

**Members' questions at Council – 25 September 2015**

**Question from Councillor C Chappell**

**Staff redundancies**

Question 1

Can the cabinet member confirm:

- a) how many council employees have been made redundant in the last six months
- b) what the total financial saving is to the council of these redundancies, and please give a breakdown of financial saving by directorate/service area
- c) how many assistant directors and service heads have been made redundant and what is the total cost of each redundancy package
- d) that these redundancies have not caused a breakdown in service delivery, especially in adult and children's services
- e) how many more redundancies does he envisage during the next six months?

**Answer from Councillor G Powell cabinet member economy and corporate services**

Answer to question 1

- a) From 1 April 2015 to 30 September 2015 there have been a total of 11 people who have left the council as redundant.
- b) The total net savings to the council over three years (i.e. three year savings less redundancy cost) by each directorate are as follows:
  - Adults and wellbeing = £282k
  - Childrens' wellbeing = £249k
  - Economy, communities and corporate = £401k
- c) One assistant director (and no heads of service) has been made redundant in the six months to 30 September. In addition to payment in lieu of notice and the usual termination payments relating to outstanding leave, the redundancy payment was £2,137.
- d) All redundancies have been undertaken in line with the council's managing change policy and procedure and subject to undertaking a full consultation process with staff, trade unions and key stakeholders involved to ensure service changes are fully considered, equality impact assessments are completed, and risks identified and mitigated before the changes are implemented to ensure there is no breakdown in service delivery. That is not to say that overall there will be no impact on service levels and, as is the position across local government as resources reduce, levels of service may need to change accordingly.
- e) Whilst council finances nationally remain under pressure, it is not possible to give a confirmed figure. However, a further reduction of 5-7 managers is currently proposed as part of the economy, communities and corporate directorate senior manager change process, and the directorate leadership team will work with each other to achieve this target. Savings plans will need to be reviewed in line with the budget proposals and any potential workforce impact identified.

**Supplementary question**

Will the Cabinet Member publish the list of redundancies quarterly for councillors to be kept informed?

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**Answer by Councillor Powell**

I will consider whether some information can be included in the quarterly corporate performance report.

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**Question from Councillor B Matthews**

Question 2

**Old cattle market development**

I understand that the contract between the council and the developers of the old cattle market site granted them an option to purchase the car park adjoining the multi storey building. Can it be confirmed that that is the case, and if so is there any indication as to when they might take up this option?

**Answer from Councillor H Bramer, cabinet member contracts and assets**

Answer to question 2

The development agreement makes provision for a range of options to be exercised, which vary dependant on whether plans for phase 2 of the development are proposed and agreed within a period of five years from practical completion of the phase 1 site. There is at this time no indication of whether any of those options will be exercised.

**Supplementary question**

What is the sale price?

**Answer by Councillor Bramer**

I will provide a written answer

**Written Answer**

As indicated in my written response, the development agreement makes provision for a range of options to be exercised dependent on circumstances. Whilst the terms of the agreement remain commercially confidential I can confirm that the process by which a price would be determined is set out in the agreement.

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**Question from Councillor B Matthews**

Question 3

**Commercial vehicle parking**

I believe that it is time that some action was taken to discourage commercial vehicles from frequently parking on the footpaths and highways within the residential areas of the city and market towns. Not only are these vehicles unsightly, but they also cause untold damage to

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footpath and road surfaces, brought about by oil leaks and excessive weight. Could consideration be given to implementing on-street parking permits for such vehicles, to help discourage this unacceptable and unsafe practice?

**Answer from Councillor P Rone, cabinet member transport and roads**

Answer to question 3

Parking on footways causing an obstruction is an offence that can be enforced by the police and specific cases can be reported to them direct for action. Restrictions on where commercial vehicles can park can be introduced through appropriate traffic regulation orders for defined streets. I agree that this issue can be of concern to local residents. Balfour Beatty operate a process for considering requests for new traffic regulation orders and I would suggest that Councillor Matthews identify the areas where such restrictions would be beneficial and discuss the matter further with his locality steward.

**Supplementary question**

Will the cabinet member write to some of the large businesses asking for their co-operation in this matter?

**Answer by Councillor Rone**

The matter is not straightforward. I will, however, write to the larger businesses asking for greater consideration when parking.

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**Question from Councillor M Lloyd-Hayes**

Question 4

**Respite care**

On Tuesday 15 September, the Director of Children's Services, in a meeting attended by Councillor Lester, promised parents' representatives that a list existed of alternative overnight respite providers. Has this been given to them?

**Answer from Councillor J Lester, cabinet member young people and children's wellbeing**

Answer to question 4

The list, together with accompanying information which may be helpful to parents, is available online at:

[https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/media/8060080/herefordshire\\_short\\_breaks\\_provider\\_market\\_2015.pdf](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/media/8060080/herefordshire_short_breaks_provider_market_2015.pdf)

and we have notified those parents who had already expressed an interest.

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**Question from Councillor M Lloyd-Hayes**

Question 5

**Social care assessment**

Councillors might like to be aware that all children attending 1 Ledbury Road are having their needs reassessed at the moment. As the children's services directorate have been reassessing these children for the past 12 months, why do they feel the need to spend more time, and council money, reassessing them again?

**Answer from Councillor J Lester, cabinet member young people and children's wellbeing**

Answer to question 5

The expectation is that every child subject to a core assessment has that reviewed at least once a year. Not to do so would be not only remiss, but would also compromise our statutory responsibilities to support children in need. I would remind Members of the OFSTED inspection of 2014, which reminded the council to ensure that its obligations for children with disabilities are met.

**Supplementary Question**

Why do assessments have to be so frequent and involve so many social workers each time?

**Answer by Councillor Lester**

I note the point about the number of social workers and want this to be addressed. Assessments are necessary to ensure needs are being met.