

COUNCILLORS QUESTIONS TO CABINET – 18 January 2018

Question 1

From: Councillor Matthews, Credenhill Ward

To: cabinet member – infrastructure

The government announced recently that it is fully committed to ensuring greater protection of the environment, in particular areas of outstanding natural beauty close or adjoining residential areas. The beauty and tranquillity of the Breinton area fully meets that criteria.

Do you agree that it is extremely unlikely that ministers will look favourably on the proposals before us today bearing in mind the above and cheaper options available subject to the other points raised here today?

Response

No I don't. Herefordshire is a beautiful county. We are committed to supporting improvements in the quality of our natural environment while bringing forward quality developments that enable sustainable growth to meet the needs of the county. The council's adopted core strategy recognises this route as the best option available and there is no cheaper deliverable option which would secure the same outcomes. Any decision on a preferred route will be informed by a wide variety of factors including environmental impacts. I am confident that by following the appropriate guidance and using our evidence base our proposals will progress.

Question 2

From: Councillor Crockett, Queenswood Ward

To: cabinet member – infrastructure

I must remind you that the Wye Valley is a Special Area of Conservation, Europe's highest level of environmental significance and importance and protection. The river running through Breinton has the same environmental importance as the Lugg Meadows, which for some reason you appear to have difficulty in accepting.

Why aren't you considering the cheaper option for the bypass, which would fully serve the same purpose? I have raised this question as I was emailed by several of my constituents regarding this.

Response

I fully acknowledge the environmental importance of the river running through Breinton. The facts are that, as demonstrated through the core strategy process, the route corridor identified is the best option available. There is no cheaper, deliverable option that would secure the same the same outcomes.

Supplementary question

Do you think you are taking significant notice of our local businessmen and listening to their concerns?

Response

Absolutely, and I have to say that the majority of businessmen that I speak to or contact me or general conversations over a number of years is that I do not speak to many that do not want us to progress a bypass as quickly and as efficiently as possible and to get on and build it. There is a pent up demand by businesses in this county to get and deal with this issue, it has been ongoing for many, many years. We now have a perfect opportunity to get on and deal with it and if we don't take this opportunity now I don't know where Hereford businesses will be. Every place I go to in meetings businesses are telling us we must have a bypass to resolve the issues that they are having as regards investment, growing their businesses and the day to day running of their businesses. So yes I do take notice of businesses and overwhelmingly they are telling me we must progress.