

## Public questions to Council – 25 September 2015

### Question from Mrs V Wegg-Prosser, Breinton

Question 1

#### Understanding Herefordshire and the awaited Local Transport Plan

The Council's Local Transport Plan expired in March 2015 and its most recent LTP Progress Report covers the years 2012/13. The Travel Choice surveys on travel to primary and secondary schools have been discontinued. However, the most recent edition of 'Understanding Herefordshire, July 2015' reports that only 1 in 4 people in the County own a car. It also states (according to the notes presented to Cabinet on 23/7/15) that Herefordshire needs to ensure a 'system-level perspective on health and transport planning'. Can the Cabinet member responsible for transport planning please confirm that this emphasis on a system level perspective on health and transport planning will inform the new Local Transport Plan and that the Council's Integrated Public Transport Unit has adopted this perspective so that health and transport outcomes are related?

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### Question from Ms C Protherough, Clehonger

Question 2

#### Retention of highest grade agricultural land.

In view of the on-going consideration of the future of Herefordshire Council's small holdings estate, due to be decided on 5th November, what measures are likely to be taken to ensure that the highest grade of agricultural land for food production is retained and that young people are encouraged into this important sector of the local economy?

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### Question from Ms K Sharp, Hereford

Question 3

#### School travel plans and traffic reduction

On its website under 'School travel plans and sustainability', Herefordshire Council states that, "We're working to cut the number of car journeys to school and improve safety. We want to cut congestion and pollution, as well as allowing more pupils to get regular exercise by walking or cycling to school."

When "school run" traffic makes up over 50% of peak time vehicle movements in the City of Hereford, and when there is an increase in childhood obesity, could the Cabinet member please explain what progress has been made on delivering these excellent aims in the last 4 years?

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### Question from Mrs E Morawiecka, Breinton

Question 4

#### Housing land supply

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Herefordshire Council reports in continuing planning applications across the County that it still has no 5 year housing land supply. The Assistant Director – Economic, Environment and Cultural Services reported to the Planning Inspector admitted in March 2015 that a number of planning approvals had been omitted from the calculation of the 5 year housing land supply. In the continued absence of the Annual Monitoring Report for the planning department would the Cabinet member please confirm exactly how many new homes have been granted approval by for development since March 2014?

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### **Question from Mr D King, Tillington**

Question 5

#### **Government funding reductions**

The Leader of the Council said, as recorded by the Council Minutes of 17 July 2015, that there were “financial pressures including an expected reduction in Government Grant, which was currently £35m pa to zero by 2020.” As a consequence the Council is preparing service cuts which will impact on the residents of Herefordshire. What is the evidence that Government Grant will be reduced from £35m pa to zero by 2020?

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### **Question from Mr J Harrington, Herefordshire**

Question 6

#### **Alternatives to road building**

In light of the documented offer made by the Highways Agency, to carry out a micro-simulation at no cost to Herefordshire Council (estimated at £30 000), to assess whether or not traffic light removal from the Asda/Belmont junction (previously a roundabout) and other Highways Agency controlled junctions would reduce congestion by making maximum use of the existing road capacity ( as it has in other UK towns and Cities), can the Cabinet and in particular, Cllr Phillip Price, tell me why in times of austerity this free offer was not accepted or progressed further, in line with DfT guidelines requesting authorities explore all sustainable alternatives to road building first?

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### **Question from Mr R Palgrave, How Caple**

Question 7

#### **Southern link road**

Council has failed to show that SLR provides best value for money compared to alternative measures for tackling road congestion in South Wye; and their consultant on this development, Parsons Brinkerhoff, has admitted that they wrongly claimed that SLR was necessary for the delivery of the Enterprise Zone.

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Given that Council is looking to make significant budget cuts and is currently paying over £16million in capital repayments and interest on loans, what justification is there to spend a further £600,000 of taxpayer's money with Parsons Brinkerhoff to try to make a case for the SLR?