

Minutes of the meeting of General scrutiny committee held Online on Monday 9 November 2020 at 10.30 am

Present: Councillor Jonathan Lester (chairperson)
Councillor Tracy Bowes (vice-chairperson)

Councillors: Jennie Hewitt, Bob Matthews, Paul Rone, Louis Stark and
William Wilding

In attendance: Councillors Christy Bolderson, Pauline Crockett (Cabinet Member),
Gemma Davies (Cabinet Member), John Harrington (Cabinet Member),
Liz Harvey (Cabinet Member), David Hitchiner (Cabinet Member),
Felicity Norman (Cabinet Member) and Nigel Shaw

Officers: Richard Ball – Director for Economy and Place, Mairead Lane – Acting
Assistant Director Highways & Transport / Head of Infrastructure Delivery,
Steve Burgess – Head of Transport and Access Services, Andrew Lovegrove –
Chief Finance Officer.

Transport Consultants:
Mr Martyn Brookes Director , National and Local Government Services and
Mr Martin Revill, Regional Director Transport Planning, Mott MacDonald
Mr Ed Ducker Technical Specialist, Mott MacDonald

11. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillor Durkin.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Matthews as a new member of the Committee.

12. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Councillor Rone substituted for Councillor Durkin.

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Agenda item 7 – Hereford Transport Package Review

Councillor Bowes declared a schedule 1 interest because her home was close to the route of the proposed Western Bypass. She reported that she had been given a dispensation to represent the views in her ward.

Councillor Hitchiner declared a schedule 1 interest because his home was close to the route of the proposed Southern relief road. He reported that he had been given a dispensation to represent the views in his ward.

Councillor Matthews highlighted that a portion of the proposed Western Bypass passed through his ward.

14. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2020 be approved as a correct record.

15. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A copy of the questions from members of the public and the answers together with the supplementary questions and answers is attached at appendix 1.

16. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

A copy of the questions from Councillors and the answers together with the supplementary questions and answers is attached at appendix 2.

17. HEREFORD TRANSPORT STRATEGY REVIEW

The Committee was invited to provide its views on the findings of the Hereford Transport Strategy Review and the Peer Review of the Hereford and South Wye Transport Packages prior to consideration by cabinet.

The Head of Transport and Access Services commenced the presentations as published with the agenda papers. Mr M Revill, Regional Director Transport Planning, Mott MacDonald and Mr M Brookes, Director, National and Local Government Services, WSP, delivered their published presentations.

The Committee discussed the report asking a number of questions to which responses were given.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO THE EXECUTIVE:

- That
- (a) more detailed studies are undertaken on the benefits and dis-benefits of traffic light management in more locations in Hereford;**
 - (b) as a result of this review, the committee recommends that the cabinet consider 'weighting of the preferred outcomes' to help determine the preferred package to take forward;**
 - (c) support is given to promoting more 'park and choose' options in combination with more investment into public transport options and cycle routes to reduce demand for car journeys into or through the city centre with a particular focus given to the limited transport options currently experienced by Herefordshire's rural communities and that the executive set up a transport team as a matter of priority to implement the planning of cycling and walking, and that the road schemes are reconfigured to accommodate walking and cycling safely within the city;**
 - (d) the cabinet follow up on the suggestion for a 'River-Bus Service' in ongoing refinement and review of the Hereford transport package options;**
 - (e) consideration is given to a wider, more in depth study, on the transport options that address countywide transport challenges and solutions, not just in Hereford City;**

- (f) cabinet should not feel constrained by having to consider just the package of options that has been presented to them as part of this review.
- (g) the committee considers that further analysis is undertaken to assess further the mitigation measures of traffic utilising an eastern crossing before the dis-benefits of an eastern crossing rule it out as an option.
- (h) school travel and transport is given greater priority and that more work is done to undertake survey work with schools and parents to gain a better understanding to what the barriers to uptake of school transport are;
- (i) carbon offsetting is looked at in relation to offsetting on major infrastructure projects.
- (j) the impact of assessing routes over other river crossings, in particular, the Bridge Sollars crossing, is built into the analysis of options and packages under review.
- (k) that the executive abandon the Western Bypass and reject other major road infrastructure schemes, barring only the eastern river crossing option;
- (l) the executive take a look again at the robustness of the qualitative assessment of the evidence presented; and
- (m) Herefordshire Council should immediately implement a well-designed comprehensive safe and attractive network of active travel measures across the entire county to reduce the effect of climate change and the risk of surface flooding.

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 30 November 2020 at 10.30 am.

Appendix 1 - Questions from members of the public and answers

Appendix 2 - Questions from Councillors and Answers

The meeting ended at 5.20 pm

Chairperson

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO GENERAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 9 November 2020Question 1**Mr D Goy – Clehonger**

Why propose a bypass for the city when only 7% of traffic is regional through traffic and 93% of traffic is heading in and out of the city on local journeys. School holidays for instance proves that point when the traffic is substantially lighter. A bypass will encourage more traffic from further afield to enter the city which will defeat the object of building the bypass.

Response

It is important to note that the review is not proposing any bypass but that east and west road options have been included in the strategic package assessments in order that the council can make an informed decision about future transport strategy and any changes from current adopted strategy.

One of the purposes of the review was to assess alternative transport options for Hereford alongside current adopted strategy which includes the western bypass.

The amount of through traffic in Hereford affects the performance of all packages assessed in this report, not just the packages which include road options. The 7% figure is calculated from the total number journeys which are observed in the Hereford transport network which comprises:

- **journeys wholly within Hereford (eg Tupsley to the city centre) = 40%,**
- **journeys into Hereford (eg Leominster to Rotherwas) = 27%,**
- **journeys out of Hereford to elsewhere (eg Whitecross to Cardiff) = 25%, and**
- **journeys passing through Hereford (eg Abergavenny to Leominster) = 7%.**

On some roads the percentage of through traffic will be higher (eg 10% over Greyfriars Bridge) and on some roads it will be lower (eg many residential roads within the city).

In terms of longer distance traffic it is unlikely that this would be encouraged to enter the city as it would use a bypass to avoid having to pass through the city.

Question 2**Ms J Tonge Hereford**

Where did the review consider and measure embodied carbon on each of the transport options, to ensure a complete carbon assessment of all of the transport options?

Response

Embodied carbon was included as indicator 3.1 within the Package Assessment Framework and each package option has been assessed against this indicator.

Supplementary

Please clarify that the embodied carbon included in each option, includes the embodied carbon not just in the physical transport infrastructure but also in the vehicles manufactured to use it?

Response

Yes.

Question 3**Ms K Sharp Hereford**

The previous administration had spent £7.3million and 6 years on developing the South Wye Transport package, and yet after all this time and money, officers were unable to provide a clear business case to show how the road would reduce congestion. This shows the risk around delivering new road schemes, which have much lower benefits/£1 than providing simpler, less expensive active travel measures. How has the risk around cost and delivery of options been built into the OAR?

Response

It is not correct to say there is no clear business case for the South Wye Transport Package. The strategic outline business case (OBC) presents the case for the project and can be seen on the council's website by following the link below:

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/13070/south_wye_transport_package_strategic_outline_business_case

The full business case (FBC) was not completed for submission to the department for transport due to the scheme being paused for review.

Risks around the cost and delivery of the different options and packages have been addressed via the Deliverability and Affordability sections of the assessment frameworks. The table at page 74 of the Review sets out the risks and clarifies the grading of risks into different bands and pages 92 and 93 summarises performance in terms of the risks.

Supplementary

In January 2019 the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure reported that £7.486 million had been spent so far on the SWTP. Also that the £2.508 million forecast spend in the year ending 31st March 2019 would deliver:

- Completion of the detailed design of the Southern Link Road
- Land and compensation costs
 - Procurement of a contractor for the Southern Link Road construction and mobilisation
 - Completion of the full business case for the South Wye Transport Package for submission and sign off to Department for Transport
- Development of a programme for delivery of the active travel measures.

This report was clear: the Full Business Case would be completed by March 2019. Why then does the answer to my question blame the non-delivery of the business case on this administration's Pause and Review that took effect in October 2019?

Response

The response was not intended to attribute any blame. It stated that the business case had not been completed.

Question 4**Mrs J Morris Hereford**

Discussion of the Western Bypass was excluded by the Planning Inspector during the Examination in Public of the Core Strategy. The Inspectors Report (Sept 2015) states “However, the Hereford Relief Road (HRR) is not identified in the Council’s Local Transport Plan as planned infrastructure, the funding is not secure and it is not part of Highways England (HE) Road Investment Strategy for 2015 – 2020. The route has not been modelled or identified in detail and there is a high degree of uncertainty about whether the HRR is viable and can be achieved within the plan period.” Hence the Inspectors “Main Modification” to the Core Strategy (MM016) “Further assessments will be undertaken as part of the Hereford Area Plan and subsequent planning application(s).” Why did Mott Macdonald report that road proposals were challenged and Examined in Public for the Core Strategy?

Response

It is not correct to say that the Inspector excluded any discussion of the Hereford Relief Road (HRR) at the core strategy EIP but recognised that the EIP was not the appropriate process to undertake an inquiry into specific highway proposals.

The sentence referred to in the peer review reporting states that “*the proposals in the form of the HTP and the SWTP have been tested and challenged in an appropriate way through technical studies, modelling and Examination in Public*” and this is consistent with the Inspector’s report and as such the peer assessment simply indicates that the EIP confirmed the inclusion of the HRR in the core strategy.

Whilst it is correct that Inspector noted that the HRR was not included in Highways England’s Route Investment Strategy (RIS) 2015-20 this was because the scheme was not at the stage for inclusion in RIS. The Inspector also noted that the identification of the HRR in the core strategy was supported by Highways England.

Supplementary

5 years have now elapsed since the Inspector’s comments on the Core Strategy, and the HRR is still not in a Route Investment Strategy, particularly RIS2 2020-2025. With the Core Strategy, and its Nutrient Management Plan requiring investment in management of water pollution; flooding and waste treatment, is the Western Relief Road/HRR viable or does it still pose a risk to the financial delivery of the Local Plan and the finances of Herefordshire Council as a whole?

Response

The Western Relief Road was part of the review. The other issues raised by the supplementary question would need to be considered as part of any updating of the core strategy which would take account of any recommendations arising from the Hereford Transport Package Review along with any financial implications.

The Council holds sufficient reserves to meet its financial challenges and obligations.

Question 5**Dr N Geeson, Hereford**

The traffic modelling was carried out in 2016 before the new City Link Road, was constructed and opened in Dec 2017. The City Link Road was forecast to reduce congestion in Hereford, particularly on the Newmarket/Blueschool St and Edgar St. How was the traffic modelling updated to reflect this significant investment in new road infrastructure and how far did it generate a reduction in journey times/congestion in Hereford?

Response

This review was not intended to separately assess the impact of the city link road. The review has assumed a forecast year of 2026 and the highway network assumed for 2026 includes the City Link Road.

Supplementary

As I mentioned in my Question, the City Link Road was planned and forecast to reduce city congestion, and also unlock land for 800 new homes in an Urban Village. From the written answer, I learn that the strategic transport review has not included assessment or modelling of the impact of the City Link Road. For the expenditure of £34 million I sincerely hope it has been successful in reducing congestion since it opened in February 2018. In the light of the written answer to my Question, surely it is now logical to conclude that without a City Link Road impact assessment, the modelling and evaluation presented in the Transport Review is incomplete? And that the Transport Review does not provide a totally accurate picture of the perceived benefits of new road building options?

Response

The City Link Road (CLR) was included in the forecasting picture in the review. For 2026 this took account of the CLR and how it redistributed traffic. In terms of the performance of the CLR an interim traffic report had been prepared that it was hoped would be published shortly. The CLR was part of a larger city centre package so there were elements of that work to be completed.

Question 6**Gill Parker**

Why hasn't the result that only 7 percent of Hereford traffic is through traffic not a headline disclosure for the western bypass.

It's a total waste of money, time and ecological disaster

Response

The traffic data that this question refers to is presented clearly in the review (page 23) and is an output from the modelling work undertaken to enable assessment of all of the different packages for the review. It is not just relevant to packages with road schemes.

The council has previously communicated modelled traffic data as part of the development of the Hereford Transport Package.

The amount of through traffic in Hereford affects the performance of all packages assessed in this report, not just the western bypass. The 7% figure is calculated from the total number journeys which are observed in the Hereford transport network which comprises:

- journeys wholly within Hereford (eg Tupsley to the city centre) = 40%,
- journeys into Hereford (eg Leominster to Rotherwas) = 27%,
- journeys out of Hereford to elsewhere (eg Whitecross to Cardiff) = 25%, and
- journeys passing through Hereford (eg Abergavenny to Leominster) = 7%.

On some roads the percentage of through traffic will be higher (eg 10% over Greyfriars Bridge) and on some roads it will be lower (eg many residential roads within the city).

In addition, new highway capacity, providing alternative access outside of the existing network, such as the western bypass or the eastern link options would provide benefits for some journeys which start or finish in the city (as well as for through journeys which start and finish outside of the network).

Question 7

Mrs J Richards, Hereford

On the Transport strategy review page 24 the north east area of Hereford (Tupsley, College Green, Aylestone Hill etc) generates 22,800 trips a day that start and finish within this quadrant vs 4,500 trips for the South East quadrant, which includes Rotherwas. Tackling the largest areas that generate traffic will have the biggest impact in reducing vehicle use, pollution. Which package measure would have the biggest impact on reducing this high level of short journeys?

Response

Our assessment shows that Package A (focus on cycling and walking), Package B (improvements in bus services) and Package C (demand management) would have the greatest potential to replace short journeys currently made by private car. The walking and cycling infrastructure option is included in all package combinations.

Supplementary

Page 33 of the review reports that “Based on trip distance and topography up to 40% of travel to work and more than 40% of travel to school journeys in Hereford have the potential to be cycled. This is subject to suitable infrastructure being in place. There is even greater potential if e--bikes are considered.” How much of this potential to cycle is forecast to be released by the Walking & Cycling package?

Response

The outcomes of the walking and cycling package and the safer routes to schools package were more people cycling and walking than would otherwise be the case. The statistics to answer this precise question were not to hand in the format to answer the extent to which the 40% figures were taken up by people who then choose to cycle/walk and the proportion of people who remain in their cars.

Question 8**Mr J Dunn Hereford**

One of the Covid measures put in place by the Council was the closure of the Old Bridge with the aim of increasing cycling, according to page 96 of Appendix A by " weekday cycling at 60 % higher than the previous year and weekend levels at twice as high " My question is

"What data regarding cycling on the Old Bridge exists to confirm whether or not these aims have been met and could the relevant figures be provided to me and the general public, and will the decision to close the Old Bridge be reviewed in the light of the data regarding changes in use by cyclists and, if so, when ?"

Response

The figures referred to on page 96 of the strategy assessment report in Appendix A reflect national patterns of walking and cycling that occurred during the lockdown, as published by the DfT. These are not targets for the Emergency Active Travel measures.

The performance of the Emergency Active Travel measures is monitored through a variety of ways including traffic data, footfall data as well as feedback from individuals and organisations.

Cycling data in the vicinity of the Old Bridge is captured via a permanent counter located in King Street. Data from this counter has shown an increase in non-motorised traffic. In the two months prior to the measures being introduced, 20 July 2020, there was a daily average of 130 pedestrians and 440 cycles. In the two months following the measures being introduced there was a daily average of 260 pedestrians and 496 cycles. These increases were most prevalent in the morning and evening peak periods.

Independent footfall data from Hereford Business Improvement District for King St also shows an increase. In the two months prior to the measures being introduced there was an average weekly total of 11.5k pedestrians and in the two months following the measures being introduced there was an average weekly total of 13.5k pedestrians.

All the Emergency Active Travel measures are reviewed as feedback and further data is received.

Question 9**Mr R Palgrave How Caple**

In the sifting process, the two eastern bypass options (15a and 15b) were discarded, but the western bypass (option 14) was taken forward to the short list. In Appendix A, tables at page 62 to 67 summarise the assessment scoring for all the options in the long list. The scoring for Options 14, 15a and 15b are almost exactly the same. Under the heading Affordability they are identical (page 67). If the two eastern bypass options are not worthy of inclusion on the short list, why is the western bypass?

Response

As explained on page 70 of the report, the full eastern bypass variants were discarded due to having "very severe adverse environmental impacts during both construction and operation". Whilst page 64 indicates a similar (although slightly less severe) level of impact for the western bypass, it was decided to retain the western bypass at this stage of the study to ensure that the current adopted core strategy (which includes the

western bypass) was subject to a wider package assessment than has previously been undertaken, and hence was capable of comparison with other possible packages.

Supplementary

Your answer said that " it was decided to retain the western bypass at this stage of the study to ensure that the current adopted core strategy (which includes the western bypass) was subject to a wider package assessment than has previously been undertaken, and hence was capable of comparison with other possible packages." Can you clarify please - does this mean that the western bypass would have been discarded from the short list if it had not been included in the adopted core strategy?

Response

In terms of the option selection to go through to the final assessment the approach taken was to ensure that as wide a range of different options that were reasonable to be taken forward were included in the assessment to enable comparisons to be made.

The assessment would not have been any different. It was a transparent assessment. The original response had indicated that the western bypass was similar to the eastern bypass but not quite as severe.

Question 10

R Winn, Ocle Pychard, Hereford

Does the Strategy's Package A, intent to implement the council resolution to adopt 20mph speed limits in all residential areas of the city?

Response

Whilst the council has not yet determined to take forward any of the packages the inclusion of 20mph speed limits in Package A does support the council's resolution (6 March 2020) to investigate the introduction of area wide 20mph speed limits. Further work would be required to develop a detailed proposal for the introduction of 20mph speed limits in the city in the event that the council determines to progress Package A and this element of the Package.

Question 11

Mrs C Palgrave, How Caple

Package C, Demand Management, is partly a 'stick' approach to persuade people to use alternative means to travel into and around Hereford rather than the car – influencing vehicle parking demand through parking policy changes. Why is this package then grouped with the road packages, which tend to have the opposite effect – to encourage people to use cars, especially as the 'road groups' don't provide any investment in public transport?

Response

The general approach to forming combinations of packages was to construct sensible groupings within which the different elements complemented one another. In terms of the road schemes the review considered;

- **Any combination would include Package A (focus on walking and cycling) as these elements would almost certainly be implemented, alongside whatever**

other options were progressed, as the foundation for any future transport strategy

- All the packages involving the road schemes would also include Package C (demand management) as these elements would complement the road schemes by limiting the extent of induced traffic which the road schemes would otherwise generate

Question 12

J Ward Tarrington

I understand that the Hereford Transport Model used to inform this review was based on a traffic survey taken in July 2016. Much has changed since then. Is it safe to proceed with strategic decisions, particularly expensive road building, based on such old data?

Response

It is correct that the Hereford Transport Model is based upon a variety of data collected in 2016. The model was then developed in accordance with Department for Transport guidance to forecast traffic conditions in 2026.

The report explains the uncertainty surrounding this approach, including the possible effects of Covid-19 on medium and long term travel behaviour. In summary, the approach adopted is robust enough to identify the major differences in traffic operation between the various packages and as such is appropriate for use in making strategic decisions.

Question 13

Mrs P Churchward

The largest generator of traffic in Hereford is the North East Quadrant of the City, where there are higher education colleges and secondary schools.

In Hereford, half of all school children travel by car, 10% higher than the national proportion.

In the modelling for the different transport alternatives, what options have the greatest impact on reducing the effect of the “school run” on congestion in Hereford?

Response

It is important to note that the chart on page 24 of the review provides data on internal trips which start and end in the city and the north east quadrant also includes the city centre, retail and businesses as well as the higher education colleges and secondary schools.

There are two measures specifically intended to address journeys to school - Safer routes to school and improved school bus. Although neither of these options were specifically modelled (ref page 60 of report), packages which feature these options in combination are A+B and A+B+C. The congestion relief assessed for these packages is provided at page 78 and 80.

Supplementary

Hereford at 46% has 10% more journeys to school by car than the national average at 36%. Destination Hereford report showed congestion from the school run can increase traffic by over 50% on some main routes into Hereford, whilst through traffic is just 7% of the total

proportion of traffic in Hereford. Millions of pounds of tax payer's money has been spent on transport modelling and yet whilst the school run has one of the largest impacts on congestion and journey times, you are saying that the effect of the school run has not been modelled. The public and stakeholders identified interventions for tackling the school run as the 3rd most popular transport measure.

Are the absolute percentage figures for congestion relief from improved walking/cycling achieved during the holidays or term time?

Response

There was an obligation to do the modelling within what Dept for Transport called "neutral periods". These were not holiday periods. So the modelling carried out was for term time. The modelling of school trips was very complex. One of the features often overlooked was that it wasn't simply people who were no longer going to and from school during the holiday/half term periods. It was also parents also taking holidays during those times. The modelling took some assumptions based on this: assumed improvements to walking and cycling times to reflect the increased attractiveness of walking and cycling routes, a slightly increased penalty to car drivers who are taking their children to school by car to reflect that some of the transport measures under consideration would make it more difficult to pick up and drop off within the immediate vicinity of the schools. The consultants had done what they could to model the effects but it was an incredibly complex pattern involving a whole raft of behaviours.

Question 14

Mr A Priddle, Hereford

The only suggested option by the consultants that could succeed in reducing traffic congestion, improving public health and reducing carbon impact is the third package:

"A + B + C: Active travel + bus + demand management".

Question: as this option addresses all the challenges upon which this Council was elected, why should this option not be immediately enacted?

Response

At this stage cabinet is seeking the views of the General Scrutiny Committee in advance of its consideration of the review findings. The Committee can consider the points raised by Mr Priddle and determine if it wishes to recommend that the cabinet adopts Package A+B+C.

Question 15

B Dean, Hereford

The majority of journeys made daily within Hereford are short and within the City, and particularly in the North East quadrant of Hereford, where each day 22,800 journeys per day start and finish in such a small area. Despite this short distance, why is the level of modal shift of Package A anticipated to be just 5% to less polluting modes and what evidence supports such a low figure?

Response

The chart on page 23 of the review provides an overview trips in Hereford. Whilst this demonstrates that internal movements represent the largest group (40%) it is not true to say the majority of trips are within the city. The remaining trips being either trips into, out of or through the city.

The 5% mode shift quoted for Package A covers the whole of Hereford and not just the north-east quadrant. It reflects the variety of journey length within and into/out of the city as a whole. Clearly short distance journeys would be more likely to change than longer ones.

Question 16**C O'Neill, Richards Castle**

The critical friend report questions how the claimed figures for congestion relief were arrived at (para 2.8.2) of Appendix B. It is not clear if the figures given are forecasts of the effects of the roads by themselves, or of the packages of roads plus other interventions. Nor is it clear if the figures apply with or without the 'Covid' effect, and whether induced traffic is allowed for. And what is the margin of error (degree of confidence) in the quoted figures? Can this be explored by the Committee please?

Response

The numbers quoted in para 2.8.2 of Appendix B (the Mott MacDonald Technical Note) relate to modelled changes in congestion levels for packages which include the road schemes alongside other interventions (eg A+C+D). The numbers do not make any allowance for Covid. As explained on page 61 of the WSP report, the model results "presented in this study take account of many of the aspects of induced traffic, although not all," The approach to dealing with the inherent uncertainties in modelling is described in the introduction to the review.

Question 17**Mrs B John, Leysters**

Mott Macdonald's review of the South Wye Transport Packages concludes that "It remains possible for schemes to fully meet current assessment criteria and yet fall short of the high standards set by policy." How should Herefordshire Council's transport schemes be developed and delivered to ensure that they do meet the ambitions set by councillors and MPs who determine policy at a local and national level?

Response

The council's ambitions in terms of important issues such as the declared climate emergency have been considered within the review and form one of the key themes against which packages have been assessed. Whilst it is not possible to predict how the Department for Transport's guidance will develop and how this will influence national funding priorities it is considered that the approach taken within the review enables the council to pursue its ambitions and would provide a sound evidence base for the development of funding bids to government.

Supplementary

The reply to my previous questions states:

'The council's ambitions in terms of important issues such as the declared climate emergency have been considered within the review and form one of the key themes against which packages have been assessed'.

However the Critical Friend summary states p158 para 1 that 'There is a risk that the focus on such metrics from the modelled outputs 'hides' the benefits and disbenefits of some packages in achieving the adopted objectives.'

Will councillors commit to take time to read carefully Mott McDonald's concerns as to whether all the options will indeed meet the Council's declared climate change ambitions - pp 157-162 - and consider fully the concerns raised about whether the inclusion of the popular /high scoring active travel option with the road building packages was indeed intentional to 'improve the performance of the road options'?

Response

The Chairperson commented that this was a challenge to the Committee and to cabinet.

Question 18

Mrs E Morawiecka, Breinton

My question is "Mott Macdonald say they were shown the Hereford Relief Road - Study of Options dated 10th September 2010. However, the background report for the Cabinet report for the meeting on 16th September 2010 should have been based on the Hereford Relief Road Study of Options August 2010, as the reports had to be published at least 7 days before the meeting. The August 2010 Amey report states (Page 1) "of the relief road options &, although considered marginal, the eastern routes perform best in terms of reducing delay within the city. Many of the overcapacity junctions are on the east side of the City and as such the eastern bypass has the greatest improvement in these areas, resulting in the overall best results" Did officers draw Mott Macdonald's attention to the original study conclusions?"

Response

The cabinet decision report (16 September 2010) did include the August 2010 Study of Options as a background paper. However, there is no substantive difference in the findings and recommendations between the August 2010 and September 2010 Study of Options reports. Both documents are published on the council's website. Mott MacDonald reviewed the September 2010 finalised version of the report. A similar version of the text referred to in Mrs Morawiecka's question also appeared in the September 2010 report at paragraph 5.1.4 on page 35:

"of the Relief Road options, the eastern routes perform marginally better in terms of reducing delay within the City. This is due to many of the overcapacity junctions being on the east side of the City and as such the eastern Relief Road has the greatest improvement in these areas."

As such it was appropriate for Mott MacDonald to review the final version of the Study of Options report.

Supplementary

The August 2010 report by Amey recommended (page 40 para 5.1.1) “Of the sustainable options Option 1 performs best in terms of delay The focus of the recommendations relating to the Do Minimum scenario should consider whether the sustainable packages can be achieved without a relief road”. To confirm that there is no bias towards road building, conscious or otherwise, within the Transport department or WSP, when was the work done on considering whether the sustainable transport measures could be achieved without a relief road?

Response

The Director commented that there was no inherent bias regarding any of the options under consideration. The review’s intention was to look at all of the different options and present openly and honestly the technical information to enable members to consider that and come to a conclusion.

A written answer would be provided to the specific question regarding when the work was done on considering whether the sustainable transport measures could be achieved without a relief road?

Written Response

Further work was undertaken following publication of the Hereford Relief Road Study of Options which considered ‘no road’ options with sustainable measures. This includes:

Hereford Relief Road Interim Forecasting Report Addendum: Reduced Housing and Employment Option, November 2012

Hereford Multi-Modal Transport Model Hereford Local Plan Core Strategy Modelling Specification, April 2013

Local Plan Core Strategy Modelling Non-Technical Summary, June 2103

These can be viewed on the council’s website at:

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/download/593/relief_road_studies_documents

Question 19

Ms M Setterfield, Hereford

Reading this report, it is still astonishing how many of our journeys in Hereford, clogging up our roads and polluting our air, are so very short. Following the Government’s recent report “Gear Change– a bold vision for cycling and walking” and their promise of substantial funding for 12 areas outside London, is Herefordshire Council going to bid to benefit as one of these mini-Holland schemes, with a main focus on replacing short car trips?

Response

The council is aware of the commitment made by government to ‘choose up to 12 willing non-London local authority areas, to benefit from intensive investment in mini-Holland schemes’ and would intend to make a submission subject to reviewing the detailed guidance for the programme once it becomes available.

Question 20**Mr A Morawiecki, Breinton**

The Transport Strategy Review (page 61) says that the Hereford Transport Model takes account of some effects of induced demand but “is not capable of estimating any longer distance transfers which may occur as a result of interventions carried out within the City. As such, there is a further possibility that the congestion relief benefits which are predicted for all packages may be slightly overestimated”. The Western Bypass has previously been promoted by Herefordshire Council and Highways England as a way for the A49 to take traffic from the M5/M6 motorway network and contribute to Highways England’s growth targets. The induced traffic effect is greatest when new road capacity is provided. What increase in extra journeys/congestion will occur on each new road scheme included in the options, particularly that coming from the current motorway network?

Response

The magnitude of induced traffic occurring as a result of the different packages is a function of the amount of ‘relief’ which the package would provide. This relief is largest for the new road schemes but the risk of some induced traffic occurring exists with all six combinations which have been assessed. As acknowledged above, we have not been able to model the likely volume of induced traffic for any of the packages being assessed, although believe the effects would be small. For example, journeys from Cardiff to Birmingham and the north of England will remain quicker via the M4 and M5 route even if a western bypass was constructed. Clearly there will be some journeys at the margin who may divert to the A49 (eg Cardiff to Chester) but these are comparatively small in number.

Supplementary

The WSP & Rand report for the Dept for Transport Nov 2018 “Induced Travel Demand” concluded that models often understated the impact of induced demand vs evidence from actual case studies once new roads created extra capacity.

The same report also concluded that evidence on the existence of induced demand means that it needs to be properly accounted for in appraisal of capacity improvements to the Strategic Road Network.

WSP have been working with Herefordshire Council and Highways England on increasing the capacity on the A49 for years and yet it appears that they have not yet followed their own advice to properly account for induced demand. As Mott Macdonald have identified, are WSP biased towards road building projects so that they chose not to follow their own advice on accounting for induced demand during this transport review?

Response

Mr Revill responded that he was not sure where it was suggested Mott Macdonald had identified WSP was biased towards road building projects.

Mr Brookes denied any bias. Within its report WSP had included some of the elements normally included in the definition of induced traffic. Some elements had not been included because they were incredibly difficult to include. One example under the theory would be that if sufficient congestion relief is created in a particular location some people not making any journeys whatsoever would suddenly decide to make a car journey. That element had not been included. Other elements had been such as people changing the time of the journey they

would make. The model was able to model that some people were currently avoiding the peak period because of excessive congestion and travelling just outside the peak period. They would revert to the peak period if congestion relief was created. The report explained what elements had been included and what had not.

Question 21

Dr K Jamieson, Cawdor, Ross-on-Wye

Building roads is totally the wrong thing to be doing if we are to contain climate change. Herefordshire Council has agreed an aspiration for the county to reach net zero carbon in 2030. The embodied carbon emissions from constructing a large scheme like the Western Bypass would deny any chance of reaching that goal. Can the committee please seek an explanation as to why the short list of packages presented to this meeting includes the bypass, a scheme which is entirely at odds with Council's declaration of climate emergency?

Response

See answer provided to Question 1.

Question 22

Mr A Richards, Hereford

Much is made of the constraint on the REZ due to the Local Development Order agreed with Highways England, capping vehicle movements from the REZ onto the A49. Highways England have previously identified that much of the congestion on the A49 in Hereford is due to short trips, many of which could be made by modes other than by car. Highways England have £100million to improve walking/cycling infrastructure along the strategic road network in order to tackle local congestion in places like Hereford. What work/reports have been done between Herefordshire Council officers and Highways England on the A49 in Hereford to introduce such active travel measures, particularly on the A49 in the South Wye areas, so as to gain headroom on the vehicles cap, at no cost to local taxpayers?

Response

Herefordshire Council have been in discussion with Highways England for a number of years to identify locations on the strategic road network where improvements could be made for walking and cycling along and across their roads. Schemes alongside or adjacent to the A49 corridor have been identified and some schemes have already been delivered at Holmer, Holme Lacy Road and Ross Road junction. The council has put forward a package of measures to Highways England under its Designated Funds programme and look forward to their response

The council has also been progressing active travel schemes in the south Wye area on the local highway network to support improved active travel to and within the Hereford Enterprise Zone, supported by grant funding from the Marches LEP and local transport plan grant (provided by DfT and allocated by the council in accordance with local priorities).

Supplementary

Thank you for explaining how many walking/cycling schemes have been delivered and are in discussion with Highways England. What reduction in congestion is forecast to be achieved through the improvements referred to and in particular on the traffic volumes on the A49 in Hereford?

Response

A written response would be given. The A49 was a long road and the extent of congestion relief would be different at different locations, and different depending on what packages were under consideration.

It was observed that the question may well refer to the designated funds projects the council had been working on with Highways England. This would be picked up in any written response.

Written Response

The measures referred to in the original response comprise schemes taken forward by Highways England as stand alone projects and further schemes being considered by Highways England as part of the designated funds project. Whilst we do not have modelling information for these schemes Highways England have advised that they use the active mode toolkit to appraise potential cycling/active mode schemes:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907393/active-mode-appraisal-toolkit.xlsx.

Whilst this appraisal is primarily concerned with the health benefits of people using an active mode, it does include a congestion benefit element and we should be able to share information with you when Highways England has undertaken its appraisal of the schemes.

Question 23

Ms N Eyles, Hereford

- It is accepted by this Review that any bypass will result in only a 7% reduction of traffic flow into the city (Any new housing would soon cancel out this improvement)
- The Review shows clearly in two maps that the main transport routes in the region lie to the EAST of Hereford
- The views of questionnaire respondents appear to have been ignored when choosing the route for the Western bypass between A465 and the river Wye
- The strategy sets out to reduce the impact of “pollutants protecting, conserving and enhancing Herefordshire’s built environment”. The selected option of the Western RED route ignores the fact that the route lies upwind of Hereford and comes within 150m of an existing housing development
- Why has the RED route not been discarded outright, and once and for all, in this Strategy Review?

Response

See response to question 1 and question 9.

Question 24

Mrs C Protherough, Clehonger

The proposals to invest in bus services (package B) are welcome, particularly if they can help shift school traffic away from cars. The report says, “Package B focuses on improved public transport and this is considered to support older people and disabled people.” Can the committee please ask why the bus package is excluded from the package groups that include roads? These package groups develop active travel and car travel but ignore buses – they ought to recognise the needs of residents who don’t want to switch from a car to ‘active travel’

for all their journeys, especially older people, who make up 24 % of the population, and disabled people, but also young people who are not car drivers.

Response

The transport modelling undertaken during the option assessment indicated that the road schemes would lead to reduction in bus patronage as some people (who had the choice) would travel by car instead of by bus. Accordingly, it was not considered sensible to combine the bus options with new road links as this would not be an effective use of investment. The committee may wish to explore this issues further in their questioning.

Supplementary

I am very pleased to see that the existence of the needs of disabled and older people are recognised in places in the report, but would remark that these, along with financially disadvantaged groups, are the very people who may be unable to travel independently by car instead of bus, whatever scheme is decided. I wonder what thought is being given to creative, convenient methods of enabling people with mobility difficulties to get around once they arrive at destinations within the city, and whether organisations of or for such groups of the population will be involved in ongoing consultation on these?

Response

As preferred packages were selected and developed there would be consultation with key stakeholder and user groups.

Question 25

Mr R Board, Hereford

From the "Hereford Relief Road - Economic and Business Impacts Study (2011)" The Western Bypass gave a benefit cost ratio of 12.6 demonstrating very high value for money, possibly creating an extra 3,187 additional jobs and an estimated Gross value added of £130 million by 2031. The report also states the positive benefits it would have on other key employment sites such as three elms and westfields.

Given that the "Hereford Transport Strategy Review" has now ruled out a full eastern bypass and that the review doesn't give benefit cost analysis on each of the options, how can a decision be made on what is the best option to go forward with as the Business impact of each is not known.

Response

The review report includes an assessment of how well each package performs against a range of economy indicators, alongside indicators for climate emergency, environment and social in order to gain a rounded view of each package. It is important to assess each package on a consistent and comparable basis and it is not appropriate to undertake analysis at the level suggested above in developing transport strategies. Also, the methodology for calculating 'wider economic impacts' has changed since 2011, and would typically only be undertaken when seeking monies from funding bodies.

Question 26**Mr T Meadows, Hereford**

Previously Herefordshire Council reported that transport measures would reduce journey times. Reports now say that new roads will reduce congestion. As Hereford is the main destination of the majority of vehicles on the city's roads, please explain how the different, proposed road options as stand-alone transport measures would reduce journey times on all key routes into Hereford, especially when induced demand is included in the modelling.

Response

All transport options were assessed individually in the early stages of the review, and it was concluded that no individual schemes, including road options, should be taken forward as stand alone measures as they did not meet sufficient package objectives. As such the Review incorporates the road schemes within wider packages and illustrates how those packages help reduce journey times. Road schemes are included in packages A+C+D, A+C+E and A+C+F and the forecast journey time reductions range from 5% to 7%.

The approach to dealing with induced traffic is described at page 61 of the review.

Supplementary

Package A+B+C reduces congestion by 15%, and journey times by 4%. Percentages are meaningless when the majority of journeys in Hereford are short trips eg. a 5% cut in journey time on a 15minute car ride is just $\frac{3}{4}$ of a minute, 7% cut is 1minute. As Page 61 says the Hereford Transport Model makes no allowance for all the aspects of induced demand, and so "congestion relief benefits may be slightly overestimated, particularly in the longer term". WSP & Rand reported in 2018, that the induced traffic effect is greater where additional road capacity is provided in locations with high congestion levels. If the full effects of induced demand were provided in the Hereford Transport Model, please state what would be the average journey time saving in minutes in Hereford on each of the key routes into the city?

Response

One of the indicators considered was journey times on 4 key routes into and out of the city (in both directions): north to south, east to west, north east to south west, and north west to south east. So there was information on journey times for each of the six transport packages considered. There was a caveat over induced traffic. Some elements were not included. The report stated that the congestion relief benefits may be slightly overstated particularly in the longer term, as quoted within the supplementary question.

Question 27**Ms J Furniss**

Much is made of the constraint on the REZ due to the Local Development Order agreed with Highways England, capping vehicle movements from the REZ onto the A49.

Highways England have previously identified that much of the congestion on the A49 in Hereford is due to short trips, many of which could be made by modes other than by car.

Highways England have £100million to improve walking/cycling infrastructure along the strategic road network, in order, to tackle local congestion in places like Hereford.

What work/reports have been done between Herefordshire Council officers and Highways England on the A49 in Hereford to introduce such active travel measures, particularly on the

A49 in the South Wye areas, so, as to gain headroom on the vehicles cap, at no cost to local taxpayers?

Response

See response to Q22

Supplementary

Of the walking and cycling infrastructure proposed by the Transport Review how much of this is to be delivered by Highways England alongside the A49 and what would the cost saving from the total £54 million cost to Herefordshire Council be if Highways England were to fund it?

Response

It was too early to determine what proportion would be funded by Highways England. The funding required was significant. The Council would in normal circumstances expect Government funding in some form to support that level of investment. As Highways England was responsible for the A49 it would be expected they would make a contribution but it was too early to say.

Question 28

Mr P Griffiths, Hereford

A figure of 29% congestion relief is suggested for the western bypass in Appendix B whereas Appendix A (page 114) estimates that the western bypass delivers a 21% "reduction in flows on roads in the AQMA". Then in Appendix A page 82 we see that Package A+C+D incorporating the western bypass will reduce journey times along key corridors by 7%. How do these forecasts relate to the finding that only 7% of road traffic in Hereford is through traffic?

Response

For accuracy, the 29% referred to is found on page 123 of Appendix C (referring to Package A+C+D), page 114 is in Appendix B (referring to the western bypass only), and page 82 again refers to Package A+C+D.

Both Package A+C+D and the western bypass in isolation would affect the journey patterns of more journeys than just through traffic, leading to the changes in traffic flows and journey times quoted in the report. For example, the western bypass would be used by some traffic which starts their journey to the south of the river but wishes to travel to somewhere in the north western part of the city. The model results show the net results of all these movements in combination.

Question 29

Mr Price

This administration stopped the building of the South Wye Link Road to do this review and in doing so lost the funding for this essential project. The peer review has cleared the processes and decisions taken in bringing this project to the build stage.

Will the scrutiny committee investigate and probe, why the SWLR is not now included as an option on its own, as it is essential to either an eastern or western river crossing?

Response

The planning consent for the Southern Link Road was preserved by undertaking initial works and this review is considering the future of the scheme. The decision regarding progressing the initial site works to preserve planning consent can be viewed at:

<http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=6101>

The southern link road (SLR) was included in the review as part of the western (option 14). It was not included as an option on its own as the bypass (including the SLR) represents the council's adopted strategy and it was important that the review was able to compare the current strategy with alternative options.

The SLR does however remain an option for the council to progress on its own and the draft recommendations for cabinet (as set out in the scrutiny report) allow for cabinet to determine to progress the SLR.

MEMBER QUESTIONS TO GENERAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 9 NOVEMBER 2020Question 1**Councillor Jeremy Milln – Central ward**

Many cities sited on major rivers augment their transport needs with water buses; closest to Hereford being perhaps Cardiff's which ply the Taff between the Bay and the city centre. Some European cities have emission-free electric water buses of shallow draught and little wake, essential on rivers with low summer flows and high environmental qualities such as ours. Heather Hurley's Herefordshire River Trade (2013) and Marsha O'Mahony's River Voices (2018), document the Wye as Hereford's HGV artery until the Railway, with passenger ferries, able to cope with its dynamic behaviour, running almost to our own time.

Although its potential as an E-W transport corridor connecting the riverside communities of Belmont, Broomy Hill, Hunderton, Greyfriars, St Martins, St James, Hinton, Putson, Lower Bullingham, Eign, Hampton and Rotherwas was not evaluated by the Study, would there be interest in doing so now?

Response

Whilst a proposal for a water bus did not come forward in the review consultation General scrutiny committee will be invited to consider this suggestion and make a suitable recommendation for cabinet to consider.

Supplementary

Given that the Review Terms of Reference, published in January, had asked the Consultants to consider all transport modes, but overlooked this one, I am delighted to hear that General Scrutiny Committee may consider the electric water bus as part of the sustainable transport mix for Hereford.

Could I ask that if GSC is minded to recommend Cabinet take the suggestion further, it is done so with specialist technical and operational understanding of such a service; its potential to meet Core Strategy objectives for sustainable transport, place-making, environment and economic development (including tourism); and how it may relate to initiatives coming forward under the Stronger Towns programme?

Response

The Chairperson commented that this would be something for the Committee to bear in mind during its discussion.

Question 2**Councillor Nigel Shaw – Bromyard Bringsty ward**

How does the report evidence that the relevant revenue costs of suggested proposals can be met from the revenue budget projected by the MTFs, including the decapitalised £15.2m, particularly in light of anticipated reductions in business rates income and other pressure on reserves during the next few years?

Response

The review sets out high level costs estimates (revenue and capital) for strategic transport packages. However, it does not say that the revenue costs can be met by existing budgets. Nor does it indicate that any capital costs have confirmed funding. It does indicate the potential sources of funding which might cover revenue and capital costs.

As is set out in the report to scrutiny, following identification of a preferred strategy further development work would be required to develop the package proposals in greater detail which would include:

- feasibility and more detailed costings of package elements
- development of the delivery programme
- preparation of funding bids

This will allow for scheme costings to be reviewed, funding sources to be considered and bids developed in support of the package. It would also provide cabinet with sufficient detail for it to allocate council revenue and capital funding and/or seek external funding.

No decision has been taken yet which requires the decapitalisation of the two road schemes. The capital spend to date for both transport packages is £12.2m, of this £0.8m was spent on acquiring assets that will remain eligible capital spend regardless of the outcome of the review. Therefore, the maximum decapitalised costs is £11.4m.

Supplementary

Thank-you for the response to my question, I appreciate that the additional £3.8m making £15.2m is the sum which Shropshire Council's 151 officer claims is due back to the LEP from Herefordshire Council.

Would the committee be able to confirm the action which will crystallise the recapitalisation of the £11.4m of revenue funding in our accounts?

Response

Because the council had chosen to pause and review the western bypass it was still capitalised. When the pause was revisited or the ongoing review was revisited consideration would be given to the accountancy treatments. If the review stopped the criteria would no longer be met and the sum would have to be returned to revenue.

Question 3

Councillor Phillips – Arrow ward

Any transport strategy must be intrinsically linked to the Core Strategy of the Council. Although the Core strategy was listed within the economy key policy context, there appears to be very little if any reference to the core strategy including impacts to the regeneration zones, place shaping outside of Hereford and actions supporting economic prosperity of 87% of small businesses employing 10 or fewer staff (pg 40 of report pack). As a greater proportion of people are now working from home with 2/3rds of the population living outside of Hereford, why was greater focus not given to the core strategy within the review?

Response

The review does take into account the core strategy's land use and growth policies. Modelling which has helped inform assessment of transport packages assumes the delivery of housing and other developments in accordance with core strategy commitments to 2026.

Qualitative assessment has also been undertaken to consider how package options impact on access to the sustainable urban extensions, enterprise zone and other new development in Hereford. This is included as indicator 6.1 within the review.

Whilst it is true that the study focusses on the transport challenges within Hereford, reference has been made in the assessment to the accessibility provided to areas such as Three Elms, Lower Bullingham, Holmer West and the Enterprise Zone (eg page 125 in relation to Package A+C+F).

In addition, the Core Strategy is to be subject to an update to look beyond its current end date of 2031. The form of this update is uncertain given the radical changes to the planning system proposed in the Planning White Paper, but the update will provide an opportunity to look again at the existing spatial strategy and land use policies and the transport review will provide key evidence to support this process.

Supplementary

Thank you for the reply which I think seems to confirm the importance of aligning housing, economic and transport strategies.

Can scrutiny today reaffirm the importance of that alignment and request a timeline of the three strategies be published as soon as possible to give clarity to the residents and businesses of Herefordshire?

Response

The Chairperson commented that this would be a matter for the Committee to consider.

Question 4

Councillor Bolderson – Wormside ward

All the options presented are extremely Hereford centric and there is not enough focus on the 2/3rds of the population who live outside of Hereford. Page 55 of the report pack has a map of Herefordshire's Strategic Highway Network. There is no infrastructure linking the south-east to the south-west. Page 53 also highlights that 65% of commuters from south-west villages travel to jobs in the city.

Every parish within Wormside is concerned with rat running, speeding and road safety. I would like to understand why the South Wye Transport Package was not considered in its own right as an option particularly as it could help resolve road safety concerns within my Ward and is fundamental in alleviating the caps on future growth at the Hereford Enterprise Zone plus the delivery of houses in line with Policy HD6.

Response

The South Wye Transport Package contains both active travel measures and the Southern Link Road. The active travel measures have been subsumed within Package A (focus on walking and cycling) and the Southern Link Road is included as part of

Package A+C+D (as part of the western bypass). The Southern Link Road was also included as part of Option 15a (full eastern bypass with Southern Link Road).

Following consultation, it was considered that separating out the active travel elements from the new road scheme would provide greater insight as to the relative merits of the different approaches available to address Hereford's transport challenges.

The SLR does however remain an option for the council to progress on its own and the draft recommendations for cabinet (as set out in the scrutiny report) allow for cabinet to determine to progress the SLR.

Supplementary

A greater proportion of people are now working from home. With two thirds of the population living outside Hereford, the report does not appear to consider the amount of traffic using alternative routes and rat runs to avoid Hereford. We all know how treacherous the Madley/Bridge Sollars route can be plus the levels of traffic going over the Mordiford Bridge. Before Covid we had almost 2,500 cars a day using Haywood Lane and Knockerhill Lane. When the Planning and Regulatory Committee went to Much Dewchurch Members took their lives in their own hands as the Committee saw lorry after lorry mount the kerb in order to get through the village. Since Covid my parishioners are telling me that speeding and road safety has got even worse and it is a topic at every single meeting of all five of my parish councils which covers about 80 square kilometres of the County. I would like to better understand how the transport strategy will address these pervasive road safety and rat running issues and improve the lives of the people living in the rural south.

Response

The Chairperson commented that the Committee would need to bear in mind in its discussion that the review had implications beyond the City itself.