

Minutes of the meeting of Council held at Council Chamber, The Shire Hall, St Peter's Square, Hereford, HR1 2HX on Friday 26 January 2018 at 10.00 am

Present: Councillor DB Wilcox (Chairman)
Councillor PJ Edwards (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors: SP Anderson, PA Andrews, BA Baker, JM Bartlett, WLS Bowen, TL Bowes, H Bramer, CR Butler, ACR Chappell, E Chowns, MJK Cooper, PE Crockett, PGH Cutter, BA Durkin, CA Gandy, KS Guthrie, J Hardwick, DG Harlow, EPJ Harvey, EL Holton, JA Hyde, TM James, PC Jinman, AW Johnson, JF Johnson, JLV Kenyon, JG Lester, MD Lloyd-Hayes, PP Marsh, RI Matthews, RL Mayo, MT McEvelly, SM Michael, PD Newman OBE, FM Norman, CA North, RJ Phillips, AJW Powers, PD Price, P Rone, AR Round, A Seldon, NE Shaw, J Stone, D Summers, EJ Swinglehurst, A Warmington and SD Williams

In attendance: Councillors

Officers: Chris Baird, Annie Brookes, John Coleman, Geoff Hughes, Alistair Neill, Martin Samuels and Claire Ward

37. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed new members, Councillors SP Anderson and EE Chowns, elected since the previous meeting of the full Council.

38. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Greenow, Skelton and Tawn.

39. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Agenda item no. 8: Motions on notice

Councillor WLS Bowen declared a non-pecuniary interest as a recipient of a war disability pension.

Councillor JLV Kenyon declared a non-pecuniary interest as a recipient of a military pension.

Agenda items 10, 11 and 12: Capital Programme 2018/19; Setting the 2018/19 budget and updating the medium term financial strategy; and pay policy statement 2018.

Councillor RJ Phillips declared a non-pecuniary interest as Vice Chairman of the Local Government Association's National Joint Council.

40. MINUTES

It was suggested that there was an omission from the minutes of the previous meeting concerning remarks made by Councillor AJW Powers in respect of the responsibilities of cabinet members. The Chairman ruled that the point raised was not material to the decisions of Council at the meeting therefore there would not be an amendment to minutes to include the matter. Members were reminded that questions regarding the accuracy of the minutes or proposed amendments should be raised with the monitoring officer by 9.30 a.m. on the morning of the meeting.

The framing of the minute of Councillor EPJ Harvey's question to the Leader concerning the framework agreement for Blueschool House was felt to be misleading. The use of the term 'preferred contractor' suggested there was a choice of contractors for selection from the framework agreement; the outcomes of the internal audit report had shown there was only one contractor on the agreement. The Chairman ruled that the point raised was not material to the decisions of Council at the meeting therefore there would not be an amendment to minutes to include the matter.

It was noted that both the points referred to would be identified in this meeting's minutes. The Chairman then put the original minutes to the meeting and it was:

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

41. CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Council noted the Chairman and Chief Executive's announcements as printed in the agenda papers.

The Chairman made reference to the Commonwealth Service planned to mark the conclusion of the Queens activities overseas and the weeping window poppy display which would be exhibited at Hereford Cathedral.

The Chief Executive provided an update on the continuous-performance improvement programme at the council, recent peer reviews, the performance of the county in year one phonics, the assessment of the care quality commission and latest totals of followers on social media facilities at the Council.

42. APPOINTMENTS TO COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Council considered a report by the Solicitor to the Council concerning: a calculation of proportionality following recent by elections; the appointment of the Vice Chairman of the Employment Panel; and a confirmation of the functions of the committees at the Council to enable the Audit and Governance Committee to undertake the role of the accountable body in respect of the new university in Hereford.

The Solicitor to the Council introduced the report and explained that the Council had agreed to act as the accountable body for the new university. Following a review by the General Scrutiny Committee it had been recommended that the governance and risk management functions of the Audit and Governance Committee fulfilled the role of an

accountable body. As the functions already fell within the remit of the committee it was recommended that the item would be added to its work programme.

Confirmation was requested that there would be no financial exposure to the Council as a result of the arrangements. The Leader confirmed that the Council was not responsible or liable for the finances of the new university but would oversee the use of grants from central government and ensure that money was used in accordance with funding agreements.

The confirmation of committee functions at the council and the calculation of proportionality was put to the vote; Council voted to approve the recommendations.

The Leader proposed and Councillor JG Lester seconded the appointment of Councillor RJ Phillips as Vice Chairman of the Employment Panel. Council voted to approve the appointment.

Resolved – that:

- a) **The existing functions of committees are confirmed as sufficient to supervise the discharge of accountable body functions in relation to public funding supporting the establishment of a new university in Hereford;**
- b) **The allocation of committee seats to political groups as contained in paragraph 13 of the officer report is agreed; and**
- c) **Councillor RJ Phillips is appointed as the Vice Chairman of the Employment Panel.**

43. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Pages 11 - 16)

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.

44. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL (Pages 17 - 20)

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.

45. NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDERS

A point of order was raised regarding the agenda item on motions which at the budget meeting should be time critical or relate to an item on the agenda. The Chairman confirmed that the motion on blue badges had been accepted for discussion at the budget meeting as it had been deferred at the previous meeting on 13 October 2017.

Council considered a notice of motion concerning the waiving of the blue badge fee for recipients of a war pension.

In moving the motion Councillor MT McEvilly made the following points:

- The military covenant committed the Council to help military veterans.

- Meetings with various local groups, including GPs had been undertaken and the proposed waiving of the fee in the motion had been identified as an effective measure to support military veterans.

The following principal points were raised by members in the debate:

- The gesture was perceived as charity which military veterans did not want; they would rather the application process was simplified;
- The proposal in the motion was felt to be a gesture of goodwill which demonstrated to military veterans that they were valued;
- The proposal involved the removal of a nominal administrative fee to a small group of individuals in the county. The financial implications were minimal; and
- A change was sought to the motion to request that the application process for blue badges for those residents in receipt of a war pension was simplified if possible. The suggested change was accepted by the proposer of the motion.

In seconding the motion Councillor P Rone commented that, despite reservations concerning the proposed change to the motion, he accepted it.

The amended motion was put to the vote and agreed by a majority of Council.

Resolved – that: In the spirit of the military covenant, to which Herefordshire Council is a signatory, the Executive is asked to consider that residents in receipt of a war pension who are also entitled to receive a blue badge have the £10 fee waived and, if possible, the application process simplified.

46. COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2018/19

Council considered a report by the Leader of the Council to agree the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2018/19.

The Leader introduced the report and moved the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2018/19 as set out in the papers. The reduction scheme for 2018/19 was unchanged from the scheme in place during 2017/18.

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Housing and Corporate Services seconded the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2018/19 and explained that the introduction of Universal Credit during the year would be carefully monitored and the impact on council tax default assessed.

Members made the following points in the debate that followed:

- How women affected by the change to retirement age would be informed of the scheme and how to apply for a council tax reduction? How hardship applicants would be made aware of how to apply for a reduction? *The Cabinet Member Finance, Housing and Corporate Services explained that the scheme would be highlighted through Housing Associations and charities such as Age UK.*
- What enquiries had been undertaken into the potential implications of Universal Credit and what had been the experience of other areas, including rates of arrears, where it had already been introduced? It was noted that levels of appeals had increased in areas where Universal Credit had been introduced. *The Cabinet Member and the Section 151 officer were not aware of the effect of Universal Credit on debtor figures. All applicants to the scheme were provided with advice and the new hub in Hereford consisting of Department of Work and Pension Staff and Herefordshire Council staff would enable the scheme to be publicised more widely.*

A named vote was held to agree the Council Tax Reduction Scheme set out in the report.

The scheme was approved 49 votes in favour, 0 votes against and 0 votes to abstain.

For (49): Councillors SP Anderson, PA Andrews, BA Baker, JM Bartlett, WLS Bowen, TL Bowes, H Bramer, CR Butler, ACR Chappell, EE Chowns, MJK Cooper, PE Crockett, P Cutter, BA Durkin, PJ Edwards, CA Gandy, KS Guthrie, J Hardwick, DG Harlow, EPJ Harvey, EL Holton, JA Hyde, PC Jinman, AW Johnson, JF Johnson, J Kenyon, JG Lester, MD Lloyd-Hayes, PP Marsh, RI Matthews, RL Mayo, MT McEvelly, SM Michael, PD Newman, FM Norman, CA North, RJ Phillips, AJW Powers, PD Price, P Rone, AR Round, A Seldon, NE Shaw, J Stone, D Summers, EJ Swinglehurst, A Warmington, DB Wilcox, SD Williams.

Against (0)

Abstentions (0)

Resolved – that the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2018/19, in appendix 2 of the papers, is approved.

47. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2018/19

Council considered a report by the Leader of the Council setting out the proposed Capital Programme for 2018/19. The report was introduced by the Cabinet Member Finance, Housing and Corporate Services who moved the Capital Programme 2018/19 as set out in the papers and explained that the schedule in appendix 3 had been changed from earlier years to improve the presentation of the schemes. The Leader seconded the Capital Programme as contained in the papers.

Members made the following points in the debate that followed:

- The change to the presentation of the figures was welcomed but it was felt that further detail was required to enable members to scrutinise the Capital Programme and propose alternative budgets. Greater detail regarding those schemes up to £500k was also requested. *The Leader confirmed that he would work with the cabinet member and the Section 151 Officer to provide detail on the schemes as the year progressed.*
- Concern was expressed regarding development partnership activities and the amount of money that it was proposed would be provided to a preferred partner. The obligations of the council to the preferred partner were queried. *The Leader confirmed that projects would go out to open tender to select a development partner but there was no obligation to contract those organisations involved in the early stages of working on proposals and producing plans.*
- A project from the current year had overspent significantly and a greater level of monitoring and scrutiny of spend on capital projects was urged in the forthcoming year.
- The future of the street lighting scheme was queried. *The Cabinet Member Finance, Housing and Corporate Services confirmed that all LED lights had now been installed and the scheme had concluded.*
- Detail regarding the stage reached in the development of the New Model Farm at Ross-on-Wye was requested. *The Leader confirmed that the Council would be*

- kept advised on progress with the New Model Farm scheme. The Cabinet Member Economy and Communications explained that a planning application for employment elements on the site would be brought forward in February 2018.*
- The investment in the A44 was welcomed and it was hoped this could be financed through money from the Challenge Fund. Greater flexibility between the revenue and capital budget was suggested to address the need for road maintenance.
 - There was reference to the gypsy and traveller pitch development contained in the proposed schemes but this did not include a temporary stopping site which had been recommended by the General Scrutiny Committee.
 - It was questioned whether the proposed expenditure on disabled and independent living facilities was to mitigate the closure of the Redhill centre and whether this formed part of the savings proposals. *The Cabinet Member Health and Wellbeing confirmed that the disabled facilities grant would be means tested and it was likely that some individuals using the Redhill centre would be provided with facilities financed through the fund. The Redhill centre would continue to provide care services until it became vacant when it could then be considered for asset disposal.*
 - The level of slippage reported in appendix 2 in the papers was highlighted. Detail regarding the reasons for the slippage and why it was accelerating was requested. The reallocation of funding between projects was queried. *The Cabinet Member Finance, Housing and Corporate Services explained that the slippage of schemes could be for a variety of reasons including planning issues or delays with procurement processes. It was confirmed that governance arrangements for the Capital Programme did not allow for the reallocation of spending from one project to another.*
 - The importance of prudential borrowing was raised particularly in light of the Commons briefing on borrowing and debt. *The Cabinet Member for Finance, Housing and Corporate Services explained that in order to finance capital spend borrowing was required. The Section 151 Officer approved borrowing and members would approve the treasury management strategy to agree the limits within which borrowing could occur.*
 - Concern was expressed regarding the use of the term 'political support' on the scoring table for schemes in the report; this was felt to be misleading and the title of the column should be amended. *The Leader agreed to discuss with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Housing and Corporate Services and the Section 151 Officer.*

A named vote was conducted on the capital programme, as set out in the report.

The capital programme was approved 39 votes in favour, 7 votes against and 4 votes to abstain.

For (39): Councillors SP Anderson, PA Andrews, BA Baker, WLS Bowen, TL Bowes, H Bramer, CR Butler, ACR Chappell, MJK Cooper, PE Crockett, P Cutter, BA Durkin, PJ Edwards, CA Gandy, KS Guthrie, J Hardwick, DG Harlow, EL Holton, JA Hyde, TM James, PC Jinman, AW Johnson, JF Johnson, JG Lester, RI Matthews, RL Mayo, MT McEvilly, PD Newman, CA North, RJ Phillips, PD Price, P Rone, AR Round, A Seldon, NE Shaw, J Stone, EJ Swinglehurst, DB Wilcox, SD Williams.

Against (7): EPJ Harvey, J Kenyon, MD Lloyd-Hayes, SM Michael, AJW Powers, D Summers, A Warmington.

Abstentions (4): JM Bartlett, EE Chowns, PP Marsh, FM Norman,

Resolved – that the proposed Capital Programme for 2018/19, in appendix 3 in the papers, is approved.

48. SETTING THE 2018/19 BUDGET AND UPDATING THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

Council considered a report by the Cabinet Member Finance, Housing and Corporate Services; Setting the 2018/19 Budget and Updating the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The cabinet member introduced the report and moved the budget as set out in the papers. He made the following points:

- The budget had taken account of the social care precept of 2%;
- The savings proposed in the budget ensured that a balanced budget would be achieved;
- The budget included arrangements for an increase in the level of reserves;
- The concerns of the auditors were raised and the opinion that small authorities were at greater risk from poor local economic performance;
- It was confirmed that the final effect of the Business Rates Retention Scheme on the county was not yet known;
- An additional £2million had been allocated to the budget of the Children's Wellbeing Directorate which would help support looked after children;
- Road improvements in Herefordshire were a priority in the budget;
- The supplement published after the despatch of full Council papers was raised which provided a corrected version of the graph concerning the base budget position in the Medium Term Financial Strategy;
- The budget had been considered through the General Scrutiny Committee and at Cabinet; and
- The final detail concerning the settlement from government was awaited. The Section 151 Officer had a proposed delegation in the budget to make changes in accordance with the final settlement.

The Leader seconded the budget as set out in the papers and explained that deliberations over the precept had been prolonged. It was felt that the proposed precept was correct to meet the pressures of social care on the county. It was acknowledged that 76% of the budget would be spent on care costs.

The leader of the Its Our County (IOC) Group made the following observations:

- Herefordshire was suffering as a consequence of austerity and city-focused government policies;
- The difficulties faced by the county were outlined in a recent report from the County Council Network; and
- Health and social care integration; support for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs); recognition of creativity; and 21st century transport solutions and sustainability were raised as priorities for the IOC group.

The leader of the Independent Group made the following observations:

- The budget proposed contained significant risk: borrowing was becoming unmanageable and there were few assets to rely upon in future. Significant savings had been achieved but mismanagement of contracts had been wasteful and costly;
- Increases in council tax and car parking charges were significant burdens for people at a time when wages were virtually frozen; and

- The investment in the enterprise zone needed to realise well-paid jobs in the county but there was no evidence this was happening.

The leader of the Green Group made the following observations:

- Withdrawal of central government funding and the ideology of the current administration at the Council had compounded problems in the county;
- The budgets that were set by Council would balance on paper but in reality often became overspent;
- Increasing parish precepts to provide for withdrawn council services placed a further financial pressure on local residents;
- The prioritisation of road building ahead of maintenance was an example of outmoded thinking at the Council;
- Herefordshire as an agricultural county relied upon SMEs involved in food and tourism industries which should be supported; and
- It was hoped that the new university students would provide an impetus to the local economy.

The leader of the Liberal Democrat Group made the following observations:

- The increase in the precept would place an additional financial burden on the residents of Herefordshire but it must be recognised that the need for the increase had resulted from a lack of investment in social care from central government; and
- Concerns were expressed about the level of borrowing proposed.

Members made the following comments in the debate that followed:

- In future years the draft budget should be considered by each of the scrutiny committees rather than General Scrutiny Committee alone;
- It was noted that the reserves had been depleted and subsequently built-up through the sale of assets. There was concern that the disposal of assets could affect the ability to borrow in the future. Greater risk management monitoring of the reserves was urged to ensure adherence to the principle of maintaining a minimum level of 3-5%. *The Leader confirmed that £11 million existed in the reserves and the receipts from the sale of the small holdings had not been added to revenue reserves, the receipts were included in the capital programme allocated to the development partner activities;*
- The prospect of a precept of 5.9% was raised which would increase the core funding for statutory services. This was in accordance with the outcomes of the budget consultation;
- To respond to the pressures faced by the county improvements to support growth were highlighted including improvements to infrastructure in the form of new highways and to broadband provision. *The Leader confirmed that future settlements from Amey would be dedicated to capital spending on roads.*
- The increase in the precept would be a pressure on local residents and detail of what the Cabinet was doing to lobby central government to support local councils was requested. *Regular discussions and conversations took place with government ministers and local MPs to promote the cause of the county. This had recently contributed towards the Midlands Engine decision.*
- The precept of 4.9% was reasonable; it was a balance between what people could afford and meeting the cost of council services;
- The impact of the collapse of Carillion on the Council was raised. *The Leader confirmed that there was no exposure to the Council from Carillion entering administration.*
- Future pressure for the county and the Council included the withdrawal of farm subsidies after Brexit and health and social care costs. The current pressures on the

budget from social care were significant and the proportion of the budget dedicated to care costs was substantial.

- Parish Councils were likely to increase precepts and the Council precept had been proposed without an understanding of the police precept for 2018/19.
- A full break down of the spending on the new City Link Road was requested. *The Leader confirmed that this would be provided.*
- It was queried how poverty would be alleviated in rural areas. *The Leader outlined how growth in the county through developing infrastructure and supporting economic development would seek to increase prosperity.*

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Housing and Corporate Services closed the debate and stated that there had been a number of good points made and that it was appropriate and reasonable to propose an increase to the precept of 4.9%

A named vote was then held on the motion proposing the budget set out in the papers.

The 2018/19 Budget and The Medium Term Financial Strategy was approved 41 votes in favour, 1 vote against and 6 votes to abstain.

For (41): Councillors SP Anderson, PA Andrews, BA Baker, WLS Bowen, TL Bowes, H Bramer, CR Butler, ACR Chappell, MJK Cooper, P Cutter, BA Durkin, PJ Edwards, CA Gandy, KS Guthrie, DG Harlow, EPJ Harvey, EL Holton, JA Hyde, TM James, PC Jinman, AW Johnson, JF Johnson, J Kenyon, JG Lester, PP Marsh, RL Mayo, SM Michael, PD Newman, CA North, RJ Phillips, PD Price, P Rone, AR Round, A Seldon, NE Shaw, J Stone, D Summers, EJ Swinglehurst, A Warmington, DB Wilcox, SD Williams.

Against (1): AJW Powers.

Abstentions (6): JM Bartlett, EE Chowns, PE Crockett, J Hardwick, RI Matthews, FM Norman.

Resolved - that:

a) the following is approved:

- i. the council tax base of 68,177.57 Band D equivalents;**
- ii. an increase in core council tax in 2018/19 of 2.9%**
- iii. an additional precept in respect of adult social care costs of 2% applied to council tax in 2018/19 resulting in a total council tax increase of 4.9%; increasing the band D charge from £1,376.50 to £1,443.95 for Herefordshire Council in 2018/19;**
- iv. a balanced 2018/19 revenue budget of £144.1m which includes**
 - 1. net spending limits for each directorate as at Appendix 3**
 - 2. a gross revenue budget of £241.2m (this excludes the dedicated school grant of £79m, after academies)**
 - a. Delegates to the section 151 officer the power to make necessary changes to the budget arising from any variations in central government funding allocations via general reserves;**
- v. the treasury management strategy at appendix 5;**
- vi. the medium term financial strategy (MTFS) at appendix 1 which incorporates the reserves policy, as determined by the section 151 officer as a prudent level of reserves; and**

- b) the section 151 officer is authorised to make necessary changes to the budget arising from any variations in central government funding allocations via general reserves.

49. PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2018

Council considered a report by the Chairman of the Employment Panel concerning the Pay Policy Statement for 2018. The Leader introduced the report and explained that it was a statutory responsibility for council to approve the publication of the statement. The Leader moved the Pay Policy Statement contained in the papers and Councillor Phillips seconded.

Members raised the following points in the debate which followed:

- The retention of the pay ration of 10:1 between the highest and lowest paid employees at the Council was welcomed;
- Detail regarding whether the Council was paying women at the same rate as men for equivalent jobs was requested. *The Leader confirmed that a written response would be provided.*
- Information regarding the average gender pay gap between male and female employees was requested. *The Leader confirmed that a written response would be provided.*

The pay policy at appendix A was put to the vote and agreed by a majority of council.

Resolved – that the Pay Policy Statement at appendix A summarising council policies is approved.

The meeting ended at 1.35 pm

Chairman

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			
<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>			
Supplementary Question – Dr Whalley			
<p>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.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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
Response			
<p>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.</p>			
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

		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			
<p>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?</p>			
Cabinet member response to supplementary question			
<p>A written response will be provided to the questioner by the 6 February.</p>			
<p>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></p>			
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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QMR July 17	3,700,000	1,545,000	6,000,000	12,000,000	6,855,555	4,900,000	35,000,555																				

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.

Agenda item no. 7 - Questions from members of the council

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
MQ 1	Councillor Chappell	With the closure of 'Hillside', and the expectation that patients will be discharged from hospital to their homes, will the cabinet member review the contracts in place with private home care providers, to ensure they have enough staff, can provide enough hours of care, have the resources to care for clients in their homes whilst allowing the council to secure contract efficiencies in line with savings proposals in the budget?	Cabinet member for health and wellbeing
<p>Response I refer to the answer provided to Ms Coda at public question number 7.</p>			
<p>Supplementary Question There is a shortage of full time care workers in Herefordshire The Council has half hourly care packages with private care home providers which causes huge logistical problems especially in the rural areas. There are several examples where care workers find a client who has fallen on to the floor some hours before they arrive. Having phones for an ambulance and made the client comfortable, are told to leave the client on the floor to go to the next client because their half hour contract with that client is up and there are no other care workers available. It is simply not acceptable to leave elderly, vulnerable people alone on the floor for what might be another hour before the ambulance arrives. With people being discharged directly from hospital to home and the need for care workers to comply with instructions from DN, physio, GPs over and above the personal care they have to give to their clients, it will not be possible for care workers to undertake the terms of their contract with Herefordshire Council. Will the cabinet member give an assurance that no client in receipt of a home care package with Herefordshire Council will be put at risk as a result of these contracts?</p>			
<p>Cabinet member response to supplementary question The intention is to make this happen. The building belongs to the authority but the services are the responsibility of the NHS. The Adults Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee considered the matter at its meeting on 25 January. Individuals in need of care recover better at home than in a care setting.</p>			
MQ 2	Councillor Crockett	Will the cabinet member please assure members that city centre sites, or others which the administrators of the proposed university show an interest in purchasing, will be disposed of in accordance with the treasury management strategy (to be approved at this meeting) and advertised for sale on the open market, ensuring that taxpayers of this county obtain full value for money, which is the duty of any public body?	Cabinet member for finance, housing and corporate services
<p>Response This is not a matter related to the treasury management strategy. The council has a duty to secure best value, and any decision to dispose of council owned land will be carried out in accordance with the council's corporate property strategy. That strategy sets out that the council may dispose of land at less than full market value, where it considers that the purpose for which the land is to be disposed of, is likely to contribute to the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of the community.</p>			

MQ 3	Councillor Powers	In early 2017 DCLG provided £503k from its Community Housing Fund for Herefordshire Council “to build capacity within local groups [and] set up support hubs.” This was approved by Cabinet on 9 March. What applications have been received, from whom, and to what sum; of which how much has been approved, is pending or been disbursed, what remains in the fund and where is this shown in the budget?	Cabinet member for finance, housing and corporate services
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Response

In accordance with the decision taken by cabinet on 9 March 2017, to date £195k of the £503k allocation has been awarded to support five projects. I will provide a written response providing the detail requested but these include: a community self-build project for veterans in Leominster, a hostel extension in Hereford, and parish council projects in Llanwarne and Fownhope. A further £110k has been allocated to support training, housing needs analysis, and delivery capacity.

Applications are currently under consideration which, if approved would account for up to a further £126k and it is anticipated that the remaining £73k will be allocated in accordance with the scheme criteria before the end of the current financial year.

The Government has announced that the fund will be continue for a further three years but will be administered by Homes England and not by councils and therefore future provision is not reflected in the proposed budget.

Supplementary Question

Can the Cabinet Member state categorically that all monies granted or yet to be granted meet the criteria established by Cabinet in March 2017?

Cabinet member response to supplementary question

My understanding is that all schemes were approved subject to those requirements. Happy to meet with the councillor to review any schemes of particular interest.

MQ 4	Councillor Jinman	Mindful of the £4.1m rural grant from government and the reimbursement from a previous Council contractor, what is the message to the road users and council tax payers as to the spend for this coming year on rural road repair, reconstruction and preventive maintenance and how does that match any survey estimates of need given the deteriorating state of the roads in most of the rural areas of the county?	Cabinet member transport and regulatory services
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Response

The message to tax payers is that we are using the resources available to us in the most cost effective way to improve and sustain the overall condition of our roads. The condition surveys show that we have improved the overall condition of Herefordshire’s roads as a result of the substantial investment made in recent years. There is more work to do and today’s report on the capital programme considers the investment of a further £5.6 million into our roads and bridges throughout the county in the coming year. Herefordshire has the second highest road miles per head of population in England and we continue to pursue every funding opportunity available to help us improve the condition of our 2000 miles of roads by investing in road surfacing work and bridge repairs that will reduce longer term maintenance costs.

Supplementary question

<p>What is the standard you are referring to (by which you measure improvement) when you say matters have improved? Has the norm against which you measure standards moved in the past 10 years to a new very poor standard?</p>			
<p>Cabinet member response to supplementary question This is a technical matter which requires a written response to the member and to be shared with all members.</p>			
MQ 5	Councillor Michael	Why are tenants of the council's land holdings on the Rotherwas Estate not being offered the opportunity to buy their own freehold before the land is sold by auction in London? Is this consistent with the treasury management strategy and asset disposal policies at the council?	Cabinet member for finance, housing and corporate services
<p>Response This is not a matter related to the treasury management strategy. As the report informing the decision to dispose of the freehold ground leases on this site set out, disposals are undertaken in accordance with the council's corporate property strategy. The council has a duty to secure best value. This is being achieved through open market disposals, which ensure that tenants have an opportunity to bid.</p>			
<p>Supplementary question Assurance is sought that all tenants are informed at the earliest opportunity when plots will be auctioned.</p>			
<p>Cabinet member response to supplementary question Property services at the Council inform tenants when the freehold to the land they are leasing is being taken to auction.</p>			

