

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO GENERAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 9 SEPTEMBER 2019

Please note that under the Constitution all questions must be directed to the Chairperson. Where it is not within the Chairperson's remit to answer the question he will ensure that the issue is explored during the committee's deliberations.

Question 1

Ms J Furniss – Belmont

Dept for Transport (DfT) Local Growth Fund Portfolio Schemes and Large Local Majors-Quarterly Monitoring Returns showed that submission of the Full Approval Application to the DfT was due on 4th March 2019 and that completion of works was due 1st May 2019. Both dates are labelled "mandatory" in the form, indicating that after this date funding, retained by the DfT for the South Wye Transport Package, may not be available. As both of these mandatory dates have been missed by Herefordshire Council, what revised timetable has been agreed with the DfT to confirm that funding is still available for the South Wye Transport Package?

Response

Thank you for your question. The issue raised is included within the grounds for call in as set out in the report published with the agenda and will be explored by the committee.

Question 2

Mr G Baker – Clehonger

As a consultant of a major business in Hereford all my working life (62 years) I have followed with interest the everlasting debate on a bypass for the city for over 40 years.

Following the well thought development of the highly successful Livestock Market it was assumed by many that the western bypass would soon be delivered.

A recent poll shows that the majority of Herefordians would like the council to get on with it.

All the evidence and consultations lead to a Government funded bypass.

Will the Committee and cabinet members please explain to the businesses of Herefordshire why anything new will come from reviewing and this holding up the development of the western bypass and southern link road.

Response

Thank you for your question. The issue raised is included within the grounds for call in as set out in the report published with the agenda and will be explored by the committee.

Question 3

Mr E Price –Oakcurch Farm Shop and Country Store – Staunton on Wye

I am the senior partner at Oakchurch on the A438 at Staunton on Wye employing many employees. After many years of talk, I believed that a Hereford Bypass was finally going to happen. A reason given for this pause is to review an Eastern bridge. After all the consultation process to arrive at the western route as the preferred bypass option, does not the Cabinet member realise the level of backlash any review of the eastern bridge will have as it does not constitute a bypass. Getting through traffic out of the city centre must happen

before any of the other reasons given can be delivered. East cannot be a bypass route therefore can the member explain what his pause can achieve in just 4 months.

Response

Thank you for your question. The issue raised is included within the grounds for call in as set out in the report published with the agenda and will be explored by the committee.

Supplementary Question

If a bypass to the east was to be explored would it go from the A49 to the A49 not just to the Ledbury Road?

Response

The Chairman noted that supplementary questions should relate to the grounds for call-in.

Question 4

Mr P Collins – Pontrilas

Is this delay in the progress of the infrastructure road improvements going to cause any funding to be lost or jeopardised?

Response

Thank you for your question. The issue raised is included within the grounds for call in as set out in the report published with the agenda and will be explored by the committee.

Question 5

Mr P Price – Preston-on-Wye

The cabinet members pause is fundamentally flawed and unconstitutional and should be stopped.

The Hereford Bypass is being considered in the prioritisation ranking for RIS 2 and will be decided by October for publishing late autumn. I assume the Cabinet member had the courtesy to speak to Highways England and Dept for Transport about his decision to pause this project when it directly impacts on the strategic road network which the A49 is part.

The Cabinet member for Infrastructures previous statements and that of some of his Cabinet colleagues that they will stop the Bypass contravenes Council policies in the adopted Core Strategy.

As the pause is described as a period of review and not a review of the Core Strategy, would the committee consider if the Cabinet member decision is in effect cancelling the project by default.

Response

Thank you for your question. The issue raised is included within the grounds for call in as set out in the report published with the agenda and will be explored by the committee.

Supplementary Question

It was questioned whether the decision to pause was in fact a decision to stop the bypass and asked whether the funding had been discussed with the expected funders?

Response

The matter would be explored by the Committee.

Question 6

Mr R Markham – Bull Products Ltd Rotherwas

I have a business with 70 staff and T/O of £12m, we are looking to expand to £50m by 2023 and recruit an additional 200 staff over the next 4 years. Over £6m of Investment decisions have made has been based on the core strategy 2011 plan, so my question is why key business stakeholders have not been consulted on any pause and my correspondence not answered?

Response

Thank you for your question. The issue raised is included within the grounds for call in as set out in the report published with the agenda and will be explored by the committee.

Supplementary question

Would there be full consultation with businesses to understand their requirements? What information had emerged following the announcement of the intention to pause work?

Response

The matters would be explored by the Committee.

Question 7

Mr J Johnson

There are currently peak time traffic movement restrictions in the Rotherwas Enterprise Zone (REZ) which the SLR was to alleviate. Can the Committee guarantee that the decision to pause the HTP and SWTP will not have an effect on the REZ expansion announced as recently as 16 August 2019, the new Cyber Centre and Shell Store developments and the Council and LEP investments therein?

Response

Thank you for your question. The issue raised is included within the grounds for call in as set out in the report published with the agenda and will be explored by the committee.