. Indeed this was referred to in our consultation in 2018. As we consider feedback to the current consultation and develop the package, traffic management schemes (including 20mph zones) will be included and we will be consulting again later this year when this will be detailed and feedback invited. If a parish or town council wishes to progress a Traffic Regulation Order in their area to aid accelerated delivery of traffic calming measures it is also open to them to directly fund this work. | | | |
| Supplementary Question: There was a lack of enforcement of 20 mph zones in Hereford in particular East Street which suffered from rat running and was dangerous at its crossing with church street. It was asked what the Council was doing as a matter of urgency to enforce 20 mph limits and address the problems in East Street. | | | |
| Cabinet Member response to supplementary question: We are looking in the HTP how can make the city a safer place. An issue with the church street junction was acknowledged which would be looked at very shortly. | | | |
| PQ 8 | Mr Cramsie, Newton St Margarets | In the event of Herefordshire Council declaring a climate emergency, will the Council appoint a Councillor with the specific remit to oversee the application of the declaration's aims to all appropriate areas of current and future policy? | Leader |
| Response: Thank you for your suggestion. As Councillor Price indicated at the last meeting of Council, he has asked the General Scrutiny Committee to consider placing the issue of policy options and actions to respond to climate change, on their work programme. Councillor Price is the cabinet lead for environmental promotion, protection and sustainability; in light of the elections scheduled for 2 May, it would be a matter for the Leader of the | | | |

Council to determine the remit of future cabinet member portfolios, and the appointment of any member champions after the annual meeting of Council on 24 May.

Supplementary Question:

Why is it that no minutes of the Herefordshire Local Nature Partnership have been published since 2015?

Leader response to supplementary question:

A written response would be provided.

PQ 9

Mr Palgrave,
How Capel

Priority 1 listed in Herefordshire Council's Corporate Plan is to, "Enable residents to live safe, healthy and independent lives". The vision expressed in the Health and Well Being Strategy is that "Herefordshire residents are resilient; lead fulfilling lives; are emotionally and physically healthy and feel safe and secure." Do you agree that to meet these objectives, Council must take full account of the risks to human health, well-being and security posed by accelerating climate change, (the Climate Emergency) and that Council should now give higher priority to its work to address climate change, ensuring its plans and investments are updated whenever they are no longer consistent with the emerging scientific evidence?

Leader

Response:

I agree that in order to meet the Health and Wellbeing Strategy vision, and indeed the Council's own vision of "People, organisations and businesses working together to bring sustainable prosperity and wellbeing for all, in the outstanding natural environment of Herefordshire" we must take full account of all the risks to human health, well-being and security, wherever those risks arise. I also agree that the decisions we take should, in accordance with our principles of good decision-making and our code of corporate governance give due weight to all material considerations, only take relevant matters into account, and make sure the action is proportionate to what the council wants to happen.

I am proud of the significant investment and action this Council has already undertaken in delivering measures to improve our energy efficiency. This includes investment in LED lighting across the county both for street lighting and within council owned buildings; installation of solar panels; electric car charging points in public car parks; fuel efficient cars for use by staff; and a new natural flood management programme. We also encourage staff to travel by bike or to walk as far as is practicable when carrying out their work. At the last meeting of this Council, Councillor Price advised that he has asked the General Scrutiny Committee to consider placing the issue of climate change and carbon management, on their work programme; the outcome of their work will inform our decision regarding future action to ensure that residents have a good quality of life in our beautiful county.

Supplementary Question:

How would local MPs and relevant government departments be made aware of the outcome of the debate on the climate emergency?

Leader response to supplementary question:

The Council had undertaken a lot of actions to reduce its environmental impact and carbon emissions but it could not do it alone and needed help from others both countywide and nationwide. The council would be asking others for this help.

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| PQ 10 | Ms Toynbee, Hereford | It is good to see Herefordshire Council consulting on walking, cycling and buses for the Hereford Transport Package. This is a great opportunity for efficient, joined-up transport in and out of the city, as well as within it. However, the consultation does not show how the council plans to link this package for the City with existing transport packages, such as that for South Wye and the City Centre, as well as with rail, at the transport hub. Why is this? | Cabinet member infrastructure |
| <p>Response: Thank you for comments about the current Hereford Transport Package consultation. I am very pleased that large numbers of people have come to see the proposals at the public events we have run since the consultation commenced in January and those who have viewed the proposals on line. We have already had over 300 responses to the consultation and hope many more will respond in the next week as the consultation runs to 11 March 2019. The focus of this consultation is on the Hereford Transport package rather than city-wide design which will be addressed both in the Hereford Area Plan and Hereford Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document. However, the consultation boards do show route corridors' links to other schemes such as the proposed Blueschool Street and Newmarket street improvements, the City Link Road and proposed transport hub, and the St Owen Street contraflow scheme, which is an element of the Hereford City Centre improvements. As we progress the detailed design of these improvements we will ensure that they are linked to ensure a comprehensive and improved network throughout the city</p> | | | |
| PQ 11 | Mr Coppock, Kington | <p>As someone who has focused and campaigned on this issue for the past 15 years could I stress the urgency with which we immediately need to act. We need to focus on the reduction of the whole Herefordshire county carbon footprint to a net zero by 2030 at the latest. The urgent need to declare a climate emergency by the council and to vote for this motion should be very clear to anyone who has read the special report of this past year from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate change</p> <p>As a concrete action following the Re-Energising Herefordshire project would the Council please consider the creation of a county wide Zero Carbon Herefordshire project to be achieved by 2030 within the action of declaring a Climate Emergency motion?</p> | Cabinet member infrastructure |
| <p>Response: As has already been referenced in previous responses, I have asked General Scrutiny Committee to include in their workplan some focussed work on the issue of climate change and will ask them to consider this suggestion as part of that work.</p> | | | |
| <p>Supplementary Question: Herefordshire has a large proportion of buildings with a poor level of insulation in comparison to the rest of the country. As part of urgent actions needed to reduce the county's carbon footprint would the council consider initiating a system that reduces council tax for well-insulated buildings; to stimulate take up combined with support for further insulation at the same time?</p> | | | |
| <p>Cabinet Member response to supplementary question: The council encouraged the better insulation of buildings. The suggestion of a council tax reduction would be looked into and a written response provided.</p> | | | |

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| PQ 12 | Ms Spearman, Newton St Margarets | From the number of people attending our student demonstration, it is clear that students and young people in Herefordshire want change to address the climate emergency. If the Council ignores the impact of climate change do you acknowledge that this will be against the interests and concerns of your constituents? | Leader |
| <p>Response: The council hasn't, and won't, ignore any impacts that affect Herefordshire or the welfare of its residents. We have already taken action through our carbon management plan, and Re-energising Herefordshire to address this issue as outlined in my response to public question number 9 above, and will continue to do so. As has already been referenced in previous responses, Councillor Price has asked General Scrutiny Committee to include in their workplan some focussed work on the issue of climate change and I hope that the new committee to be formed after the elections in May will make this a priority.</p> | | | |
| <p>Supplementary Question: What more can the Council commit and promise to provide to reassure young people of Herefordshire and how can we work together?</p> | | | |
| <p>Leader response to supplementary question: A document would be produced shortly which would set out what the council had already done and what it intended to do in response to climate change. Herefordshire was the first county to ensure that there was 100% coverage of LED streetlights which since 2011 had ensured a 65% reduction in the level of energy used in street lighting and resulted in significant savings to the council. Offices had been sold and staff had been consolidated in fewer buildings. Staff were encouraged to walk and cycle to work and after 2019 electric vehicles would be purchased as pool cars at the council.</p> | | | |

Agenda item no. 6 - Questions from members of the council

| Question Number | Questioner | Question | Question to |
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| MQ 1 | Councillor PJ Edwards, Newton Farm | In the absence of an accurate response to my question put to Council meeting 12 th October 2018 regards the BBLP contract and selling of Grounds Equipment, please may all Members be informed of vehicles and machines which Herefordshire Council own in relation to the BBLP contract? | Cabinet member transport and regulatory services |
| <p>Response: The query that you raised in relation to the Leader's report to Council in October did not receive an inaccurate response. Your query, as recorded in the minutes, was whether Balfour Beatty Living Places (BBLP) would be able to deliver their responsibilities to maintain the council's open spaces and verges given that it was understood that they had sold the equipment they owned required for these tasks and would therefore be reliant on third party contractors. The response confirmed that BBLP remained contracted to deliver this work, which is the case. A further query requested confirmation of the amount of money raised from the sale of equipment; this information was provided on 29 October 2018 (for ease of reference the amount was £21,548.40).</p> <p>As you will appreciate there is a significant amount of machinery and vehicles the council owns in relation to the BBLP contract; rather than produce a lengthy list here I would ask any member wishing to inspect the relevant asset register to email Laura.Lloyd@herefordshire.gov.uk who will be able to assist.</p> | | | |
| <p>Supplementary Question: How can the contract with BBLP be so poorly managed that council-purchased assets such as new mowers and a new tractor are not entered in the asset register and why hasn't the purchase of additional equipment not resulted in the reduction of contract costs?</p> | | | |
| <p>Cabinet member response to supplementary question: I take exception to claim that the contract is poorly managed. A response from the contract officer would be provided.</p> | | | |
| MQ 2 | Councillor A Seldon, Bromyard West | How would the cabinet member for finance and corporate services defend the accusation that his administration proposed an unbalanced budget in 2018-19 by proposing a manifestly undeliverable budget for the Children and Families Directorate in February 2018? | Cabinet member finance and corporate services |

Response:

The question indicates that Councillor Seldon is suggesting there has been unlawful activity by this administration and this Council given that it is a requirement of law to set a balanced budget. Making such an outrageous accusation, suggests to me either a complete lack of understanding of local government finances and budget setting, or an attempt to grab a headline in view of forthcoming elections; neither explanation reflects well on the questioner.

Herefordshire Council's budget setting process is well established and robust. This administration's proposals in 2018, as they are every year, were reviewed by scrutiny. The particular financial challenges facing children's services were fully set out and tested by scrutiny, and the director for children's wellbeing confirmed that whilst no cast iron assurances could be given on the saving on this area he had confidence in the work that had been done in relation to the estimates. The budget proposals were reviewed and assessed as lawful by the council's section 151 officer, and debated by full Council before being voted on – a vote in which I note Councillor Seldon supported the very budget proposal that he now says was 'manifestly undeliverable'.

As a councillor active within the Local Government Association (LGA) he will recall that as recently as January this year the LGA was reporting that nearly 90% of local authorities had overspent their children's budget in 2017/18 and there is no reason to believe that the picture will be different at the end of the 2018/19 financial year. I am sure Councillor Seldon would not be intending to suggest all those authorities are similarly to be 'accused'. A further report from the LGA, "Making Sense", in the Autumn of 2018 has highlighted how little control local authorities have over children's care costs. I would be delighted to lend Cllr Seldon my copy if he wishes to cultivate an interest in this area. The reality is that nationally the pressures on children's social care are increasing whilst local government resources have been reducing. At the time the budget was set, and reflected in the medium term financial strategy, the pressures facing children's services were recognised and, as any prudent council would, we maintain close oversight of that budget and ensure that, should it prove necessary, additional resources are made available to support that vital service. Those additional resources are only available to us because of this administration's continued prudent approach to budgeting.

Supplementary Question:

Is the answer to the initial question 'yes'?

Cabinet member response to supplementary question:

The answer is no. A similar process would be followed to produce the budget for the following financial year. It was hoped that if there were concerns these would be raised through the scrutiny committees or with the section 151 officer. There was national concern over the funding of children's services at councils and greater certainty was required from central government.

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| MQ 3 | Councillor ACR Chappell, Hinton and Hunderton | There are a number of milestones and other historic items like finger posts and boundary stones across the county that need to be preserved. | Cabinet member transport and regulatory services |
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| | | Will the cabinet Member for Highways, undertake a county wide audit to ensure these items are recorded and not destroyed by highways works and other events? | |
| <p>Response: The council considers the protection of historic structures such as milestones and boundary stones to be a valuable part of the historic environment of the county, many of which are listed by Historic England. The council is aware of the potential threat to these features and is working to reduce it. When highway maintenance is undertaken close to these features, care is taken not to remove or damage these markers. If they are found to be in an unstable condition, they are reset and repaired where possible, and we continue to explore external sources of funding to support more proactive management.</p> <p>The council already holds a significant amount of information about these features, and is working to improve this data. Until recently listed milestones were the only ones recorded on the Herefordshire Historic Environment Record (HHER), which affords them greater protection under the Planning (Listed Building & Conservation Area) Act 1990. In the last few months, we have been working with the Milestone Society to add data held by them and also adding data from a survey we carried out in 2012/13 to the HHER. Although adding these unlisted structures recorded in the HHER will not afford any additional protection, it will give them greater visibility and attention when it comes to management and protection of them, as is the case for all heritage assets. As a result of this survey and audit work there are now around 300 mile markers recorded on the HHER and this work is still ongoing.</p> <p>There is always merit in seeking the views and assistance from parish councils as they can contribute valuable local knowledge to this work, and I will ask officers to liaise with Locality Stewards to take those discussions forward at a local level.</p> | | | |
| <p>Supplementary question: Is there awareness of the missing milestone marker in Byford? Were there discussions with BBLP, highways officers and planners to ensure that historic markers were protected? Were the police investigating stolen markers?</p> | | | |
| <p>Cabinet member response to supplementary question: The council worked closely with the milestone society, the police and local parish council to protect historic markers.</p> | | | |

