

Appendix 9 – Responses received from affected local ward members

Responses were received from five local ward members:

- Cllr Christy Bolderson, ward member for Wormside Ward
- Cllr David Hitchiner, Leader of the council, ward member for Stoney Street
- Cllr Tracy Bowes, ward member for Belmont Rural
- Cllr Bob Matthews, ward member for Credenhill.
- Cllr Mark Millmore, ward member for Holmer

These are reproduced below:

Cllr Christy Bolderson, Ward member for Wormside Ward

As Ward Councillor for Wormside, I appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback about the matter being considered in advance of the publication of the decision report. With limited information in the Report Summary For Consultation With Affected Ward Members, my comments are as follows:

The objectives of the packages as I understand are:

SWTP: Promote economic development with improved access to HEZ; reduce traffic issues; and promote walking and cycling.

HTP: Improve local and regional connectivity by providing an alternative route to the existing A49 through the city; encourage new business and job creation by making Hereford a more attractive place to locate with improved road connections and more reliable journey times; enable the delivery of future housing and educational development, attracting people to live and study in the city; reduce the impact of accidents and breakdowns on the city's roads by providing an alternative crossing for the River Wye; reduce the impacts of transport on air quality and noise within the city, and improve road safety; encourage healthy lifestyles by improving public spaces and encouraging more people to walk and cycle.

1. The objectives of the HTP are far broader than the SWTP. I do not understand why these packages are being reviewed together and not independently.
2. Each of the packages are at very different stages of their life cycle and therefore they should be assessed independently. For example, there should be an opportunity to proceed with one and pause/reflect/proceed on the other.
3. The possible options outlined are very city centric and do not reflect that Hereford is the 4th most rural county in England.
4. The possible options outlined do not appear to consider the socio-economic impact of stopping the HTP:
 - a. Evidence outlined in the independent report **Hereford Relief Road – Economic & Business Impacts (SQW)** suggests a relief road would:
 - i. Improve business growth prospects

- ii. Improve access to existing and new markets
 - iii. Improve access to suppliers, expanding production and taking on more staff
 - iv. Enable improvements to efficiency of local labour markets
 - v. Improve access to high quality labour – creating jobs, attracting inward investment, making Hereford a more attractive place to live, reducing commuter times, stemming out-migration of young adults
 - vi. Improve efficiency of business operations, costs and the productivity of existing jobs
 - vii. Encourage inward investment
 - viii. Improve the scale and speed of development on existing land
 - ix. Create temporary construction jobs
- b. To meet the central government housing target for Herefordshire, 6500 new houses was to be delivered as part of the HTP. Possible options do not consider the impact on rural parishes and infrastructure if the road is not built and the houses are not delivered. Rural parishes are already under significant pressure as Herefordshire is not currently delivering on required land supply.
- c. With reduced income from central government, how would the loss of income from new houses and business rates be compensated so that adequate funding can be provided to services (once statutory obligations to vulnerable children and adults is fulfilled). For example, if a fleet of electric buses are introduced, it would need to be a heavily subsidised service due to the rural nature of our county.
5. Money to fund active travel measures for the SWTP was to be provided as part of the LEP funding. How does the council intend to fund these measures if the road is to be paused or stopped?
6. Many of the active travel measures associated with the SWTP (eg. TRO on Belmont Road) can only be implemented in conjunction with the opening of the SWTP. In addition, local Parishes were in discussions with Herefordshire Council to implement further TROs on local roads to improve road safety in conjunction with the opening of the SWTP. How will these measures be implemented if the SWTP is paused or stopped?
7. Cllr Harrington was taken on a tour of the Wormside Ward on Friday 19 July 2019. He witnessed first-hand the number of HGVs using narrow laneways not suitable for such heavy traffic. In addition, he met with key businesses that provided him with statistical evidence to support the need for both the SWTP and HTP.
8. One business alone with the Wormside Ward has over 150 lorries going through the centre of Herefordshire each day. Cllr Harrington was presented with evidence indicating that the amount of greenhouse gasses emitted by these vehicles driving stop/start through central Hereford is much higher than when they are doing 60 miles per hour on a bypass. In this instance, the HTP would

be helping to reduce carbon emissions and would continue to support rural businesses and residents as electrification of vehicles increases.

9. Over 17 relief road studies and reviews of the Eastern Link Road have already been performed. Many are reported here https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/download/593/relief_road_studies_documents. I question the need to further explore the viability of an Eastern Link Road. Examples of reports commissioned by Herefordshire council include (and not limited to):
 - a. **Hereford Relief Road: Study of Options (Amey)** – looked at inner and outer relief road route options on both the east and the west of the city. The study concluded that the eastern corridors, although having greater time saving qualities due to most of the overcapacity junctions being located on the east, present a high risk in terms of delivery due to environmental constraints especially the Lugg Meadows Special Area of Conservation site. This would make it likely that any plans would be successfully opposed by Natural England under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Therefore the report suggests that this route should not be pursued any further. The study also highlighted that a corridor too far outside the city would not provide a short enough route to attract through-traffic or local trips. An inner western route was considered to be the preferred option as it would have a reduced impact on the Special Area of Conservation sites. An inner western route would also have a shorter crossing over the River Wye minimising environmental impact and construction costs.
 - b. **Hereford Relief Road Technical Studies (Parsons Brinkerhoff Ltd):** independent report reinforced conclusions in the Amey report.
 - c. **Hereford Relief Road – Economic & Business Impacts (SQW)**
 - d. **Hereford Relief Road Impact Study -Addendum on the economic and social impacts of a proposed Eastern Link Road (SQW)**
 - e. **Independent Review of Hereford Eastern Links Study (Parsons Brinkerhoff Ltd)**

Cllr David Hitchiner, Leader of the Council, Ward Councillor for Stoney Street

I am asked for feedback as Ward Member of one of the wards affected by the various major infrastructure proposals being considered by the present administration.

I should declare that my home could be affected by the outcome of these decisions.

I have observed the traffic situation in Hereford for nearly 20 years, the first three and a half from working in Hereford, and the next 14 or so commuting daily to Droitwich which has required either travelling through Hereford or going south and using the M50.

There are clearly many complex issues to be balanced. Were it a simple matter the issues would have been settled many years ago.

I believe that the significant issue for residence in my ward is traffic going into Hereford especially, but not exclusively, during the morning “rush hour”. I am not satisfied that the

plans put forward by the previous administration will solve this problem and I would welcome the opportunity to examine this further.

So far as the western bypass is concerned, I am concerned that this might result in considerably increased heavy goods vehicle traffic passing around Hereford attracted by those from South Wales by a shorter route than using the M5. Such traffic would pass along the A49 which is unsuitable for such increased traffic, passing through and disrupting many small communities between Ross and Shrewsbury, and increasing the prospect of road accident casualties. Such road use would also increase pollution to the immediate area of road, as well as the A49.

The construction of a western bypass, and the southern relief road, will irreversibly convert farming land into a road network. If there are less environmentally damaging feasible alternatives available these should be carefully considered, especially in the light of the recently declared climate emergency. All options should be carefully considered, with more consideration given to public transport, footpaths and cycleways, improved rail links and park and rides.

On the other hand the existing plans point to the improvements deliverable to the local economy through their adoption. These are important and need to be weighed carefully.

Cllr Tracy Bowes, Ward member for Belmont Rural

Firstly, in the spirit of openness and transparency I should declare that my home would be affected by the proposed Western “bypass”.

I know from personal experience about the traffic chaos in Hereford. Daily I travel up and down the Belmont Road, so like **all** residents I am keen for the traffic problems in Hereford to be fixed. However, residents do not believe the planned measures will address the issues they face and in time will probably increase the amount of traffic and pollution.

Studies show that eighty percent of Hereford city traffic is local, people wanting to get into the city for work, education and shopping amongst other things. **This means only twenty percent of traffic is through traffic.**

You should understand that Belmont residents also want to find solutions to the traffic issues. They are some of many residents that are affected daily, travelling to and from work or on the school run. I spoke to numerous residents during recent elections and they clearly said they want the council to prioritise walking, cycling and active transport measures designed **to tackle the issue.**

They want the council to look at other ways of reducing traffic, they want safer ways of getting into the city, extending cycle and walking paths, reducing the “stop start” traffic lights and improving bus services, which were greatly reduced across the county by the previous administration.

People in rural areas have almost no bus service which means people have to use cars to get into the city. Residents want to be able to send their children to school on buses which are environmentally friendly, subsidised and reduce the number of cars needed to do the school run. They agree we do not have enough bridges and that we need to invest in another bridge to the East of the City. It would cost a fraction of the cost of the proposed bypass and could be built relatively quickly.

As part of the “bypass” consultation exercise Belmont Rural Parish Council asked residents to attend an extra ordinary meeting on 16th March 2018, members and Officers from Herefordshire Council including Councillor Price attended and heard the various concerns raised. As a result of this meeting the Parish Council formally replied to the consultation, stating that residents did not support the bypass and **if** the road were to go ahead then their preferred option would be the olive/black route as this would have the least impact on Belmont residents.

The red route will have a massive effect on residents living in Canterbury Close, Tintern Close and Dorchester Way, as well as other residents across the ward. Other options which meant the road could have been built further away from existing homes, lessening the impact of pollution and noise levels were not chosen.

Residents were incredibly upset and frustrated, not only were their views ignored but, in their opinion, the red route was chosen to allow more housing, rather than helping to alleviate traffic congestion issues, therefore, not only would residents suffer from more pollution, but the measures would not address the traffic problems.

In summary we need to pause and review the transport packages, the data is out of date and we need to seriously consider the climate emergency declared by Council. The traffic schemes **MUST** be fit for purpose and must provide long term and sustainable solutions to our traffic problems.

Cllr Bob Matthews, Credenhill Ward.

As Ward Member of one of the wards affected by the various major infrastructure proposals being considered by the present administration, I found the four options forwarded to me for consideration and feedback to be extremely negative.

I would be surprised if any elected member would oppose an additional river crossing to the east of the city which would provide an alternative route for our emergency services, and at the same time greatly enhance the growth and provision of well paid jobs from within the Rotherwas Enterprise zone.

I fully agree that all options have to be carefully considered, such as public transport, footpaths and cycleways, improved rail links, privately constructed park and rides and the urgent upgrading of the Belmont/ Bridge Sollars Road.

It is vitally important that any scheme being considered should deliver long term benefits. The last thing needed by our hard pressed local business people at the moment is uncertainty. Provide the appropriate infrastructure required and I am confident that they will deliver the growth and jobs so desperately needed.

Cllr Mark Millmore, Ward Councillor for Holmer

The people of Holmer want us to get on with building the bypass.

There are many reasons to why we should not waste time and money on new enquires because all this work has been done extensively in the past. Follow this link

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/download/593/relief_road_studies_documents

Therefore, why are we messing about when all the material facts are at our finger tips?

For example

The planning committee from 12th January 2017 and council 24th January 2017 states.

‘A very comprehensive study of options by Amey came down in favour of a western route, for many reasons not simply the complications of Lugg Meadow being a Site of Special Scientific Interest. This was sufficiently controversial for Herefordshire Council to commission a review by Parsons Brinckerhoff who supported Amey’s conclusion. That conclusion is written into the core strategy which can be revised in five years provided there is a sufficient body of evidence to support such a revision. There is no credible technical case for challenging the conclusion now, nor with the core strategy published would there be an opportunity to present such a case even if one could be developed.’

These public enquires and consultations have been going on for decades here’s one from 27 years ago.

M.D Kavanagh’s B, Sc.(Eng) said in October 1992 when talking about public consultations concerning the Lugg Meadows.

‘The only effective way of overcoming these objections is to adopt an alternative route to the west of the city which was one of the two propositions put forward at the time of the public consultations. Such a route would be much less detrimental environmentally, whilst still providing a substantial cost benefit according to the Department’s figures’

Hereford is at a fork in the road we must build a comprehensive infrastructure now – bikes and electric buses are a small part of the solution.

For us to pass up a £180 million investment would be a staggering level of incompetence that would haunt this administration.

We need to tell the rest of the country that we’re open for business and create a future for our children.

Not to do so would be an appalling legacy of this council.

Do we want to go down in history as the councillors who demoted Hereford to becoming an irrelevant backwater?

Political agendas must be subservient to our duty to the people of Herefordshire.