

MINUTES of the meeting of Council held at Council Chamber, The Shire Hall, St Peter's Square, Hereford, HR1 2HX on Friday 18 December 2015 at 10.00 am

Present: Councillor DB Wilcox (Chairman)
Councillor PJ McCaull (Vice Chairman)

Councillors: PA Andrews, BA Baker, JM Bartlett, TL Bowes, H Bramer, CR Butler, ACR Chappell, MJK Cooper, PE Crockett, PGH Cutter, BA Durkin, PJ Edwards, CA Gandy, DW Greenow, KS Guthrie, J Hardwick, DG Harlow, EPJ Harvey, EL Holton, JA Hyde, TM James, JF Johnson, JLV Kenyon, JG Lester, MD Lloyd-Hayes, MN Mansell, MT McEvelly, SM Michael, PM Morgan, PD Newman OBE, FM Norman, CA North, RJ Phillips, GJ Powell, AJW Powers, PD Price, P Rone, AR Round, A Seldon, NE Shaw, WC Skelton, J Stone, EJ Swinglehurst, LC Tawn, A Warmington and SD Williams

36. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors WLS Bowen, AW Johnson, RI Mathews, RL Mayo and D Summers..

37. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Agenda item 10 – Appointment of vice-chairman of the general overview and scrutiny committee.

Councillor CA Gandy and Councillor AJW Powers declared pecuniary interests and left the meeting for the duration of this item.

Agenda item 7 – Notice of motion 2 – Additional 2% precept in respect of adult social care.

Councillor ACR Chappell declared a non-pecuniary interest for the motion because he was a care worker.

38. MINUTES

Councillor LW Tawn requested a correction to minute no 20 –he had declared a non-pecuniary interest not as a director of the Old Market but as an owner of a business at the Old Market.

RESOLVED:

- a) that the minutes of the meeting held on the 25 September 2015 as amended be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the chairman; and
- b) that the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on the 16 October be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the chairman.

39. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

The chairman offered congratulations to Councillor Lester and his wife on the birth of their daughter.

The chairman reported the receipt of three petitions relating to:

- Schools transport policy
- Road safety in Tump Lane, Much Birch Herefordshire
- Ross on Wye library

The chairman reported that on the 16 December he had facilitated visits by a group of young people to present a production of Frozen at the children's ward, Herefordshire Hospital, Brookfields, Black Marston School, Barrs Court School and the Martha Trust.

40. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

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.

41. PETITION FOR DEBATE - ROSS-ON-WYE LIBRARY

Council was asked to consider a petition received bearing more than 7,000 signatures and therefore requiring debate by Council.

Council debated the petition in accordance with the procedure set out on page 56 of the agenda papers.

The petition for Ross on Wye Library was presented by Clare West on behalf of the Ross Library Development Group and the following points were highlighted:

- the service is used by all ages
- the service and building is not just about books
- the building provides a public space for meetings.
- the service contributes to social cohesion
- the service provided internet access

Councillor H Bramer, cabinet member for contracts and assets, proposed the motion that: this Council be asked to formally respond to the petition, and in doing so particularly to consider sustaining a library service in Ross-on-Wye and other market towns working closely with the local community and library development groups.

The cabinet member commented that ongoing dialogue is continuing with user groups.

Councillor JA Hyde seconded the proposal.

In the course of the debate the following principal points were made:

- Any response by the executive should consider the county as a whole.
- Concerns were expressed that the existing service would be replaced by a less efficient and reduced model.

- Market town libraries also supported community/parish services.
- Library buildings did not have to be seen as only offering library services

The chairman thanked the Ross Library Development Group for the petition.

RESOLVED: That the executive be asked to formally respond to the petition, and in doing so particularly to consider sustaining a library service in Ross-on-Wye and other market towns working closely with the local community and library development groups.

42. NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDERS

Motion 1 - road markings

Councillor NE Shaw proposed the motion. The motion was seconded by councillor A Seldon.

Councillor Shaw highlighted that the current policy of waiting until work is required was not sufficiently responsive to public concerns about conditions. The motion if passed would enhance road safety.

In discussion the following principal points were made:

- The standard of road markings done in recent years had been of poor quality.
- The current method of requests for work through locality stewards was working and there must be a sensible approach taken with repairs with regard to costs.

Councillor P Rone cabinet member transport and roads confirmed that the motion only related to repairs to existing workings and was not a fast track for new road markings. Any new request would be required to go through the usual channels i.e. locality stewards.

The motion proposed that a: ‘...request by parish council, headmaster or emergency services officer *through* the ward councillor...’

An amendment was proposed to substitute the word ‘through’ with ‘copied’ with the view being that this amendment would enhance communication. The proposer of the motion confirmed that he was content with this amendment.

RESOLVED: The executive cabinet member responsible should reconsider the blanket approach in respect of road markings and special road treatments outside schools; fire, police and ambulance stations; pedestrian crossings and any other locations historically associated with serious or fatal accidents. That in such circumstances a request by a parish council, headmaster or emergency services officer copied to ward councillor be prioritised by our highways maintenance partner and delivery of an agreed scheme on the ground be effected within 3 calendar months unless delayed for reasons justified by the cabinet member responsible e.g. adverse weather, re-surfacing being scheduled within the next 12 months, closure or consolidation of a location, other traffic scheme (TRO or otherwise) being imminent.

Motion 2 – Additional 2% precept in respect of adult social care.

Councillor J Stone proposed the motion with a minor alteration to the wording of the motion which was seconded by councillor PA Andrews.

Councillor Stone made the following principal points:

- Any increase in council tax is never welcome however if this motion is not passed savings would have to be secured elsewhere which would increase existing pressures on other services.
- Hereford has a higher percentage of residents over the age of 65 compared to the national figure – 23% and 17% respectively.

In discussion the following principal points were made:

- The opportunity should be welcomed to use the extra money to maintain and improve services.
- The wider issue of care funding would not be solved by the additional 2% levy and other actions would continue to be required including delivery of savings and increasing economic growth in the county.
- There should be clear demonstration of how the extra money should be spent.
- The additional costs of service delivery in rural areas should be recognised.

RESOLVED: This Council requires the executive to consider accepting the additional 2% precept in respect of adult social care. In making its recommendations to Council the executive is requested to consider how this money can be best used to protect services, continue to further transform our local health and social care system, reduce demand and ensure improved services for some of the most vulnerable citizens now and in the future.

Motion 3 – Supplementary planning document: Intensive livestock units.

The motion was proposed by Councillor AJW Powers and seconded by Councillor FM Norman

Councillor Powers made the following principal points:

- the local planning authority must have robust policies in place;
- there would be little or no cost in developing a suitable policy;
- a robust policy would avoid appeals and associated costs.

Cllr Norman spoke in support of the motion noting that without robust policies in place the authority could be vulnerable to legal appeals.

Councillor P Price, cabinet member infrastructure, in responding to the motion, noted that most of the issues were addressed in the core strategy, and proposed the following amendment which was seconded by councillor Swinglehurst:

- a) *Should it be found that the new policies in the adopted core strategy plus those to be included in the minerals and waste development plan document are not adequate to address matters of:*

*public and residential amenity
waste and manure management*

*impacts on surface and ground waters
landscape and visual impacts
traffic movements, volumes and highway safety*

Then the Executive be asked to develop – with officers, members and key stakeholders – a Supplementary Planning Document for intensive livestock units (and related forms of development)

- b) *This Supplementary Planning Document goes through the appropriate consultation and decision-making channels before being adopted.*

In discussing the amendment the following principal points were made:

- The county had experienced an increasing number of poultry related planning applications.
- Without a robust policy the council could leave itself vulnerable to possible legal appeals and the associated costs.
- Whilst understanding the sentiments behind the motion most issues were already addressed in the core strategy.

The amendment was carried with 27 votes for, 18 against and one abstention.

A named vote was then held on the substantive motion.

For (30): Councillors, BA Baker, JM Bartlett, H Bramer, CR Butler, MJK Cooper, PGH Cutter, BA Durkin, CA Gandy, DW Greenow, KS Guthrie, DG Harlow, EL Holton, JA Hyde, JF Johnson, JLV Kenyon, JG Lester, MT McEvelly, PM Morgan, PD Newman, CA North, RJ Phillips, GJ Powell, P Price, PD Rone, NE Shaw, WC Skelton, J Stone, EJ Swinglehurst, DB Wilcox and SD Williams.

Against (12): Councillors, PA Andrews, TL Bowes, EPJ Harvey, TM James, MD Lloyd-Hayes, MN Mansell, SM Michael, FM Norman, AJW Powers, A Seldon, LC Tawn, and A Warmingington.

Abstentions (6) Councillors ACR Chappell, PE Crockett, PJ Edwards, J Hardwick, PJ McCaull, and AR Round.

RESOLVED: That

- (a) **Should it be found that the new policies in the adopted core strategy plus those to be included in the minerals and waste development plan document are not adequate to address matters of:**

- **public and residential amenity**
- **waste and manure management**
- **impacts on surface and ground waters**
- **landscape and visual impacts**
- **traffic movements, volumes and highways safety**

then the executive be asked to develop – with officers, members and key stakeholders – a supplementary planning document for intensive livestock units (and related forms of development.

- (b) This supplementary planning document goes through the appropriate consultation and decision making channels before being adopted.**

43. PROPOSED CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2016/17

The deputy leader of the council presented the draft capital programme for 2016/17 to 2019/20 inclusive, as proposed by cabinet on 3 December 2015.

In the course of the discussion the following principal points were made:

- Confirmation would be provided regarding the mechanism for valuation of Brockington prior to sale.
- Car parking places were being reduced during construction of the link road and consideration could be given to using Hereford Bus Station to develop additional parking facilities.
- Expenditure on smallholdings would be kept to a minimum pending disposal of the estate.
- A briefing would be provided on the impact of the sale of the smallholding estate on the debt to asset ratio.

RESOLVED: That the 2016/17 to 2019/20 capital programme as set out at in the report be approved.

44. REVISIONS TO THE COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME

Council was invited to approve revisions to the current council tax reduction (CTR) scheme as proposed by cabinet on 3 December 2015

In the course of the discussion the following principal point was made:

- Members were aware of struggling families and the council's hardship fund could be more widely publicised on the council website and by council staff.

RESOLVED: That

(a) the following revisions to the CTR scheme be approved:

- I. reduce the maximum level of CTR subsidy from 84% to 80% for certain claimants;**
 - II. protect CTR at 84% where the claimant is in receipt of either severe disability premium or carers allowance, or households with a child under the age of five;**
 - III. a claimant who lives in a property above band C would have their CTR capped at 80% of a band C equivalent property in their parish;**
 - IV. the amount of capital, excluding property, above which claimants cannot claim CTR be reduced from 16k to 6k and;**
- (b) the revised CTR scheme is implemented for the financial years 2016/17 and 2017/18.**

45. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE GENERAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillor CA Gandy and Councillor AJW Powers declared pecuniary interests and left the meeting for the duration of this item.

Nominations for the appointment of vice-chairman of the general overview and scrutiny committee were received as follows, and a vote held in accordance with the council procedure rules:

Councillor Gandy – proposed by councillor Morgan, seconded by councillor R Phillips

Councillor Harvey - proposed by councillor Powers, seconded by councillor Lloyd-Hayes.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Gandy be elected vice chairman of the general overview and scrutiny committee.

46. LEADER'S REPORT

The deputy leader of the council presented a report on the activities of cabinet since the meeting of Council in September.

In discussion the following principal points were made:

- Councillor Price, cabinet member for infrastructure, confirmed that there were ongoing discussions with Planning Officers on how to fund ongoing maintenance of public open spaces across the county established as part of new developments.
- Capital raised through asset disposal could not support revenue staffing costs but would contribute to the county as a whole.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

47. FORMAL QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS TO THE CABINET MEMBERS AND CHAIRMEN UNDER STANDING ORDERS

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.

The meeting ended at 1.00 pm

CHAIRMAN

Public questions to Council – 18 December 2015

Question from Mr P McKay, Leominster

Question 1

Highways records

A briefing note raised for general overview and scrutiny committee advised that access is to be improved to our highway records but at local access forum council's Balfour Beatty representative had little information other than that some statutory records would shortly be online. The Deregulation Act 2015 provisions can be expected to come into effect early next year with volunteers researching gaps and anomalies in the records, helping to bring them up to standard, so may I ask if :

1. Viewing the records over historic base maps could be made viewable at record office, this known to be available to Herefordshire Council officers but not online?
2. If viewing the Exponare public rights of way data with its written statement path termination information could be reinstated, this presumably still available, and useful information if researching gaps and anomalies?
3. If the list of anomalies and blue triangle location markers could be made viewable, again useful information if researching gaps and anomalies?
4. If definitive map modification order application's and road protocol applications could be shown on a map layer in addition to being listing in the register, this making them clearer to be seen by all?

Answer from Cllr P Rone, cabinet member transport and roads

I am pleased to report that the statutory records (definitive map, list of streets, streetworks register and local street gazetteer) are now available online at <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/beta/highways-maps>

Regarding your specific points:

1. I agree that making this information available online would be helpful and I have asked officers to investigate whether this is possible, subject to complying with the appropriate licencing restrictions
2. I can confirm that, subject to resolving any technical issues, officers will seek to make this available online
3. The data relating to anomalies is a working document open to misinterpretation and therefore not appropriate to publish this online. However, researchers may make an appointment with the Balfour Beatty Living Places public rights of way team to view the available data at the Thorn Offices in Hereford.
4. I agree that including this information as a map layer would aid clarity. Achieving this requires further digitisation work to be carried out.

Whilst we will continue to work to make as much information as possible available online it is important to note that there are resource implications to achieving this and, given the resource constraints and overall priorities for the service, I regret it is not possible to give any timescales for achieving this.

Supplementary Question

Now that the Street Works Register has been published, could you confirm that you have work in hand to self-register our highways that you are aware of for which you are not the street authority, which could be expected to include through routes in regular public use and cul-de-sac's leading to public places and to public paths mentioned on the written statements as road to which path connects, in conformance with your responsibility under s.4(5) of the 2007 Regulations, and if not what do you need to do this ?

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Answer from Cllr P Rone, cabinet member transport and roads

There is no specific project or planned work-stream to record additional highways of which the authority is aware but for which it is not the street authority. Should members of the public identify such routes they may submit an application, either for a Definitive Map Modification Order or one under the Council's Highways Records protocol, supported by suitable and sufficient evidence. All properly made applications will be prioritised and actioned accordingly. The "responsibility" set out in 4(5) of The Street Works (Registers, Notices, Directions and Designations) (England) Regulations 2007 comes into play in this regard once the Council becomes aware of such highways. The Council has established its Highways Records Protocol specifically to ensure that there is a suitable mechanism in place to enable people to make the Council aware. In short, to meet the responsibility, the Council needs members of the public to submit appropriately researched and evidenced applications.

Question from Mrs E Morawiecka, Breinton

Question 2

Southern link road

The Southern link road waste report is blank for the management of waste from the construction of this road. As waste spoil has been a significant problem with the Rotherwas Enterprise Zone, ESG development, the flood alleviation works, Asda, etc. would the cabinet member please explain what cost allowance has been made for the waste associated with this major infrastructure project and how this has been calculated, including types of waste, volumes of each waste and location of the appropriate waste handling sites?

Answer from Cllr P Price, cabinet member infrastructure

An appropriate allowance of around £900k for waste management has been made within the scheme cost estimate based on the level of scheme design with appropriate contingency allowance. The detailed calculations will be developed as the scheme progresses.

Question from Mrs V Wegg-Prosser, Breinton

Question 3

Hereford 2020

Hereford High Town, Hereford Butter Market, Hereford parking charges, Hereford Southern link road, and Hereford Skylon Park enterprise zone all seem to have been rolled into one masterplan, 'Hereford 2020', with its own website, and video insert 'blogs'. Could the cabinet member responsible for 'Hereford 2020' please explain what, at a time of cuts to public services making Hereford a less attractive place in which to live, is the justification for the allocation of £2.5 million to streetscape improvements in High Town, and describe the remit, terms of reference, budget and funding sources for 'Hereford 2020'.

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Answer from Cllr G Powell, cabinet member economy and corporate services

Question 3

Herefordshire is already a great place to live, to visit and to do business. Growing the local economy through investment in infrastructure will create new jobs and enable the building of new homes; key elements in the future prosperity of our county.

I believe that our historic cathedral city deserves a city centre of which we can be proud and the High Town refurbishment scheme is just one part of a package of initiatives, which will enable us to deliver that objective.

The High Town refurbishment scheme will support the economic growth of Hereford city centre by providing a more spacious and pleasurable environment. The scheme aims to achieve what the Old Market shopping centre and Widemarsh Street schemes have done and encourage even more visitors and shoppers to visit the city. Investment in high quality public realm schemes can make a major contribution to increasing footfall thereby supporting the economic growth of cities. The funding for the High Town refurbishment scheme will be taken from the Department for Transport annual grant and explains why the project is phased over an extended period of time.

“Hereford 2020” is a brand rather than a project in its own right. Hereford 2020 is an umbrella under which a number of projects can be collated and will change and evolve over time.

The web pages, developed in house, <http://www.hereford2020.com/> aim to bring together information about the major improvements planned in the city over the next five years. This website is a low cost way to provide a clear vision for the growth of the city and provide information about schemes such as the High Town refurbishment or city link road as they are developed. There is no dedicated budget because the information has been developed within existing resources. The website is enhanced by using photographs of the hoardings which are now in place around the new city link road site. The space on the hoarding was sold to generate income.

Question from Mrs J Morris, Hereford

Question 4

Local transport plan

With reference to the draft local transport plan policy, on page 16 it says in reference to bus services - "Subsidy is allocated to services on the basis of the relative costs of providing the service and rider-ship (cost per passenger). A service qualifies for subsidy if the cost per passenger is at, or below, a standard amount. This standard amount alters in line with budget availability. **At the time of writing (2012)** the rate is £4 per passenger."

Would the cabinet member confirm that the public are actually viewing the 2015 local transport plan and what the update, current 2015/16 standard rate, actually is per passenger?

Answer from Cllr P Price, cabinet member infrastructure

The correct version of the consultation draft local transport plan 2015 is on the council's website. I can confirm that the current rate per passenger guiding decisions on subsidy is £4 as per the draft document, reference to 2012 is a typographical error and should refer to 2015. Any comment received on the draft document will be considered in finalising the plan for adoption by Council.

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Supplementary Question

As the Local Transport Plan is for the next 16 years - what is the anticipated rate at which this standard rate will change?

Answer from Cllr P Price, cabinet member infrastructure

It is difficult to predict what the standard rate of change will be. However, consultation on the matter is planned with the rates to be reviewed annually.

Question from Dr N Geeson, Hereford

Question 5

Local transport plan

The local transport plan currently under public consultation includes a strategic environmental assessment (SEA) based on a list of objectives to protect the environment. Unfortunately this SEA is not new but is based on previous SEAs, including that for the core strategy, which was criticised for not recognising up-to-date baseline environmental data. Since the proposed Western relief road corridor crosses the River Wye SAC (that is a European designation) and SSSI, why does the council mention only very few environmental assets by the riverbank that might be affected, and consistently fail to recognise the scheduled ancient monument at the National Trust site of Breinton Springs, Breinton Wood ancient woodland, (designated a Local Wildlife Site), extensive landscaped parkland, and a local geological site at Red Rocks? If so much up-to-date environmental evidence is missing, surely this SEA, which is required both by European law and the national planning policy framework, cannot be either reliable or lawful?

Answer from Cllr P Price, cabinet member infrastructure

The evidence base for the strategic environmental assessment (SEA) for the local transport plan (LTP) is shared with the evidence base developed for the sustainability appraisal for the core strategy as both strategies include the same proposals in respect of major transport infrastructure such as the Hereford relief road. The issue about the evidence base being up to date and comprehensive with regard to the Breinton area was raised at the core strategy examination in public and considered by the inspector. The inspector concluded that the core strategy was robust in terms of its sustainability, had been subject to an adequate sustainability appraisal, and that the core strategy was sound. The council considers that the SEA for the LTP is also sound.

Supplementary Question

Special areas of Conservation like the River Wye are supposed to be protected by European legislation in the form of Habitats Regulations. In para 1,3,4 of the Strategic Environmental Assessment accompanying LTP4, I quote:

‘Herefordshire Council considers it unlikely that significant negative effects on European sites will occur from the LTP4’

Surely any new river crossing could not avoid production of significant negative effects, especially where there are scheduled monuments, Local Wildlife Sites and Local Geological sites, and surely a specific Habitats Regulations Assessment is needed.

Answer from Cllr Price

Evidence will be provided in due course.

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Question from Ms K Sharp, Hereford

Question 6

Enterprise zone employment

With the council making significant investment in the Rotherwas enterprise zone to support the creation of 4,000 new jobs, would the cabinet member please confirm how many additional, new jobs have been created on the zone (excluding those that have been transferred from other sites in Herefordshire)?

Answer from Cllr G Powell, cabinet member economy and corporate services

Five developments are complete on site. Companies occupying this new space are bringing 273 new jobs to Herefordshire over the first three years of occupation. Four more developments will be finished at the end of January, which will add to the jobs total.

A number of these developments are being constructed by local building contractors, boosting their businesses too.

The Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (MLEP) and the Enterprise Zone (EZ) board has always had a policy of welcoming growing local companies as well as seeking to attract businesses from further afield. Providing the right space in the right location for a local company allows them to expand and to employ more local people, and to build on and expand their established local supply chains.

In order to secure these jobs the EZ needs to prepare and provide infrastructure to sites so that the land is ready for investors to buy. They then build their new premises, occupy the buildings, and then over a period of time, create new job opportunities.

A major benefit of the zone's funding arrangements is that the business rates generated are recycled through the MLEP, with the council having a call on these funds to repay the infrastructure investment it is making. The MLEP is also supporting future growth of the zone by securing government funding for the A49 – A465 southern link road.

Question from Ms C Protherough, Clehonger

Question 7

Local transport plan

The LTP4 SEA para 4.6.30, shows that in 2009 the county's carbon footprint per capita was 16.2% higher than the rest of the UK. Since then the rest of the country has reduced its carbon footprint by 13% whilst Herefordshire has only reduced by 10%. With the council's plans for economic and housing growth across the county, including major new road infrastructure which is expected to increase car use, what are the forecast carbon emissions between now and 2031 and what amount is anticipated to come from transport within the county?

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Answer from Cllr P Price, cabinet member infrastructure

We do not have a breakdown for the county level of this projection, however government projections indicate that transport related carbon emissions will reduce nationally by 16% between 1990 and 2030. This compares with an overall projected reduction of 50% for the same period which indicates that whilst government expects transport carbon emissions to reduce over time they are unlikely to reduce at the same rate as the overall average.

The council has set a target of reducing co2 emissions by 80% on the 1990 base by 2050. The most recent emissions data would indicate that we are on track to achieving that target.

Question from Mr J Perkins, Hereford

Question 8

Southern link road

With the deadline of April 2016 fast approaching for providing a full business case to the Dept for Transport for the South Wye transport package, and planning permission for the Southern link road still outstanding, would the cabinet member please confirm that Herefordshire Council will be submitting a full business case for the sustainable transport measures that will tackle congestion in South Wye, ahead of any road building?

Answer from Cllr P Price, cabinet member infrastructure

April 2016 was a target date not a deadline. A full business case for the South Wye transport package (which comprises new link road and associated active travel measures) will be submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) before any road building.

Question from Ms P Churchward, Breinton

Question 9

Local transport plan

Given that the cabinet member has asked people to take time away from their Christmas preparations, holiday and family in order to meet the December 31st consultation deadline for the local transport plan 2016-2031, it would be helpful if he could provide specific examples of past LTP proposals that have been changed or introduced as a result of public consultation, particularly from the 2010 consultation on LTP3.

Answer from Cllr P Price, cabinet member infrastructure

I am pleased to note that some responses to the consultation have already been received; however the point made about the timing of the closing date is accepted and I can confirm that the deadline for receipt of responses has been extended to 5.00pm on Friday 29 January.

The following examples demonstrate the value of engaging in consultation:

- Respondents to the local transport plan (LTP) consultation in 2010 included the Hereford relief road as one of the top four transport priorities countywide. We have listened to this feedback and a Hereford relief road is now included in the draft LTP.

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- 71% respondents to the LTP consultation in 2012 said that we should target public transport subsidy to a core network, which we have done.
 - 63% respondents to the LTP consultation in 2012 said that road maintenance was important and supported a proactive approach. This was also supported in the 2012 Herefordshire quality of life survey which identified road and pavement repairs as areas most in need of improvement and a priority. In 2014 and 2015, the council has invested an extra £20m to fix the county's roads.
 - 59% respondents to the LTP consultation in 2010 said they supported more measures to encourage sustainable transport. We successfully bid for government funding to help deliver the £11million Destination Hereford project which has included the construction of the Connect 2 Hereford Greenway cycle bridge and route.
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Question from Ms D Toynbee, Eaton Bishop

Question 10

Destination Hereford

£11 million was allocated to the council for the Destination Project to April 2015, to develop low carbon transport and support sustainable economic growth in Hereford. Would the cabinet member detail how the final Destination Hereford package has performed against the targets of reduced congestion and increased rural access to public transport?

Answer from Cllr P Price, cabinet member infrastructure

The impact of the Destination Hereford project is currently being evaluated and will be reported to cabinet as part of the normal performance reporting process.

Question from Ms P Mitchell

Question 11

Local transport plan

The draft LTP4 policy document contains an ambitious and very welcome policy on active travel, aiming for cycling to account for 15% of all journeys in Hereford by 2032 (p 30). This is a very big difference from the share modelled in the 2014 Hereford transport strategy review which showed that by 2032 cycling would account for less than 5% of trips on Hereford's road network (table 3.8).

What modelling has the council undertaken since the Hereford transport strategy review report to analyse the impact of a 15% mode share for cycling in 2032 on a) the number of cars using the Hereford relief road, which the 2014 transport strategy review says will not be needed until 2027, and b) peak hour congestion in Hereford?

Answer from Cllr P Price, cabinet member infrastructure

The 15% target for cycling mode share by 2031 demonstrates our commitment to promoting sustainable modes of travel. As a target and not a forecast no modelling has been undertaken.

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Members' questions at Council – 18 December 2015

Question from Councillor J Bartlett

Support for victims of sexual violence

Question 1

The UK government opted into the EU directive (Article 9) establishing the minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime including rape, sexual violence and childhood sexual abuse. This was formally adopted on 4 Oct 2012 with member states having until the 16 Nov 2015 to implement the directive. Can the cabinet member confirm what steps have been taken to meet these requirements to provide effective specialist support to victims of sexual violence within Herefordshire?

Answer from Councillor G Powell cabinet member economy and corporate services

There are two specialist providers of support for victims of rape, sexual violence and childhood sexual abuse for victims in Herefordshire; West Mercia Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Centre (WMRSASC) <http://www.wmrsasc.org.uk/> and The Glade Sexual Assault Referral Centre (The Glade) <http://www.theglade.org.uk/>.

WMRSASC operates in Herefordshire and Worcestershire to offer specialist support to the victims of rape and sexual violence. Herefordshire services are free and available to survivors who have experienced any form of rape and/or sexual violence at any time in their lives. WMRSASC provides a telephone helpline for female and male survivors and their supporters, face to face counselling for survivors over the age of 11, an independent sexual violence advisory service for survivors over the age of 11, email support, signposting service and internal and external training. This service is funded by a police & crime commissioner grant and other grant awarding bodies.

The Glade, based in Bransford, Worcestershire is jointly funded by the Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and NHS England. It is a dedicated centre which provides a comprehensive service to men, women and children who have been raped or sexually assaulted in the previous 28 days.

Services can be accessed via the police or by self-referral. The Glade offers support from trained professionals and support options may include a forensic medical examination to gather and store evidence, if appropriate, referrals for ongoing and long term support, advice about pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections and referrals to the local genito-urinary medicine clinic for full sexually transmitted infection screening.

The Glade provides a counselling service to its clients. Where appropriate, and with the victims consent, The Glade may make referrals to sexual health services, independent sexual violence advisors), GPs and local organisations

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that offer counselling. If consent is given, The Glade may also share information anonymously with the police about the assault, on the victim's behalf.

Counselling support is available for children under 11 years via the children & adolescent mental health services commissioned by Herefordshire CCG.

For further information please refer to Herefordshire facts & figures.

<https://factsandfigures.herefordshire.gov.uk/about-a-topic/community-safety/sexual-offences.aspx#Vic>

Supplementary Question

Can the Cabinet Member confirm if the Worcester funding has stopped.

Answer

There is a comprehensive service in place and there are no plans for the service to be reduced

Question from Councillor A Powers

Support for cultural services

Question 2

In his House of Commons statement on the comprehensive spending review the Chancellor of the Exchequer said:

“One of the best investments we can make as a nation is in our extraordinary arts, museums, heritage, media and sport. £1 billion per annum adds £25 billion to our economy: not a bad return. Deep cuts are a false economy.”

Given this council's support for the county's City of Culture 2021 bid, given that the MP for Hereford and South Herefordshire is chair of the culture, media and sport select committee, and to avoid embarrassment to him and the county, will the cabinet member now recognise his chancellor's wisdom by honouring those words at local level and reversing the proposed cuts in funding to our libraries, museums and cultural services?

Answer from Councillor H Bramer cabinet member contracts and assets

The reduction in government grant and the need to support those most in need in the county means we must continue to review spending and subsidy across all services.

Although ongoing revenue subsidy is being reduced, the authority is one of the few councils that have invested in the cultural sector in recent years including a purpose built archive centre to complement one of the best museum resource centres in the country. We continue to work with bodies such as the Courtyard to support their plans for development.

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In response to the budget consultation we are working closely with the county's network of library user groups to explore a cost effective model for sustaining and improving the library service. In similar vein we are working with the Hereford library users group and associated groups on the opportunities for Hereford library setting aside £900k in the capital programme proposals before Council today to contribute to a community led solution for the library in Hereford. In respect of the wider museum service, work is continuing to explore income generation opportunities with a further report due for cabinet consideration in 2016.

As part of the bid for City of Culture Herefordshire should be proud of its achievements in the cultural sector. Rather than just reflect on the investments of the authority, we should celebrate the achievements of voluntary and community groups, businesses and small enterprises, and the significant contribution they have and will continue to make to the cultural life and economy of the county.

Question from Councillor A Powers

Housing growth

Question 3

We welcome the excellent news of the chancellor's support for Hereford's university project. NMiTE's business plan proposes that purpose-built accommodation will be built in the city for all its students – and up to 5000 are envisaged over the next 15 years - throughout their three years of study.

Can the cabinet member please explain how that accommodation, whether purpose-built or in the private rental sector, will be able to be provided, given the planned annual uplift in student numbers and the local plan core strategy's requirement for Hereford to provide over 3000 additional new homes, on non-strategic sites in the city, during the same period?

Answer from Councillor P Price cabinet member infrastructure

The figure of 3,000 is subject to confirmation. The council will be modelling the likely impacts and constraints of the current trajectory taking into account the specific and unique characteristics of purpose-built student accommodation. We will utilise the Hereford area plan process to identify suitable locations for student accommodation within the city alongside other accommodation needed to meet the city's housing target. This process has begun and will take account of opportunities that may be less suitable for general needs housing, and associated parking/highways requirements.

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Supplementary Question

Could the Cabinet Member explain the figure of 3000?

Answer

The figure of 3000 relates to the University and student numbers.

Question from Councillor J Kenyon

Parking strategy for Hereford

Question 4

Can the cabinet member please clarify the parking strategy for Hereford, and the timing of delivery for its various planned elements, as outlined in the draft local transport plan 2016-31? What alternative sites are proposed in the short term to the loss of parking at Merton Meadow (including for coaches) and the former Rockfield DIY site at Station Approach?

Answer from Councillor P Price cabinet member infrastructure

The proposed car parking policy is set out on pages 26 to 28 of the draft local transport plan, currently undergoing consultation and available at:

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/media/3849015/ltp4_policy_consultation_draft.pdf

This draft policy highlights that the provision of car parking will proceed alongside the redevelopment proposals within the city. The draft policy highlights that the council will seek to ensure there is sufficient overall supply of car parking spaces to meet the demands of the city and where necessary will provide replacement car parking in suitable locations. There is sufficient capacity in the city parking stock to accommodate the loss of spaces during the construction of the link road and improved signage will be introduced to ensure people know where those other car parks are. This includes sufficient coach parking at Hereford leisure pool.

As the regeneration proposals for the city, including the urban village, progress, the demand and supply of parking will be monitored and if necessary, the provision of additional parking spaces will be delivered as part of an integrated redevelopment of the area. The timescales for this provision will depend upon how quickly the regeneration proposals come forward and the locations for new car parking will be determined at that time.

Supplementary Question

Can the Cabinet Member give assurances that there are adequate parking facilities in place?

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Answer

Confirmation will be sought from Officers that sufficient parking facilities are in place. Improved parking directions/signage to aid users is also planned.

Written answer

Occupancy surveys of council car parks were carried out in 2015 to help the council decide whether additional capacity would be required in respect of works impacting Merton Meadow and the car park at station approach (former Rockfield site). The capacity surveys indicate a spare capacity of around 840 spaces prior to works impacting Merton Meadow and station approach car park and this will be sufficient to maintain a reasonable supply through the construction works and subsequent redevelopment of the site for housing. The assessment takes into account an effective operational capacity of 95% which allows for 5% under-utilisation acknowledging that car parks do not generally operate efficiently once they are more than 95% occupied. The study is available at:

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/media/8060202/herefordshire-cc-final-report-august-2015.pdf> .

Parking demand will continued to be monitored.

Prior to the proposed short term loss of car park spaces public information will be provided on the alternative car park provision in the city so that current users of Merton Meadow are able to utilise alternative car parks.

A review of the car park signage in Hereford is currently being undertaken with a view to identifying opportunities to improve the current car-park related signage. This will also assist in providing better information for car users wishing to park in the central area and making them aware of alternative parking locations.

Question from Councillor M Lloyd-Hayes

Smallholdings

Question 5

The report by Herefordshire Council's consultants Fisher German was provided, in redacted form, to the general overview and scrutiny committee's task and finish group to inform their work and recommendations on the future of the council's smallholdings estate. Yet the report was deemed not to have been an informative to the cabinet decision on 3 December to sell the entire estate.

The council refused the NFU's Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) request to see the report.

Can the cabinet member please explain:

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- a) why the Fisher German report, even in its redacted form, was not made available to other elected members
- b) why it was not an informative to the cabinet decision, and
- c) why the EIR request by the NFU was refused.

Answer from Councillor H Bramer cabinet member contracts and assets

The redacted report (which was received in its draft form some 18 months ago and not taken further given the then alteration to the review's timetable and focus and is therefore an incomplete and outdated draft) was not relevant to the decision in hand.

A background paper is defined by law as being one considered by the proper officer to be a previously unpublished paper which a) contains facts or matters on which the report is based and b) was relied on to a material extent in the drafting of the report. Neither of these criteria applied in this case.

The draft report was exempted from publication under Regulation 12(5) (e) of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 because disclosure is, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of the smallholding tenants and Herefordshire Council; this was explained to the NFU when responding to their request.

Supplementary Question

Regarding smallholdings, why was 50k allocated to the Fisher German report and the report then not subsequently used?

Answer

The Fisher German report was not used as it was not viewed as pertinent to the Cabinets' decision. The costs are not known at this time but will be made available to the member.

Question from Councillor E Harvey

Local transport plan consultation

Question 6

On 23rd November a public consultation was opened on the county's 15 year transport plan. It runs until 31st December. Unfortunately it won't be until this week (more than half way through the five week consultation period) that hard copies of the plan are made available to the public in the council's information centres. A third of the consultation period takes place during the Christmas holidays. At least a week of which will see all the information centres closed – so that means that hard copies will be unavailable to the public for two thirds of the duration of the consultation period.

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The council's website states: "Consultations are an essential part of policy development. They provide the necessary feedback on proposals for legislative change in local government. As well as having your say, public feedback makes local government's policies more informed and effective."

Given the length of time Herefordshire residents have waited to see and comment upon the transport plan for the county, and the store the council sets by such commentary:

- a) will the cabinet member agree to extend the consultation period for this document by at least the four weeks for which hard copies of the documentation have not been available to the public? and
- b) will he consult with the council's parish liaison officer to determine whether a further extension of the timescale is necessary to enable all parish councils - both urban and rural, to have the opportunity to meet and to consider their responses to the proposals?

Answer from Councillor P Price cabinet member infrastructure

I would refer Councillor Harvey to the answer provided to public question number 9.

All parish councils have been advised of this extension which provides them with sufficient opportunity to consider making a response.

Supplementary Question

Can the Cabinet Member give assurances that in future short consultations are not carried out during the holiday period in the future.

Answer

The consultation on the transport policy is being extended to Friday 29 January 2016. It is not practical to take account of all holiday periods throughout the year.
