

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 7 FEBRUARY 2014

Question from Miss R Stanier, Hereford

Question 1

Financing of Proposed Energy-from-Waste Facility at Hartlebury

I gather that it is proposed to borrow 40 million pounds to finance an energy-from-waste incinerator at Hartlebury.

Please let me know how the public will be able to track the actual cost of the incinerator during both the construction and usage phases. Could you let me know which headings to look for in the council budget and accounts, please? The arguments for the energy-from-waste incinerator are based on value for money, so it is necessary to see clearly how this is achieved.

I tried to comment using your on-line budget consultation, but I could not find any reference to the Energy from Waste project under either Public Health or Finance.

Question from Mrs E Jones, Herefordshire

Question 2

Medium Term Financial Strategy

Herefordshire Council plan to allocate £40million towards the planned incinerator in Worcestershire. To ensure that this can be considered value for money, how does HC plan to mitigate for the various negative impacts? Some of these are changes in legislation which may happen in the very near future. Others are outlined in the Business Case Lite 2009 such as the 'inability to import waste from outside of the two counties', 'mass burn efw technology becoming outdated and deemed redundant as a means of ensuring sustainable waste management for public authorities', site specific costs which it is stated could add considerably to the overall costs, foreign exchange rates etc.'

Question from Ms L Brookes, Herefordshire

Question 3

Incinerator/recycling costs

Herefordshire's Mid Term Financial Strategy is about to commit an extra £1.5 million pounds from other budgets to help finance an incinerator, yet 68% of waste is organic and can be treated for between £27 to £80 per tonne. Recycling can pay £26 per tonne and much more waste can be recycled, so is the Council convinced that paying £123 per tonne to burn waste, and increasing Herefords share of costs is good value for money and if so why?

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Question from Mr S Tranter, Herefordshire

Question 4

Finance

y questions relates to the Medium Term Financial Strategy, regarding the extra monies that will be required to finance the incinerator in Hartlebury, to be paid for by Prudential Borrowing till 2042.

On the assumption that the Cabinet made themselves aware of the KPMG report written for Hereford's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and of any limitations of the Deloitte financial document put before the Joint Cabinet on the 12th December 2013, for example "We do not take responsibility for the Mercia's financial models and have not audited or otherwise verified them." I ask: Why are you prepared to take the risk of being tied into Prudential Borrowing with Worcestershire till 2042 with the associated risk that this will have to be shown on your balance sheet and could easily create problems with raising funds for more pressing services?

Question from Mr R Wilden, Herefordshire

Question 5

What assurance has Herefordshire Council received from Worcestershire County Council regarding Herefordshire's ability to opt-out of the waste contract in 2023?