

**Public questions to Council – 20 May 2016**

**Question from Mrs E Morawiecka, Breinton**

**Question 1**

**Local transport plan**

The local transport plan has been updated to recognise the potential for a new university in Hereford. The National Travel Survey of 2014 (ONS) shows that 21% of people aged 17-20 live in a household with no access to a car, and for those who live in a household with access to a car 51% do not drive. With such a high proportion of young people unable to drive, what transport infrastructure is being specifically proposed to support and encourage those aged 17-21 to study in Hereford and enable them to access the range of services and opportunities the county has to offer?

**Answer from Cllr P Price, cabinet member infrastructure**

The local transport plan recognises the exciting prospect of a new university being developed in Hereford and the council is working closely with the university promoters to support its development close to the city centre.

New infrastructure, including a Hereford bypass, is essential for the growth that is planned in the city, including the new university. The city centre transport package and South Wye transport package will deliver improvements for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport in the city centre and south wye area of the city. The future provision of a Hereford bypass will enable the delivery of a further package of measures within the city to improve provision for sustainable modes of transport which will be identified as the detailed proposals for the Hereford Package are developed.

Young people attending colleges already offering further and higher education opportunities, as well as a new university and student accommodation based within the city centre will benefit from all these measures and will also be well located to enable students to take advantage of the national rail network and the county bus network which radiates from the city which together provide sustainable transport options for journeys to a wide **range of destinations within and outside the county.**

**Supplementary Question**

When over 51% of student aged young people do not drive would Councillor Price explain why a bypass around Hereford is essential for the development of a new university within the City Centre, when it will be increasingly hard for students to access Hereford by Rail?

**Answer by Cllr P Rone - cabinet member – transport and roads**

All rail services running in the West Midlands franchise area were up for renewal and the Council would take part in negotiations to seek to increase the frequency and capacity of trains.

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

**Question 2**

**Local transport plan: cycling and walking**

The Government's cycling and walking investment strategy is out for consultation until 23 May 2016. The key element of the strategy is that cycling and walking should become the natural choice for shorter journeys or as part of a longer journey.

What part of this element would be fulfilled by the building of the southern link road (SLR) with no cycle or walking pathways, and no apparent funding of the complementary measures which,

## Public questions to Council – 20 May 2016

according to cabinet minutes 18.12.14, “will be outlined within the planning submission for the SLR element” of the south Wye transport package? Furthermore, there is still no sign of the complementary measures appearing within the planning submission for the SLR element and yet, in accordance with Government policy, the funding of the SLR is conditional on these complementary measures being delivered at the same time, or in advance of, road building.

### **Answer from Cllr P Price, cabinet member infrastructure**

The local transport plan makes clear that the southern link road forms part of the wider South Wye transport package. Planning matters relating to a specific application are not a matter for debate in this forum but will be considered by the planning committee in due course

There are already direct and convenient walking and cycling routes between the urban areas of south-east and south-west Hereford and a range of active travel measures will be delivered on the existing network in the South Wye area to support the southern link road and deliver the South Wye transport package objectives. A long list of potential sustainable transport schemes has been identified and considered following a process of reviewing previous studies, assessing existing transport conditions, site visits, and feedback from public consultation on high level South Wye transport package sustainable transport options in summer 2014. From this a number of interventions and schemes have been retained for further consideration and consultation which include shared use footway/cycleways, 20mph limits on residential streets across south Hereford, signing, behavioural change programmes and landscaping public realm improvements. I currently anticipate consultation on these measures will take place before the end of this calendar year, including public exhibitions in the South Wye area in a number of venues.

### **Supplementary Question**

What is the justification for defaulting on the pledge to include complementary sustainable transport measures within the planning application for the southern link road?

### **Answer by Cabinet Member – Infrastructure**

The Planning application, if approved, would provide authority to proceed with the road and enable funding to be secured. The road could not be provided without complementary sustainable transport measures. There would be time to develop these before the road could be delivered. It was intended to consult on sustainable transport measures later in the year.

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### **Question from Mr J Perkins, Hereford**

#### **Question 3**

#### **Local transport plan: traffic lights**

In the local transport plan strategy for Hereford page 12 the document says “The system which controls traffic signals is aging and also prone to instability which further impacts on the effective management of traffic passing through the network.”

In recent months there have been a number of occasions of traffic lights failing in Hereford where traffic, in some cases moved more smoothly, where others specially those involving pedestrian crossings south of the river caused total disruption. Andrew Jones, the Road Safety minister has recently advocated the removal of lights, as also proposed by Hereford Transport Forum as long ago as 2012.

Would the cabinet member please provide details of the cost of making improvements to the traffic

## Public questions to Council – 20 May 2016

signals in Hereford and when they are scheduled to happen, and would he also consider some of the proposals outlined in this question?

### **Answer from Cllr P Price, cabinet member infrastructure**

Hereford's traffic light system is jointly managed with Highways England which is responsible for the management of the A49 through the city. The council and Highways England have recently implemented minor improvements to ensure the existing computer system is resilient and supported pending wider improvements. Options for further improvement will be considered with Highways England over the coming period as proposals for the Hereford transport package are developed. The cost of any improvements will be determined as part of this process.

Highways England has considered the potential for the removal of traffic lights at major junctions in the city. However, they have concluded that such an approach would not currently be possible given the current high traffic volumes which need to be safely accommodated whilst balancing the needs of pedestrians needing to cross. The provision of a Hereford bypass as part of a Hereford transport package may enable this to be considered in the future as part of a package of measures to improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists within the city, once the bypass has been delivered.

### **Supplementary Question**

A government minister has recommended that traffic lights be taken out of cities because of the queues they are considered to cause.

### **Answer by Councillor Price**

We have considered this in relation to Hereford. Highways England are not prepared to remove lights at main junctions. I agree with their view. Removal of lights would be dangerous for those walking and cycling who would not be able to cross roads easily.

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### **Question from Ms C Protherough, Clehonger**

#### **Question 4**

#### **Local transport plan: consultation**

The local transport plan was a public consultation, in which many stakeholders and public bodies engaged. For any other public consultation conducted by Herefordshire Council the public responses have been made available for public examination. As transport affects every resident in the county, why have the consultation responses received during this local transport plan consultation earlier this year been treated as confidential and not been made available for public examination?

### **Answer from Cllr P Price, cabinet member infrastructure**

The local transport plan consultation responses have not been treated confidentially and are available for viewing at council offices on request and I understand members of the public have already made such requests and viewed the responses. I have asked for copies to be made available on the website for ease of access.

Public questions to Council – 20 May 2016

**Supplementary Question**

When are the responses going to be available on the website and have all Councillors been able to view them, for example the response from Gloucestershire County Council?

**Answer for Councillor Price**

The responses can be viewed at Plough Lane and will be made available on the web as requested.

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

**Question 5**

**Local transport plan: Hereford/Worcester connections**

Just over a year ago Cllr Philip Price backed Worcestershire's plans to improve the Carrington Bridge in Worcester, the main route to the M5 from Herefordshire, and was reported as saying, "Congestion on the bridge ..... puts significant strain on businesses who cannot avoid using the A4440 to transport their products to various parts of the country".

Page 24 of Herefordshire's local transport plan shows a western relief road connecting the A49 both north and south, by 2027, but with no connection to the A4103/A465 Worcester Road. Would the cabinet member Cllr Philip Price please explain why the latest version of the local transport plan shows no intention to improve connections between Hereford and Worcester?

**Answer from Cllr P Price, cabinet member infrastructure**

The map on page 24 of the local transport plan accords with proposals set out in the approved core strategy, and demonstrates that is the longer term (post 2027) intention of the council to make the further connection between the A49 and the A4103. The local transport plan also recognises the need to lobby for and engage in franchising discussions in order to improve rail connections.

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**Question from Dr N Geeson, Hereford**

**Question 6**

**Local transport plan: conformity with core strategy**

In Herefordshire Council's adopted local plan core strategy we read that "Policy SS7- Addressing Climate Change" states "***Development proposals will be required to include measures which will mitigate their impact on climate change. At a strategic level, this will include:***

- delivering development that seeks to reduce the need to travel by private car and which encourages sustainable travel options including walking, cycling and public transport;***
- designing developments to reduce carbon emissions and use resources more efficiently".***

If the road schemes proposed in the local transport plan (LTP) are built ahead of sustainable transport options, these roads are shown to increase overall vehicle emissions, which would result in the LTP not being in conformity with the adopted core strategy. Would the cabinet member responsible please confirm that there is provision to ensure the LTP does conform with the core strategy, and that the LTP needs to measure and assess performance of overall vehicle emission changes across the county?

**Public questions to Council – 20 May 2016**

**Answer from Cllr P Price, cabinet member infrastructure**

The draft local transport plan is in accordance with the core strategy. It includes proposals for the infrastructure required to support the development identified within the core strategy, measures to reduce the need to travel by car and to encourage sustainable modes of transport.

National legislation determines vehicle emission standards and national policy would therefore have to address any requirement to reduce emissions at source.

However, the council does have a duty to review and monitor air quality across the county, including those originating from traffic. In compliance with this, the environmental health service currently monitors nitrogen dioxide at a range of locations next to our roads. These are used to give us monthly averages which in turn are used to give annual figures to compare against the national air quality objective. This is reported on an annual basis to Defra and the information is also used to determine the effectiveness of the air quality action plans in place for the county's two air quality management areas in Hereford and Leominster.

There are also plans to use the data from a continuous real time monitoring station along Victoria Street to assess trends in both nitrogen dioxide and particulate pollution along the A49 corridor in Hereford.

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**Question from Ms D Toynbee, Ruckhall**

**Question 7**

**Local transport plan: statutory obligations re passenger transport**

The Local Transport Plan (2016-2013) Consultation Report says:

"We received a number of responses with comments about specific bus services and routes. The council is continuing to review passenger transport with the aim of protecting the most important services and honouring our statutory commitments whilst having to make significant reductions in revenue spending for each of the next 4 years."

What are the statutory commitments that the council has in regard to passenger transport?

**Answer from Cllr P Price, cabinet member infrastructure**

The local transport plan provides the policy basis to enable the council to meet its statutory obligations in relation to passenger transport. The key statutory responsibilities are set out in section 63 of Transport Act 1985 sets out the following duties for local transport authorities:

- to secure the provision of such public passenger transport services as the council consider it appropriate to secure to meet any public transport requirements within the county which would not in their view be met apart from any action taken by them for that purpose; and
- to formulate from time to time general policies as to the descriptions of services they propose to secure under paragraph (a) above.

The council is also required to reimburse operators for the cost of travel by users entitled to free transport under the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme.

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**Public questions to Council – 20 May 2016****Question from Ms K Sharp, Hereford****Question 8****Local transport plan: walking and cycling routes**

Other counties recognise how lucky Herefordshire is in having some of the highest quality (to walk and cycle) lanes in England. These lanes and byways, which include Sustrans National Cycle route 46, play an important role in supporting the tourism offer to the county whilst minimising the carbon footprint of tourists to the area. Would the cabinet member please explain why the local transport plan omits any map of these walk and cycle routes and why they are offered no recognition or protection within the transport policies?

**Answer from Cllr P Price, cabinet member infrastructure**

The council does recognise the value for of its extensive rural highway and public rights of way network for leisure and tourism including cycling. The network is indeed so extensive that inclusion of a map in the local transport plan would not be practicable; however a map showing the key rural cycle routes is available on the council's website at:

[https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/media/7609921/rural\\_routes\\_2014.pdf](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/media/7609921/rural_routes_2014.pdf) and a map of the public rights of way within the county is at:

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-highways/footpaths-byways-and-bridleways/online-map-of-public-rights-of-way>

The cycle network is recognised in the local transport plan policy including at:

- LTP AT1 – this policy supports extension to the cycle network, better integration between cycling and public transport, use of traffic regulation orders to promote increased cycle use, providing clear and concise signage and identifying improvements in cycle provision within routine maintenance programmes (page 43)
- Asset Management Vision statement - Public places that are safe to enjoy, for recreation and travel on foot, bicycle and by public, community or school transport and car. (page 12)
- LTP AM10 – to maintain a safe and efficient network – including cycle ways (page 17)
- LTP PT7 – which seeks to integrate rail with cycle networks and to improve cycle parking at stations (page 35)

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**Question from Ms A Lagoutte, Eaton Bishop****Question 9****Local transport plan: eastern Hereford congestion**

The Amey 2010 report (Hereford Relief Road - Study of Options – para 4.2.17) highlighted that many of the overcapacity road junctions were on the eastern side of Hereford. The Hereford transport package map (page 24 of the transport strategy) only shows park and choose sites or improved cycle routes for the west of the city. For example, there are no park and choose sites for the Rotherwas enterprise zone (REZ), despite the council owning land in this area, and having invested millions in the new Connect 2 walk/cycle bridge connecting the REZ with the city.

With housing growth already happening across the city (north, south, east and west) and in villages and parishes all around Hereford, what provision is being made to tackle congestion across the eastern side of Hereford over the next 15 years and improve transport choice for these residents?

**Public questions to Council – 20 May 2016**

**Answer from Cllr P Price, cabinet member infrastructure**

Significant improvements to improve transport choice and reduce congestion have already been implemented within the eastern side of the city over recent years. As the questioner highlights this has included the Hereford Greenway (Connect 2) scheme which provides a direct link between the enterprise zone and east of the city. Investment has delivered traffic calming and 20mph zones to improve safety and encourage walking and cycling in the vicinity of schools on Barrs Court Road, Venns Lane, Folly Lane and in Tupsley.

Whilst not included on the map on page 24, a park and choose site is in place on Vincent Carey Road at Rotherwas and is shown on the map on page 25 of the document which shows all current and proposed sites for the city.

The development of the Hereford transport package will enable consideration of improvements which may be required and the local transport plan provides the policy context which will enable further improvements to be made as new housing developments come forward.

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**Question from Ms C Palgrave, How Caple**

**Question 10**

**Local transport plan: measures of success**

The local transport plan proposes to measure the percentage of the population who are active.

Herefordshire is recognised as having a growing elderly population, like many other rural counties. The local transport plan proposes to measure just the percentage of the whole population who are active, which risks setting up the council to fail. Would the cabinet member agree that if it measured separately the proportion of school age, working age populations, retired, etc. taking part in active travel, the council may be better able to show success via its local transport plan proposals?

**Answer from Cllr P Price, cabinet member infrastructure**

The health indicators proposed in the local transport plan are in line with nationally available indicators and use data already collected we see the local transport plan as making an important contribution to the council's broader responsibilities for public health. Annual monitoring will provide an opportunity to review these indicators when necessary and where specific schemes are brought forward it will be possible to consider appropriate monitoring of their effects in more detail, having regard to the costs of data collection and any additional value of additional or alternative indicators.

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**Question from Mr S Wegg-Prosser, Breinton**

**Question 11**

**Local transport plan: freight policy**

The freight rail head at Moreton-on-Lugg Business Park takes tens of thousands of heavy freight movements every year off the local road infrastructure and onto rail, improving road safety and reducing road maintenance costs. Many rural parishes responded to the LTP consultation asking for Herefordshire Council to consider the impact heavy goods vehicle movements were having on villages such as Pembridge, Lyonshall and Eardisley. Would the cabinet member please explain

**Public questions to Council – 20 May 2016**

why the freight policy statement (LTP FR1, p.29) has no accompanying LTP4 strategy and no freight route map to show the impact freight has on rural residents and the historic environment of our county?

**Answer from Cllr P Price, cabinet member infrastructure**

The freight policy statement and LTP FR1 was updated following the consultation. It now includes a clear commitment to develop a freight strategy which will take into account the findings of the Marches Strategic Transport Corridors Study, work with partners including Highways England and engagement with local communities impacted by freight movements to develop and agree suitable mitigation measures.

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**Question from Mr N Morawieki, Hereford**

**Question 12**

**Local transport plan: objectives**

Of the five main aims of the local transport plan one is “enable economic growth – by building new roads linking new developments to the transport network and by reducing short distance car journeys”. Building new roads is not a direct enabler of economic growth and in fact has been shown to **increase** short distance car trips as a result of “induced demand”. 20% of all households have no access to a car, and this increases to 30% of all households aged 70 years or older (National Travel Survey 2014). In this and earlier transport consultations in Herefordshire, investment in good public transport was rated the top priority. Good public transport is a more cost effective enabler of economic growth than building new roads, and improves access to jobs and services for all households, whether or not they possess a car.

Would the cabinet member agree with the consultation respondents and the Government’s 2011 white paper (Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon: Making Sustainable Local Transport Growth Happen) which stated that a transport objective – “Economic Growth - reducing congestion and enabling access” is a better transport objective for Herefordshire than “building new roads”?

**Answer from Cllr P Price, cabinet member infrastructure**

The local transport plan does not include a transport objective of “building new roads”.

The objectives of the plan include: “To enable economic growth”. Building new roads is an enabling mechanism; we need a Hereford bypass together with a package of measures to support active travel options within the city in order to achieve the objectives. The plan is very clear that both these elements are essential and I do not agree that a change to the plan’s objectives is necessary.

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**Question from Mr R Stowe, Rowlestone**

**Question 13**

**Local transport plan: cost benefit analysis of the southern link road**

An eastern link road would link the enterprise zone at Rotherwas to the A438 Ledbury road via a new bridge over the River Wye. Whilst the southern link road will just shift traffic from the A465 on to the A49, an eastern link road could significantly reduce city centre congestion.



## Public questions to Council – 20 May 2016

The southern link road depends on £27m of provisional funding from central government via the local enterprise partnership (LEP), but will require a full business case to be presented to the Department for Transport.

Central government has confirmed that “LEPs will be permitted to exercise flexibility to substitute other projects if they have been rigorously assessed and offer comparable or better value for money”.

Jesse Norman MP has promoted an eastern link road for several years, and has repeatedly requested since 2014 that the council produce a cost-benefit analysis of the southern link road against an eastern link road.

Given the confirmed flexibility in LEP funding, the council's duty to demonstrate value for money in its use of public funds, and the repeated requests from Jesse Norman MP, would the cabinet member please explain why the council has not carried out a cost-benefit analysis of the southern link road against an eastern link road?

### **Answer from Cllr P Price, cabinet member infrastructure**

The Department of Transport has retained oversight of the South Wye transport package project and its funding. The funding is specifically for the delivery of the South Wye transport package and cannot be used for alternative schemes. If the scheme were not to progress in accordance with agreed funding profiles then the funding be lost to Herefordshire and the Marches.

The relative merits of a western or eastern by-pass have been extensively reviewed over many years, alongside consideration of deliverability and on the evidence of those reviews there is no justification in expending further resources on further analysis.

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### **Question from Ms S Bell, Rowlestone**

#### **Question 14**

#### **Local transport plan: southern link road justification**

In August 2014 the Highways Agency advised the council in writing that ‘the building of new road infrastructure could only be justified in policy terms when other avenues such as travel planning and sustainable travel modes had been developed and shown not to address the transport needs and issues identified’.

Would the cabinet member please explain why the council has completely failed to follow this Highways Agency guidance with respect to the southern link road?

### **Answer from Cllr P Price, cabinet member infrastructure**

The council has not failed to follow guidance.

Highways England have been engaged throughout the process and confirmed their support for the southern link road as part of the South Wye transport package. A number of possible options that could address the problems and objectives of the South Wye transport package were considered and appraised in accordance with criteria used by the Department for Transport, which is the responsible body for this scheme. Options considered included: ‘traffic max’, ‘sustainable transport max’ and a new link road. The traffic max option aimed to reduce the amount of congestion along the A465 whilst the sustainable transport max aimed to reduce severance, promote physical, reduce accidents and reduce congestion through modal shift. Assessment indicated that none of

**Public questions to Council – 20 May 2016**

the three approaches in isolation satisfied all of the scheme objectives but that a combination of a new southern link road with elements of the sustainable transport max approach best met the objectives of the South Wye transport package. This appraisal work is set out in detail in the South Wye transport package preferred option report (November 2014) published on the council's website.