

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

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 1	Mrs Clare Palgrave, How Caple	The Hereford Transport Package consultation asks respondents if they agree that a bypass should form part of a package. What percentage answering No to this question will result in the bypass proposals being dropped?	Cabinet member Infrastructure
Response <p>It would be wrong to set a percentage in relation to a single question as you propose – this is a consultation not a referendum. To do so would be to disregard the comprehensive evidence base which informed the Core Strategy adopted by Council in 2015 and which confirms that the bypass scheme is needed to deliver the county's growth.</p> <p>The Hereford Transport Package sets out how we will deliver the Core Strategy with a bypass and package of complementary measures that will deliver our growth, journey, safety, health, and environment objectives. This is what we are currently consulting on and we want to know people's views.</p> <p>The responses to the consultation will contribute to the evidence base used to inform our decision-making and, as with previous consultations and evidence, the results will be made available on the website in due course.</p>			
PQ 2	Dr Nichola Geeson, Hereford	Will Herefordshire Council recognise that information provided to the public for them to state their "preferred" bypass route is misleading, inaccurate and incomplete, and therefore responses to the current consultation may be void?	Cabinet member Infrastructure
Response <p>Absolutely not. There is comprehensive information in the public domain about the shortlist of bypass routes which will enable people to consider proposals and provide feedback. The information has been developed by our consultants from current data sources and presented in a format that enables the impact of each possible route to be seen. The level of detail is appropriate to the development of the shortlist of possible bypass routes and further detailed technical work alongside feedback to this consultation will inform the selection of a preferred route, which will be the subject of further consultation later in the year.</p>			
Supplementary Question <p>On the constraints map labelling of features such as Hereford Community Farm, and archaeological sites such as Warham Medieval Settlement has been missed off completely. Identification of the Woodland Trust's Drovers Wood, Pippin museum Orchard, and Green Bank Queen Elizabeth II Field in Trust, that is designated Local Green Space in Breinton's Neighbourhood Plan, is almost invisible. There are more similar issues, but people need all of this information. Otherwise, when they choose a route, they will believe there is little of significance in the way. Do you still believe the constraints map is fit for purpose?</p>			
Cabinet member response to supplementary question <p>Yes, the constraints map is fit for purpose. If local residents knew of constraints they should make the council aware through the consultation, such enquiries have already been followed up. Meetings had taken place with members of staff from the community farm and there was an understanding of their issues. In respect of Drovers Wood there was also an understanding of the issues. The consultation responses and social media posts showed people are aware of the constraints. The responses to the consultation would be considered in due course and the constraints map was fit for purpose.</p>			

PQ 3	Mr Richard Stow, Rowlestone	Principle A of Herefordshire's Code of Corporate Governance requires "demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values", and Principle B requires "ensuring openness". The Government's definition of openness states: "Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing". In its decision making in 2017/18, has the Audit and Governance Committee demonstrated a "strong commitment" to openness?	Chairman of Audit and Governance Committee
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Response

Yes, the Audit and Governance Committee has demonstrated a commitment to openness. During the 2017/18 municipal year all matters before the committee have been discussed in open session with papers being made publically available in accordance with the access to information rules.

PQ 4	Mr Stephen Wegg-Prosser, Breinton	The HTP2 brochure (p.8) states that in 2032 "a bypass will improve A49 north-south journey times ... [with] AM peak hour reduction by 8 minutes Northbound and 5 Minutes southbound". Please confirm that these journey time savings are for the minority number of drivers electing to use the A49 bypass route, estimated from modelling to be about 15% of the whole. What are the time savings for the other drivers?	Cabinet member infrastructure
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Response

The quoted journey times relate to traffic travelling over the full length of the existing A49 between its new junction with the Southern Link Road in the south and the new junction with the bypass in the north. Journey times on this existing A49 through the centre of the city will improve in the future with a bypass in place, relative to the current day.

It isn't possible to list the extent of savings for other drivers in advance of the detailed traffic modelling currently underway.

PQ 5	Mrs Elizabeth Morawiecka, Breinton	Friday is the only weekday where traffic flows show a significant and consistent level of variance from the weekday average. WSP/Parsons Brinkerhoff claim that Friday may not be representative of a 'normal' weekday in Hereford. Hence it was decided that traffic would be modelled on an average of the Monday to Thursday peak hour flows. Why is Herefordshire Council planning a transport package around just a 4 day working week?	Cabinet member infrastructure
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Response

The council isn't planning a transport package around just a 4 day working week but is following the traffic modelling requirement set out by the Department for Transport. This requires us to identify periods where traffic volumes and trip purposes are relatively consistent as the basis for estimating a representative hour for a traffic model. For this reason we do not survey during periods of known lower travel rates such as school holidays or periods of higher traffic volumes. Following this guidance mitigates the risk of distortion to the averaging process which could lead to unreliable model results. The 'average traffic conditions' resulting from this DfT-compliant approach are an appropriate basis for transport and environmental appraisal.

Supplementary Question

What will the peak journey times in and out of Hereford be on a Friday with or without a bypass compared to current times?

Cabinet member response to supplementary question

A written response would be provided to the questioner.

Written response provided on 19 April 2018:

As those who live in and visit Hereford will be well aware, traffic flows in the city can be significantly higher on Fridays compared to the rest of the week. Indeed, the Report of Highways Surveys published on the Council's website identifies that traffic flows on a Friday are, on average across all monitoring sites, 3.7% higher than the average for weekdays. Tackling the levels of congestion and the adverse effects of traffic within the city are key objectives of the Hereford Transport Package and the benefits of the package would be seen every day of the week.

A robust traffic model based on sound data is necessary to assess and develop the Hereford Transport Package. In accordance with guidance published by the Department for Transport, the traffic model has been constructed to represent average weekday traffic conditions in the AM Peak, PM Peak and inter-peak periods. It is not possible to forecast traffic flows for specific days of the week.

It is important in building traffic models that they represent 'average' traffic conditions across the network and avoid specific days or events which can distort traffic movements. Models therefore typically avoid using data from weekends and school holidays for example, as outlined in the response given to the original question.

Following this guidance, the building of the model for Hereford has considered variations in traffic flows. As Friday flows exhibit a greater variation from the weekday average compared to other days, the model build has only included Monday to Thursday data in order to calculate average weekday traffic flows.

PQ 6	Ms Kate Sharp, Hereford	Cllr Price claimed Hereford cannot grow without a "bypass" yet the HTP plan shows 3 "sustainable urban extensions" but without information regarding how the 1,000s of houses in these areas will link to the education, employment, health service, leisure sites across the City. Why is the Council not proactively determining ways in which these areas could provide low-cost, sustainable homes that link to services without the need for a car?	Cabinet member infrastructure
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Response

The council has been proactive in ensuring that the urban extensions will be sustainable. The policies for the Hereford urban extensions are set out in the Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy, which was adopted following independent examination in October 2015. The Local Plan is clear that the delivery of the proposed housing levels and distribution is dependent upon necessary infrastructure, the Hereford bypass is necessary infrastructure. The policies for the urban extensions provide a range of requirements to be provided as part of the development, including:

- affordable housing;
- educational provision;
- new employment land and jobs;
- open space and green infrastructure provision;
- health provision; and
- other community facilities.

The urban extensions are also expected to bring forward and enhanced pedestrian facilities and improved cycle links and better public transport.

PQ 7	Mrs Jackie Morris, Hereford	The local development scheme dated January 2015 gives a target date of Autumn 2016 for public examination of the Hereford Area Plan and winter 2016 for adoption of the HAP. What are the revised dates?	Cabinet member infrastructure
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Response

The Hereford Area Plan is now expected to be submitted to the Secretary of State early in 2019 with adoption taking place, subject to consultations required on any modifications, following an Examination in Public. We are intending to update the Local Development Scheme by the end of April and this will set out revised timescales for the preparation of the remaining Development Plan Documents.

Supplementary Question

The Hereford Transport Package (HTP) gives no indication as to how urban extension areas will link with services in the city centre and other areas. Both the HTP and the HAP were to come forward together as

complementary and holistic plans. Why is the 'Hereford Bypass' being progressed ahead of the Hereford Area Plan?

Cabinet member response to supplementary question

The HAP is the effective neighbourhood plan for the city of Hereford and had a slow start because Hereford City Council did not want to proceed with it. Work on the bypass has been ongoing for 10 years and has been proactively pursued since the adoption of the Core Strategy in 2015.

PQ 8	Ms Ann Rowan, Brienton	The traffic modelling for Hereford shows that the greatest number of vehicle movements are for North East Hereford (Tupsley), generating many more car journeys than any employment area in Hereford. This area accommodates schools/colleges with well over 6,000 students. How do the HTP proposals promote safe, sustainable transport for young residents to access this area and reduce congestion in Hereford?	Cabinet member infrastructure
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Response

Traffic modelling of the Hereford Transport Package is ongoing. When complete it will set out traffic movements in Hereford with a bypass in place. This information will be set out in the outline business case for the project later in 2018. The Hereford Transport Package is a combination of a bypass scheme and a package of complementary walking, cycling, bus and public realm improvements across the whole city. Improvements being considered include 20mph zones, improved walking and cycle paths, improvements to bus stops, junction improvements for pedestrians and cyclists and improvements to public realm in the city. These proposals form part of the current consultation and we would like people to feedback to enable us to develop the package measures further.

PQ 9	Mr Ben Poulter, Hereford	Many residents and business affected by the proposed 'bypass' were not contacted about these proposals. Herefordshire Council lost one statutory consultation, first round of consultation on the HAP/HTP and omitted it from the report to Cabinet in January 2018 i.e. the Environment Agency response. Why can't Herefordshire Council handle simple paper based communications, if Herefordshire council cannot manage simple tasks how it will manage a complex, highly-engineered road crossing?	Cabinet member infrastructure
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Response

As outlined in my response to a question from Mrs Poulter at Cabinet in February, although notification of the intention to discuss route options within the approved core strategy corridor at the January meeting of Cabinet had been in the public domain for some months there was an administrative error in our contractor's mailing process, for which they apologised. We have taken steps with our contractor BBLP to ensure lessons are learned from this error for future updates and communications.

We have not lost a statutory consultation response. The HAP/HTP combined consultation resulted in two consultation reports, one for the HAP and one for the HTP. The Environment Agency response to the consultation in 2017 primarily related to the HAP and was included in the Herefordshire Area Plan Issues & Options Paper Consultation Statement dated October 2017 and published on the council's website. Within this response the Environment Agency requested early involvement in the development of the bypass project and this ongoing engagement was reflected in paragraph 48 of the report to Cabinet in January.

PQ 10	Ms Jayne Angulatta, Hereford	The Local Development Scheme for delivery of the Core Strategy/Local Plan, dated January 2015 states that it will be updated and published annually. Can I ask whether later versions have been published and if so where can these be found?	Cabinet member infrastructure
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Response

The council has not revised its Local Development Scheme in the period since January 2015. However, we expect to publish a new Local Development Scheme by the end of April setting out revised timescales for the preparation of the remaining Development Plan Documents now that the Gypsy and Travellers DPD is progressing to examination in public.

PQ 11	Mr Peter Hands, Lower Breinton	Why are the Conservative led Herefordshire Council going against the Conservative Prime Minister's vision and wishes of wanting to preserve ancient orchards and historical woodland's where new developments and roads are to be built? Herefordshire Council have proposed the western link routes pass through ancient apple orchards and the historical Drovers wood as laid out in the Breinton Plan.	Cabinet member infrastructure
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Response

The council holds to the aim of protecting the environment where new developments and roads are to be built. That does not mean that essential development can always be achieved with no impact on the natural environment.

This shortlist of routes currently subject to consultation was developed from a long list of 24 possible routes within the adopted core strategy corridor. Of the 24 routes originally considered those that impacted on protected ancient woodland were sifted out as national planning policy protects such woodland area when other route alignments are available.

Of the remaining seven possible routes some but not all routes impact on Drovers Wood and apple orchards in the Breinton area and we are asking people to tell us which route they would prefer based on the impact each has on these and other features and constraints along each bypass alignment.

PQ 12	Mr Clive Blunn, Hereford	In the traffic modelling for the Hereford Transport Package no data could be collected in 2016 for Aylestone Hill or Hampton Park Road. Both of these roads provide important access to Hereford. In the case of Aylestone Hill it carried more traffic than the A49 Ross Road in 2015. How can a transport model for Hereford ignore traffic on either of these roads and when will the modelling be reviewed?	Cabinet member infrastructure
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Response

These roads haven't been ignored. Automatic traffic counts weren't carried out but alternative surveys were and these are listed in Table 2-1 of the Report of Highway Surveys available on the Council's website and are informing the traffic modelling.

PQ 13	Mr Robert Chappell, Hereford	Will the Council please reopen its "Adopted Core Strategy" to consider removing the Three Elms Urban Expansion Zone from the Strategy until such time as the Council obtains its own independent expert advice as to whether the land in question is or is not suitable for development, given the ongoing issue of the underground water aquifers, rather than relying on advice being obtained by the Church Commissioners?	Cabinet member infrastructure
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Response

We have no plans reopen the Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy. This forms the statutory development plan the county, and underwent independent examination in public prior to its adoption in 2015. Elements of the plan cannot be "reopened" or "removed" in isolation. Any planning application for the development of the Three Elms site will be proceed to determination in accordance with the appropriate regulatory processes.

PQ 14	Mrs Carole Protherough,	The HTP modelling data shows "the combined two -way June and July 1 hour Monday to Friday flows at each HC ATC site show very little variation in flow between 2006 and 2016. This would indicate there has been little or no traffic growth within Hereford over this period", So what are Herefordshire Council	Cabinet member infrastructure
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		doing to tackle the real causes of increased congestion and delays?"	
<p>Response</p> <p>The council has and will continue to deliver a range of measures to tackle congestion and delay and has already delivered a range of improvement schemes including the new City Link Road, the new Connect 2 bridge and other extensions to the cycle network in the city. In addition, we continue to deliver a range of behavioural change projects to encourage people to make more use of active travel modes. It is however the bypass as part of the Hereford Transport Package which will provide additional capacity and provide congestion relief on existing routes in the city.</p>			