

## Appendix 2 - Questions from members of the council

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
MQ 1	Councillor RI Matthews	At full council on May 19 it was noted that certain financial responsibilities had been delegated to Hoople Ltd, a public registered business financed by taxpayers in Herefordshire. The company's accounts to March 2016 showed losses of £1.396M and decreased turnover of 8%. I asked the leader to arrange an urgent review of responsibilities for monitoring this publicly-owned business. Can the Leader inform Council what action he has taken?	Leader of the council
<p><b>Leader's response</b></p> <p>Following the May meeting of Council I asked the chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee to consider the delegation to Hoople staff regarding the writing off of uncollectable debts and the issues around the Hoople pension deficit. I am pleased to be able to report that the chairman has agreed for the matter to be considered at the next meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee and, following discussions with external audit, officers are preparing a report for the committee. The council remains responsible for monitoring the performance of Hoople.</p>			
<p><b>Supplementary question – Councillor RI Matthew</b></p> <p>I am satisfied with the response that this matter is going to audit and governance committee for close monitoring during the next twelve months.</p>			
MQ 2	Councillor ACR Chappell	The cabinet member, Chief Executive and relevant Director are members of the university project board. There is only one elected member, drawn from the executive. Cabinet will receive reports from the board and the £300K loan from council requires reports to audit committee. Will the Leader ensure that one non-executive member is appointed to the board and a standing item exists at general scrutiny and Council providing scrutiny and accountability?	Leader of the council
<p><b>Leader's response</b></p> <p>The joint university delivery board is not an outside body to which the council makes appointments but a partnership arrangement and as such complies with the council's approved framework for partnership governance. Arrangements are in place for the effective monitoring and reporting of any financial arrangements between the council and the university bodies. There is no requirement to report on deployment of loans to the audit and governance committee; however that committee does assure the robustness of our risk management and governance frameworks and the council's internal audit team will have access to all records relevant to the loan. I do not see that appointment of a further member of council to the delivery board will strengthen accountability; however I will, through the delivery board, ask the university team to consider reviewing their broader community engagement mechanisms. It is a matter for the scrutiny committees to prioritise and determine their own work programmes. I would be happy to meet separately with Councillor Chappell to provide updates on the work of the board.</p>			

### **Supplementary Question – Councillor ACR Chappell**

I am concerned that the public perception is that Herefordshire Council is giving away not just money but properties etc. The audit committee is not a scrutiny committee but one of the priorities of the Board is that it is scrutinised, I just feel there should be ongoing scrutiny of what is happening and what is being handed over so that the public and we their elected representatives are 'on-board'.

### **Leader's response to supplementary question**

The nature of your question and the logic behind it was understood Councillor Chappell. There are two issues here; the actuality and the perception. The actuality is this council does not drive or manage the university project, it is a separate organisation. We provide help with putting green bookcases together and securing loans via the LEP but we have no authority over the body. It would therefore be inappropriate to scrutinise it, as it would any business in the city. What you refer to is understood, if there is a public perception that we are responsible for the university and that we are giving them public money then that is a perception that we should deal with.

**Chief Executive comment** – the intention is to be transparent and therefore minutes of meetings of the joint university delivery board are on the website. It may help to have further discussions about what is possible with the intention of increasing transparency.