

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

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
MQ 1	Councillor Marsh, Leominster South	I recently came out of Hereford station to a featureless expanse of tarmac with neither guidance to the town centre nor any sign of tree planting - or even places where they could be put. What is being done to make this important entry point to Hereford welcoming?	Cabinet member infrastructure
<p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The council is currently developing plans for a transport hub in this location which will see the regeneration of this area. This delivery of this hub will include the provision of good quality hard landscaping and planting. We will be consulting on this later this year to ensure users of the station and bus users and others have an input into the design.</p> <p>We are also working with the Hereford BID team to implement wayfinding signing throughout the city and this will include signing to city destinations from the train station. We are working towards the installation of this signing scheme by Summer this year.</p>			
MQ 2	Councillor Matthews, Credenhill	It is my understanding that when the contract was agreed with British Land in respect of the Old Market site, they were given an option on any further development on the adjoining land.  Can you tell Members if there are any indications from British Land that they will soon be taking up that option and if so, what will the financial benefits be to the ratepayers of Herefordshire?	Cabinet member for contracts and assets
<p><b>Response</b></p> <p>British Land have indicated they are considering the feasibility of exercising their option. Financial and other benefits will be a matter for consideration once any proposals have been submitted for consideration.</p>			
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p>My understanding is the contract clearly states after main development they have to pay for future development for basically nothing. Can he confirm that option is within the contract?</p>			
<p><b>Cabinet member response to supplementary question</b></p> <p>A written response will be provided to the member.</p> <p>Response sent on the 3 April:</p> <p><i>The option defines the sale price as being the <u>market value</u>. If the value cannot be agreed then there is provision for this to be determined by an independent surveyor.</i></p> <p><i>Obviously it is important to add that any Phase 2 retail scheme would carry with it additional financial benefits including Business Rates income from developed units and the broader economic impact of attracting additional footfall to Hereford as a shopping destination.</i></p>			
MQ 3	Councillor Harvey, Ledbury North	Cabinet agreed on 15 February to continue paying £25,000 p.a. for Herefordshire Council to be an observer at West Midlands Combined Authority board meetings. Please would the	Leader

		Leader state the number of occasions during 2017 when he attended a WMCA board meeting?	
<p><b>Response</b></p> <p>I must correct Councillor Harvey. On 15 February Cabinet accepted the scrutiny committee's recommendation to continue to seek non-constituent membership of the West Midlands Combined Authority but did not agree to pay the £25k fee set for non-constituent members; instead it agreed to undertake negotiations to secure either a reduced observer status fee and/or clarification that benefits accruing to observers are analogous to those accruing to non-constituent members. No meetings were attended in the current financial year.</p>			
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p>With no prospect of Herefordshire being able to do anything more than observe the decisions of others on the West Midlands Combined Authority for at least the next 4 years (at a membership cost to the county of potentially up to £100,000):</p> <p>How is the new leader intending to demonstrate value for money Herefordshire from whatever annual 'observation fee' ends up being agreed, and</p> <p>Is it the new leader's intention to actually attend future WMCA board meetings on Herefordshire's behalf or at least to begin to offer the board the courtesy of an apology on the occasions when he is absent?</p>			
<p><b>Cabinet member response to supplementary question</b></p> <p>The WMCA is a work in progress, the rules, shape and extent of the authority were developing. Meetings had been attended in previous years but they had been of little value. Minutes and briefing notes from all meetings were received and good relations had been developed with other Leaders through the authority. Herefordshire Council was currently on a waiting list to become a full member of the authority.</p>			
MQ 4	Councillor Chowns, Bishops Frome and Cradley	Why does the council have two different map-based systems for road defects, one for those 'in progress' and another for the much larger number of potholes reported but not yet actioned; and when will residents get an improved, service-oriented, single-map system that enables us to monitor council performance on addressing all road defects, and includes information on expected timeframes for inspection and repair of all potholes?	Cabinet member transport and regulatory services
<p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The 'report a defect' map allows new defects to be reported but also shows currently in progress defects; we are already exploring mechanisms to enable feedback on progress of reported defects.</p> <p>The corporate performance report received by Cabinet and published on the website quarterly includes information on overall performance regarding addressing road defects to enable monitoring of performance.</p>			
<p><b>Supplementary Question</b></p> <p>With reference to our existing standards and timeframes for inspection and repair of road defects what percentage of cases have been met in the past year and how does this compare to the previous year and neighbouring authorities?</p>			
<p><b>Cabinet member response to supplementary question</b></p> <p>A written response will be provided to the member.</p> <p>Response sent on 14 April:</p>			

## Overview

17/18 saw a significant increase in the number of Category 1 defects on the network. Despite this increase all category 1 defects were repaired within the timescales set out within the Highways Maintenance Plan (HMP). For Category 2 defects 17/18 saw a slight increase. It is inappropriate to do any major statistical analysis on this data due the changes in the HMP and repair timescales.

## Defect Volumes

Category 1 Defects	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Totals
17/18	197	115	111	138	134	121	119	121	117	269	412	317	2171
Performance	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
16/17	81	41	26	50	34	31	29	22	63	130	176	235	918
Performance	100%	100%	100%	98%	94%	97%	100%	100%	100%	88%	100%	100%	

Category 1 defects are emergency works needed to be carried out within a set period. Defects are required to be completed before the end of the next working day or within 7 days depending on the risk attributed to the defect. These defects are classed as higher risk due to the danger posed to the public.

Prior to December 2016 the Highways Maintenance Plan stipulated a response time of 24 hours for all Category 1 defects. The 2016/17 data is therefore not directly comparable with the 2017/18 data.

Category 2 Defects	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Totals
17/18	895	1586	2236	1440	1536	2926	1520	1221	1517	652	3284	3637	22450
Performance	100%	83%	93%	95%	94%	98%	97%	96%	98%	91%	94%	80%	
16/17	2653	3726	1920	1636	1606	1752	1580	1233	947	1237	888	824	20002
Performance	96%	96%	99%	96%	97%	98%	98%	98%	87%	85%	93%	91%	

Category 2 defects are works needed to be carried out within a set period. Category 2a has a timescale for defects to be addressed within 28 days and Category 2b has a timescale of 2 months. The categorisation of the defect will be based on the risk that it poses.

Prior to December 2016 the Highways Maintenance Plan stipulated a response time of 28 days for all Category 2 defects. The 2016/17 data is therefore not directly comparable with the 2017/18 data.

## Comparison with other highway authorities

The Council participates in the National Highways and Transport Survey, Customer Quality and Cost Efficiency Network which provides benchmarking information across 88 highway authorities across a range of strategic performance, customer satisfaction and cost measures. In relation to the % of Defects completed on time, Herefordshire is one of the highest performing authorities. Over the most recent monitoring period assessed (2017) Herefordshire's outturn for this indicator is 95% of defects completed in time. The average across all 88 highway authorities is 77.14% with many authorities performing much worse than this.

MQ 5	Councillor Bowen, Bircher	Can the Council and the citizens of Herefordshire be assured that all the monies returned to Herefordshire Council by Amey will be spent on the minor roads in Herefordshire: these roads are the lifelines of our large and rural county and have	Cabinet member Transport and Roads
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		suffered severe damage this winter and require urgent attention?	
<b>Response</b>			
The council has already allocated £5.1million from the Amey monies received to date to undertake additional highway maintenance works in the coming financial year. Further funds may become available, as matters are concluded with Amey and allocation of any further funding will be subject to the normal council decision-making processes. Investment is guided by the Highway Maintenance Plan.			
<b>Supplementary Question</b>			
The majority of the allocation would go where it was most needed but it needed to be remembered that local roads, between villages, in remote parts of the county were important lifelines.			
<b>Cabinet member response to supplementary question</b>			
The annual maintenance plan will shortly be published which will show the spend and investment across the highways network for the forthcoming year.			
MQ 6	Councillor Bartlett, Leominster East	What social and environmental standards will be set for any developments pursued through the Development Partnership, beyond statutory basics?	Cabinet Member contracts and assets
<b>Response</b>			
The partnership enables the council to exercise control of the quality and nature of developments and we will be able to specify the environmental standards expected for each development as proposals are brought forward for cabinet consideration.			
A number of commitments have been made by Keepmoat to deliver social benefits through the programme. These include using the local supply chain, supporting the local third sector, and contributing approximately 7.5% of its profit from residential sales to a community investment fund. The fund will be reinvested in community schemes through the partnership.			
<b>Supplementary Question</b>			
Can you also add anything on the setting of higher efficiency standards and environmental protections as well as access to public open spaces?			
<b>Cabinet member response to supplementary question</b>			
The control of quality and the nature of the development will be looked at when proposals are brought forward for the consideration of cabinet.			
MQ 7	Councillor Norman, Leominster West	What emergency plans were in place, and what additional support did the Council in fact provide, for vulnerable groups during the icy and snowy weather that severely affected Herefordshire for several days from 1st March 2018 – with particular reference to both street homeless people and housebound individuals?	Cabinet Member Health and Wellbeing
<b>Response</b>			
The council has longstanding robust arrangements in place to ensure the safety of vulnerable people during periods of severe weather, working with the providers of services to ensure care continues even in the face of travel disruption.			
These include arrangements for access to 4x4 transport for care staff and ensuring care can be delivered to those who need it most. Staff also maintained frequent contact with individual residents, ensuring they knew when they would next be visited and responding to emerging situations.			

We have long provided support to the night shelter at St Peter's and St James' Church House. The council's outreach worker also visits the shelter every morning to connect with each person who has stayed there. During the recent snowy weather, the council increased its level of engagement with potential rough sleepers to ensure they were able to access somewhere safe to stay overnight.

In addition, the council maintained an active programme of social media activity, designed to ensure people were aware of the full range of support available, provided advice on how to stay warm and avoid slips and trips, and encouraged people to look out for their neighbours who might be vulnerable.

I would like to place on record my thanks to all those staff, partners and members of the community who provided such a fantastic response during the recent extreme weather to ensure that those in most need were supported.

### **Supplementary question**

The response was focused on Hereford, what arrangements were there across the county in the market towns? Can the severe weather reserve be allocated to highways alone or can it be more widely disbursed?

### **Cabinet member response to supplementary question**

A number of smaller scale operations were in place across the market towns. The county-wide provision would be investigated and a response provided to all members. The severe weather reserve could be used for any aspect of Council business affected by adverse weather.

Response provided on 29 March:

*The council has longstanding robust arrangements in place to ensure the safety of vulnerable people during periods of severe weather, working with the providers of services to ensure care continues even in the face of travel disruption.*

*As part of its ongoing engagement with providers throughout the year, the council ensures that they have resilience/emergency plans in place to maintain delivery of services during cold and icy weather. This can include: arrangements for access to 4x4 transport for care staff in order to ensure care can be delivered to those who need it most; and enabling care home staff to stay overnight at the care home in order to reduce the need to travel. I should note that day activity services usually close for the health and safety of clients and staff who would have to travel to the venue.*

*During the recent snowy weather, the council actively supported care providers through a range of measures. A member of the broker team worked over the weekend to liaise and communicate with providers on any issues. It is of note that the brokers reported few issues of concern, with those that did arise being dealt with through other carers/providers supporting the client or accessing volunteer 4x4 support through social media.*

*Providers communicated with clients to inform them if they were going to be late to attend them at home. They also prioritised calls and, where possible, asked family and friends to support on calls where roads were not passable.*

*Our in-house service, Home First, also prioritised calls and had access to the resilience 4x4 volunteers if capacity permitted. As a result, this really helped the team to undertake the calls where the individual had no family or friends.*

*The council also has responsibility for supporting anyone who finds themselves at risk of sleeping rough. The council has long provided support to the night shelter at St Peter's and St James' Church House. The council's outreach worker also visits the shelter every morning to connect with each person who has stayed there. During the recent snowy weather, the council increased its level of engagement with potential rough sleepers to ensure they were able to access somewhere safe to stay overnight. While the shelter is in Hereford, the Rough Sleeper Outreach workers cover all of Herefordshire and the numbers reported are all rough sleepers across the county.*

*Historically, the Housing Solutions Team provided Homeless Surgeries in Leominster, Ross and Bromyard. With the opportunities and challenges presented through the Homelessness Reduction Act, we are hoping to re-instate this provision later in 2018/19, with details still being considered. The Homeless Surgeries were useful as they provided a presence locally for individuals, helped to prevent rural homelessness and established good links with local estate agents and landlords, which helped in securing private rented accommodation.*

*In addition, the council maintained an active programme of social media activity, designed to ensure people were aware of the full range of support available, provided advice on how to stay warm and avoid slips and trips, and encouraged people to look out for their neighbours who might be vulnerable.*