

Agenda item no. 6 - Questions from members of the public

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 1	Dr Selfe, Leominster	How is the Council ensuring it has an independent support service for parents of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities as required by law; Children and Families Act, s 3(57)? Funding for the current independent service finishes in April, new funding has been made available from the DfE from December 2017 with an invitation to bid for contracts. How does the Council's budget ensure provision for this service?	Cabinet member young people and children's wellbeing
<p>Response</p> <p>The government is currently tendering for a single provider to deliver a national contract that will ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, or SEND, and their parents and carers in every council area have access to information, and impartial advice and support, covering SEND issues across education, health and social care; and ▪ Establish a national helpline – including a dedicated Freephone service – and access to online information, advice and support is available to families who have children and young people with SEND. <p>It is the government's intention that this service will be available from April 2018. In addition to this new national service, the council ensures that it provides a range of information through the Local Offer and through its own special educational needs services.</p>			
<p>Supplementary Question – Dr Selfe</p> <p>We have learned that government funding for an independent service may be forthcoming in April 2019 which is to be welcomed. But, unfortunately, the independent service will receive no funding from this April. How does the Council's budget ensure provision for this vital independent service in the interim period? The law requires provision of an independent service (Children and Families Act, 2014), and expressly states that Local Authority employees cannot be regarded as independent.</p>			
<p>Cabinet member response to supplementary question</p> <p>The arrangements currently provided by the council will remain until future funding decisions are made by the government.</p>			
PQ 2	Dr Whalley, Hereford	Blackmarston / Barrs Court / Westfield educate profoundly disabled children with complex medical needs. Two years ago they had full-time nurses – now they do not. This contravenes the Children and Families Act 2014 putting health and safety of vulnerable children at serious, and daily risk. Does 2017/18 budget expedite the Council's assumption of its proper responsibility to the education and care of these children and ensure funding for clinical nursing?	Cabinet member young people and children's wellbeing

Response

The support of children with clinical needs is the responsibility of Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group who I am advised are now recruiting to fill posts which will support all children with high levels of clinical need across the county but will largely be focussed on the three special schools mentioned.

School nursing, which does not provide clinical support, is the responsibility of the council and all of the schools concerned will also have the appropriate allocation of school nursing.

Supplementary Question – Dr Whalley

The local authority as the ‘responsible commissioning body’ (Children and Families Act 2017 Section 25 and Section 26) has to ensure that the EHC Plan fully details the Education Health and Care needs of the child ensuring all agencies contribute to the plan and confirming precisely how they will make at least adequate provision i.e.:

- what is to be secured e.g. clinical nursing post/physiotherapy/occupational therapy/speech and language therapy;
- by whom it is provided; and
- how and when it is to be delivered.

Cabinet member response to supplementary question

The point is noted and I am keen to ensure that such plans are in place.

PQ 3	Mrs C Palgrave, How Caple	Destination Hereford Report 2016 showed significant car use reduction after investment of £4.97m promoting and enabling sustainable travel. Today, Council is being asked to authorize expenditure of over £5.38m in 3 years developing designs and obtaining consent for the “Bypass”. How does this deliver better value for money compared with investing further in sustainable travel across the whole City, including the East, where many junctions are over capacity (Amey 2010)?	Cabinet member Infrastructure
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Response

It isn’t a case of either/or. Extensive analysis and studies undertaken identify that a bypass together with other improvements in the city centre are required to meet the objectives of the project which are to enable growth needed in Hereford and enable a healthier and safer city. Moving the A49 out of the city centre is the only way of restricting traffic in the city centre to allow for better walking and cycling facilities in the centre. Investing only in sustainable travel and junction improvements in place of a bypass would not. The upcoming consultation will enable us to gather views on the emerging proposals and will shape the kind of measures that could be delivered with the bypass which could include sustainable travel and junction improvements, if appropriate.

PQ 4	Mrs E Morawiecka, Breinton	From the report to Cabinet on Thursday 18 th January 2018 it appears that Herefordshire Council have spent £2.932 Million on developing routes for the Western Relief Road. How can officers incur this	Cabinet member finance, housing
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		level of spend when the only traceable budget agreed by councillors for the Western Relief Road was just £600,000, approved by Cabinet at their meeting on 16 th June 2016.	and corporate services
Response			
<p>The June 2016 report authorised works to the value of £3.25m. The report recognised that in the event that £2.625m external funding was not fully secured consideration would need to be given to allocation of further funding. External funding of £890k has already been secured and there is still a live bid for external funding, the result of which is expected later in the spring. The project was included in the approved public realm annual plan. Authorisation of virement between approved budgets is carried out in accordance with finance procedure rules. Proposed use of reserves, if necessary, was reported to Cabinet on 18 January and will be formally approved as part of our normal quarterly budget monitoring cycle.</p>			
Supplementary Question – Mrs Morawiecka			
Who in Herefordshire Council authorised contracts for over £2.932million to be spent on developing a Western relief road and was the council’s procurement process followed in securing these contracts including requesting competitive tenders for the work?			
Cabinet member response to supplementary question			
A written response will be provided to the questioner by the 6 February.			
Written response sent on 5 February - <i>The Hereford Transport Package (Hereford bypass) development work was undertaken by BBLP and their sub consultants WSP. This work formed part of the Councils public realm annual plan in each year. The public realm contract was awarded to BBLP in 2013 following an OJEU procurement process.</i>			
PQ 5	Mrs Jackie Morris, Hereford	<p>The Capital programme shows the Hereford Transport package cost £510,000 in 2017/18. However the report to the Cabinet showed a total cost for 2017/18 of £2.122 million - £383,582 being taken from the Severe Weather Reserve.</p> <p>With recent accidents on rural roads, due to wintry conditions, who decided the Severe Weather Reserve should be used for a capital project for which Councillors had approved no formal budget and when?</p>	Cabinet member finance, housing and corporate services
Response			
<p>Use of the reserve has not yet been authorised, but was identified in the 18 January Cabinet report as a potential source of funding should the live external funding bid prove unsuccessful. Approval of virement between approved budgets is carried out in accordance with finance procedure rules. Proposed use of reserves was reported to Cabinet on 18 January and will be formally approved as part of our normal quarterly budget monitoring cycle. This will not impact on our ability to maintain gritting of our roads during severe weather, the cost of which is supported from base budget rather than reserves which are intended to cover exceptional circumstances.</p>			
Supplementary Question – Mrs Morris			

The budget consultation report shows that when asked about capital investment, 77% of respondents wanted investment in road maintenance and 50% wanted supporting/facilities for young people. Only 47% wanted investment in new roads. How does the proposal of an additional capital budget of over £2.45million for yet another new road for Hereford, with no proven benefit, respect the priorities of the electorate, particularly their preference for investment in road maintenance?

Cabinet member response to supplementary question

The results of the consultation response are acknowledged. Funding arising from the Amey litigation will be utilised for capital spending on roads.

PQ 6	Ms K Sharp, Hereford	<p>The Council's July 2017 Quarterly Monitoring Report (QMR) to the Dept for Transport shows a very different capital spending profile on the South Wye Transport Package to that included in the Herefordshire Council Agenda for today, under Capital Project Appendix 3.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="533 539 1850 753"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Prior</th> <th>2017/18 Budget</th> <th>2018/19 Budget</th> <th>2019/20 Budget</th> <th>2020/21</th> <th>2021/22 onwards</th> <th>TOTAL</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Appendix 3</td> <td>3,612,000</td> <td>3,500,000</td> <td>14,000,000</td> <td>6,200,000</td> <td>8,317,000</td> <td>-</td> <td>35,629,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>QMR July 17</td> <td>3,700,000</td> <td>1,545,000</td> <td>6,000,000</td> <td>12,000,000</td> <td>6,855,555</td> <td>4,900,000</td> <td>35,000,555</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Would the Cabinet member responsible please explain which figures are correct and why there is such a difference between the reports?</p>		Prior	2017/18 Budget	2018/19 Budget	2019/20 Budget	2020/21	2021/22 onwards	TOTAL	Appendix 3	3,612,000	3,500,000	14,000,000	6,200,000	8,317,000	-	35,629,000	QMR July 17	3,700,000	1,545,000	6,000,000	12,000,000	6,855,555	4,900,000	35,000,555	Cabinet member finance, housing and corporate services
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Response

The figures quoted by the questioner are not correct summaries of either appendix 3 to the capital programme report or the quarterly monitoring report.

In appendix 3 the total figure is £35m. It would appear that the questioner has inadvertently omitted to take account of the negative figure of £629k shown in brackets in the 'brought forward' column.

The QMR figure for 2020/21 states £6,855,000 giving a total figure of £35m.

The profiling of spend has changed between the production of the two reports, and will continue to change as the programme progresses.

PQ7	Ms A Coda, Peterchurch	<p>With the likely closure of Redhill Rehabilitation Centre in the coming month what provisions, and financial arrangements, have been set in place, and planned for the future, to support the additional workload from patients who are more likely to be discharged directly to home? These will include some very vulnerable people needing to recover from serious injuries and re-enable despite often being very elderly and frail.</p>	Cabinet member health and wellbeing
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Response

The council are working closely with health partners to support the move to enable more people to go home once they are medically fit following hospital treatment rather than stay in a hospital bed. The impact of delaying the move home greatly impacts on the person's ability to recover and regain confidence and key skills, however Herefordshire will still have a large number of community beds and if someone has needs that are best met in one of these beds, they will be transferred to one.

PQ 8	Mr P Chapman, Breinton	The success of a new road must be predicated on reducing car use and congestion, but it is intended to build a vast housing development and resulting surgeries, schools and shopping centres. An obvious consequence is increased congestion in the city, especially in the East already at overcapacity. How much property-tax payer's money is identified to build the required new schools, health facilities, industrial estates and associated sustainable infrastructure?	Cabinet member infrastructure
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Response

The success of a bypass is not predicated solely on reducing car use and congestion. The delivery of the bypass as part of a package of measures will enable the growth of Hereford as we set out in our core strategy plan. New homes and new jobs at an expanded enterprise zone will help secure our future by retaining our young people and attracting new families to the city. A new university could transform this city. This growth cannot be delivered without new infrastructure. The new road will provide an alternative to a congested trunk road which goes right through the heart of the city impacting on homes, businesses and schools improving safety and air quality for these people.

The infrastructure for growth will not be delivered exclusively by the council but also by developers (home builders and industry) and central government departments using a variety of funding streams. The council's own investment plans and how these will be sourced are included in the capital programme and medium term financial strategy.

Supplementary Question – Mr Chapman

As a local resident living to the West of Hereford journey times would be increased greatly by the proposed road infrastructure and housebuilding. How does the council intend to improve general transport infrastructure and what work is being done for people living just beyond the outskirts of Hereford?

Cabinet member response to supplementary question

The bypass and the new crossing over the River Wye will allow Hereford to move forward and enable growth. To meet the cost of local services growth is required and the bypass is key to future growth. A conversation with Mr Chapman could be arranged.