

**Minutes of the meeting of General scrutiny committee held at
The Council Chamber - The Shire Hall, St. Peter's Square,
Hereford, HR1 2HX on Monday 9 September 2019 at 10.15 am**

Present: Councillor Jonathan Lester (chairperson)

Councillors: Barry Durkin, Jennie Hewitt, Bernard Hunt, Jim Kenyon,
Alan Seldon and Paul Symonds

In attendance: Councillors Polly Andrews, Jenny Bartlett, Christy Bolderson,
Sebastian Bowen, Gemma Davies (Cabinet Member), Carole Gandy,
John Hardwick, John Harrington, Liz Harvey (Cabinet Member), Kath Hey,
David Hitchiner (Cabinet Member), Helen I'Anson, Tony Johnson,
Bob Matthews, Mark Millmore, Jeremy Milln, Roger Phillips, Paul Rone,
Nigel Shaw, David Summers, Elissa Swinglehurst and Kevin Tillett

Officers: R Ball, Director Economy and Place (ADEP), M Lane – Head of Infrastructure
Delivery (HID), A Lovegrove – Chief Finance Officer, C Ward – Monitoring
Officer, J Coleman – Democratic Services Manager/Statutory Scrutiny Officer.

S Burgess – Head of Transport and Access Services, J Callard –
Transportation Strategy Manager, K Morris – Strategic Capital Finance
Manager, A Neill – Chief Executive, N Webster – Economic Development
Manager.

10. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Bowes and Wilding.

Apologies were also received from Councillor Guthrie, one of the signatories to the call-in.

11. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Councillor Kenyon substituted for Councillor Wilding and Councillor Seldon for Councillor Bowes.

12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

13. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2019 be approved
as a correct record.

14. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Questions received from members of the public had been published as a supplement. It was noted that the issues raised were included within the grounds for call in as set out in

the report published with the agenda and would be explored by the committee along with any supplementary questions

A copy of the published questions and supplementary questions asked at the meeting is attached at appendix 1 to these minutes.

15. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Questions received from members of the council had been published as a supplement. It was noted that the issues raised were included within the grounds for call in as set out in the report published with the agenda and would be explored by the committee along with any supplementary questions.

A copy of the published questions and supplementary questions asked at the meeting is attached at appendix 2 to these minutes.

(Councillor Bolderson had declared a schedule 1 interest in the matter and had been granted a dispensation by the monitoring officer under S33 (2) (c) of the Localism Act 2011 as it was in the best interests of persons living in the council's area.)

16. CALL-IN OF CABINET MEMBER DECISION ON HEREFORD TRANSPORT PACKAGE AND SOUTH WYE TRANSPORT PACKAGE

The Committee considered the call-in of the decision of the cabinet member infrastructure and transport regarding the Hereford Transport Package (HTP) and the South Wye Transport package (SWTP).

The decision had been called in accordance with the Scrutiny Rules at part 4 section 5 of the constitution by the following twelve Councillors: Councillors Shaw, Phillips, Swinglehurst, Johnson, Durkin, Millmore, Guthrie, James, Gandy, Polly Andrews, Symonds and Tillett. The grounds for the call in were: that there has been inadequate consultation with stakeholders prior to the decision being made; that there was inadequate evidence on which to base a decision and that not all relevant matters were fully taken into account; that the decision is disproportionate to the desired outcome; that the decision-maker has failed to consult with and take professional advice from all relevant officers including the monitoring officer and the chief finance officer, as appropriate, or has failed to have sufficient regard to that advice; that the decision exceeds the powers or terms of reference of the decision-maker responsible for the decision; and/or that the access to information rules have not been adhered to.

The Chairman outlined the protocol for the conduct of the meeting a copy of which had been published as a supplement to the agenda papers.

Cabinet Member - summary of his decision.

Councillor Harrington – cabinet member – infrastructure and transport commented that the new administration formed after the election in May 2019 aimed to tackle Hereford's congestion and free land for development using modern sustainable transport measures and an eastern link river crossing at Rotherwas. It was therefore necessary to assess whether the current schemes provided value for money and solved the problems they were intended to solve.

Travel, transport and infrastructure development should reduce congestion, support the economy, improve health and wellbeing and make the county a better place. Account also had to be taken of the council's declaration of a climate emergency in reviewing existing schemes.

The report on which he had based his decision to pause and review the two transport packages had set out all the options and their implications. It was intended that a further decision would be taken shortly on the scope for the review of each package.

Presentation of Reasons for the Call-in

Councillor Phillips as the lead call in member spoke on the call-in followed by Councillors Shaw, Phillips, Swinglehurst, Johnson, Millmore, James, Gandy, Polly Andrews, and Tillett.

The following principal points were made:

- The transport packages were essential for the economic, environmental and social wellbeing of the county.
- A pause in work would potentially have a disproportionate impact and make the packages undeliverable. Highways England currently had the Hereford Transport Package as its second priority scheme for the west midlands. A pause risked losing that status. Work should therefore continue while the proposed reviews were undertaken. This option had not been addressed within the report.
- The southern link road was critical to the development of the Rotherwas Industrial Estate.
- It was questioned whether the active travel measures in the SWTP could continue to be funded from the current source if the southern link road was paused.
- It was also questioned whether the pause was contrary to the local transport plan and core strategy, both of which were part of the council's budget and policy framework, if the pause would result in funding being withdrawn.
- Paragraph 61 of the report to the cabinet member set out the risks associated with a decision to pause and review or stop the projects. Reference was made to the proposed mitigation that "specific communications required with funding bodies to clarify any risks associated with a delay in the council progressing bids, seeking to hold on current bids or the consequences of resubmitting bids in the event that current bids are formally withdrawn". It was suggested that clarification should be sought from funders before considering a pause.
- Appendix 3 of the report discussed option A, the decision that had been taken in relation to the SWTP, to pause all work and undertake a review whilst continuing active travel measures. It stated that if paused it was not known what the position of the Department for Transport (DfT) and the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) would be. In addition a pause may cause the land owners affected by the compulsory purchase orders to take action.
- Account did not appear to have been taken of these points in the decision. Assurance was required from the funding bodies that funding would not be lost as a consequence of pausing works. Otherwise the decision was disproportionate and departed from the budget and policy framework and the risk not mitigated. If that was the case a decision to pause could only be taken by Council.
- Without the western bypass the housing targets in the Core Strategy could not be met and a pause was therefore contrary to this policy.
- Paragraph 51 of the report indicated that a pause did not constitute a trigger for claw back of the grant monies. However, no such assurance could be given if funding was withdrawn by the grant funding body. Confirmation was sought as to whether a claw back might therefore be triggered. The sums involved had been capitalised. It was questioned what revenue funding would have to be found if the projects were paused and lost funding and what mitigation was proposed.
- Appendix 3 concluded by noting that a decision to pause would need to be reviewed on a regular basis. If the outcome of such a review was to cease then all capitalised costs would need to be funded from an appropriate revenue reserve. It was asked how regular that review would need to be.

- There had been a lack of consultation. The residents of the county as a whole should be consulted.
- The decision seemed to be at odds with the decarbonisation of the city centre.
- Sufficient reports had already been produced in support of a bypass. The council risked having to pay back substantial sums from its revenue budget.
- The consultation process had been flawed. It was unclear why some Parish Councils in wards had been consulted and others had not. In addition key stakeholders had not been consulted. There was also evidence that the database used to contact residents had not been up to date. It was also questioned whether what had occurred qualified as a serious consultation exercise.
- The pause would lead to continued uncertainty.
- Two parties of the three forming the coalition had campaigned in the 2019 election to stop the bypass. That was the political reality underlying the decision to pause. The matter should be considered by council.
- Residents along the A49, were adversely affected by pollution and supported a bypass to improve air quality.
- Residents in the Hinton and Hunderton Ward particularly on the Ross Road and Belmont Road were also affected by pollution from traffic but had not been consulted.
- Clarification was requested on the expected future level of HGV movements in the event of a bypass.

Cabinet Member Response

The cabinet member commented that issues of pollution would be discussed and considered and were therefore not relevant to the call-in of his decision.

The review would examine the detailed evidence and would take account of the climate emergency that had not been a factor when the two plans had been drawn up.

He considered the concerns about consultation to have some validity. The points made about the potential implications of a pause could be seen to argue in favour of a greater consultation period and he would consider this point.

He would also consider the suggestion that the schemes should be allowed to progress while the review was being conducted, although regard would need to be had to the additional costs that would be incurred.

(Councillors Durkin and Symonds as signatories to the call-in and members of the committee stated that they would consider the matter with an open mind.)

Questions from the Committee

The following principal matters arose during questioning:

- The Monitoring Officer confirmed that 32 questions had been received from members of the public of which 6 had been accepted. The questions that had been rejected or redirected had been questions that did not relate to the specific decision and were properly for the cabinet member to answer separately or were otherwise outside the scope of the call-in. The redirected questions would be published and answered at the next Cabinet meeting.
- It was asked whether the best course would be for the cabinet member to defer a decision until there had been better engagement, noting also the argument for continuing work in parallel with undertaking the proposed reviews to avoid the risk of jeopardising funding.

The cabinet member indicated that he intended to consider this point.

- It was asked if consideration had been given to using existing infrastructure to signpost a route round Hereford for HGVs.

The cabinet member commented that this had not formed part of the decision, but would form part of the review. He understood that the evidence set out that HGVs comprised 7% of the total traffic (48,000) vehicles crossing the river.

- Referring to paragraph 67 of the report it was asked if it was considered that there had been adequate communication. Wide consultation was essential on such a major issue.

The cabinet member commented that letters sent to those identified in the paragraph were not part of a consultation process but rather a notification of an impending decision. He reiterated that the consultation might have been carried out better. A full consultation would form part of the proposed reviews. He added that, although not part of the process, he had visited and spoken to many businesses at Rotherwas and Pontrilas.

- The cabinet member confirmed that there had been discussions with the key funding bodies and they had been updated.
- The Director commented that the Marches LEP was the largest funder for the SWTP. There was a confirmed funding agreement in place with them. That funding was expected to be drawn down by March 2021. As the cabinet report appendix 3 – option A stated, a pause that resulted in a significant programme change and completion after March 2021 would affect the ability to use the existing funding agreements. It was understood that the Marches LEP Board was likely to discuss the SWTP in September. They had acknowledged the wish to pause and review.

There was currently no secured funding for the HTP from external funders. The DfT funding process for large local major projects was a potential funder for the HTP. Midlands Connect, the regional transport body had been invited by the DfT to determine regional priorities and had indicated that they wished to see a conclusion to the review to enable them to take that into account in their advice to government. They recognised that the new administration wished to review the evidence base and had allowed the flexibility for that review to take place.

A separate bid had been submitted under the housing infrastructure fund to Homes England.

Highways England were also considering Route Investment Strategy 2 (RIS2) looking at the government's road building programme for 2020-2025.

The Marches LEP, DfT, Highways England and Homes England and other government bodies had been made aware of the council's consideration of a pause and review and the cabinet member report highlighted the risks and mitigations in relation to those funding arrangements and that would continue as part of any review. None of the funders or potential funders had indicated that they would not fund the scheme or indicated any change in their funding arrangements. This would be explored in the proposed reviews.

No particular timeline had been confirmed for a cut-off. The LEP Board had not yet met. There was no timescale for a funding announcement by Government in relation to large local major schemes of Highways England RIS2. They had not given a deadline for conclusion of the review.

The council had promoted the two schemes to government. If the funding request were to change that would have to be considered by government.

- Reflecting on the economic arguments for infrastructure development being advanced, it was remarked that Client Earth had written to a number of councils who were reviewing their local plans to see if their intentions were consistent with legal obligations under the Climate Act 2008. The cabinet member confirmed that the letter

had been received and that would form part of the reviews and of reviews of other relevant policies. The executive was mindful of the need for action as well as words in responding to the climate emergency.

- The question was raised as to whether the proposed bypass provided for within the Core Strategy and the Strategy itself was intended to reduce congestion in the City or to generate housing growth.

The cabinet member commented that he considered that there appeared to be some confusion within the Strategy. His view was that the primary aim was to unlock land in the west. Current figures did not show a reduction in traffic on the A49 as a result of the bypass. Questions included whether land could be unlocked in a different way or if congestion could be relieved in a different way.

- It was asked if anything could be learned from the current bypass works being undertaken by Worcestershire County Council. The cabinet member indicated that he did not expect to follow their approach.
- There was a logic to a pause and review to enable the new administration to satisfy itself as to the way forward. However, a bypass was required. A recent poll in Newton Farm ward had indicated 80% supported a bypass. The review must not be at the cost of unacceptable delay and additional expense and even cancellation of the funding secured.
- A view was expressed that the pause and review should proceed as proposed. Climate change had grown in importance as a factor in recent years and it was important to ensure that the current schemes would address this concern. Congestion in the City was an issue and it was important to ensure that the correct solution was identified.
- It was proposed that the council ensured that databases were kept up to date to ensure consultation conducted appropriately.

The cabinet member commented that only a small number of letters had been sent in error out of the several thousand issued. In three cases people had moved house. In two cases people had been deceased. Apologies had been sent and the databases updated accordingly.

- It was suggested that during the period of review consideration should be given to open days for parish councils, businesses and the public to seek their views.
- The possibility of holding a referendum on a bypass was raised.
- There was further discussion of the merits of pause and review compared with continuing work in parallel with undertaking the proposed reviews to avoid the risk of jeopardising existing funding, including consideration of whether to differentiate between the two projects given their different funding status. One view was that no further harm should be caused pending the outcome of the reviews.
- In terms of the delivering the SWTP by March 2021 the Director commented that the longer the pause and review the more difficult it would be to meet that timetable. The council would need to consider the flexibility of the funders and the profile of spend, noting that part of the funding was from the council. This would need to be discussed with the Marches LEP and the DfT.
- The Director emphasised there was no connection between the Marches LEP and any organisation that may benefit from the southern link road part of the SWTP. The Marches LEP considered priorities for the Marches and oversaw the discharge of government funding allocated to it. Funding had been awarded on the basis of all the objectives set out for the SWTP. The council could consider the profiling of the scheme and ask for flexibility from the Marches LEP. It would, however, be a matter for the Marches LEP.

- It was asked how the Marches LEP would view a request to progress the active travel measures alone. The Director commented that the active travel measures were a relatively small part of the £35 budget for the scheme (some £5m). He did not know what the LEP's view of such a request would be. He noted that planning permission had been granted for the southern link road. This set out the specifications for the proposed road.

(The meeting adjourned between 12.20 and 12.32pm)

- A member commented that the decision was disproportionate. A decision should only be made after consultation with all businesses and completion of the reviews and be determined by council itself.
- A member commented that it was essential that any consultation was conducted with the all the necessary evidence available to enable an informed decision to be reached.

Summing up by Cabinet Member

The Cabinet member – infrastructure and transport thanked all those who had contributed to the debate.

Summing up by Lead call-in member

(Councillor Phillips having had to leave the meeting Councillor Shaw summed up.)

Councillor Shaw thanked contributors and made the following principal points:

- A review was fine but this should not be at the risk of both secured funding and that which had been applied for given the years it had taken to achieve that opportunity.
- Many other authorities would be keen to accept any funding foregone by the council.
- The effect on the Rotherwas Enterprise zone the cyber security development and the new university shell store development and other council and private investments appeared to have been overlooked.
- The LEP met on 27 September. They had to ensure the funding allocated for the SWTP would be spent by 2021. Other authorities would doubtless have alternative schemes they would like the funding to be spent on instead.
- Given the political composition of the council the decision should not be taken by a single cabinet member but by council as a whole, possibly informed by a referendum.
- He welcomed the cabinet member's indication that he would review consultation and consider whether to review the schemes in parallel with continuing them rather than pausing them.
- There should be constant engagement with the funders both of secured and potential funding.
- He requested that written questions that had been accepted received a written response.

The Monitoring Officer clarified that the proposed decision was not contrary to the budget and policy framework and as such was not a decision for council itself.

RESOLVED: That the decision be referred back to the cabinet member to reconsider, and in doing so:

- **The cabinet member seeks clarification from the funders, of both the South Wye Transport Package and the Hereford Transport Package, of the funding implications of a review and ensures that both projects are not interdependent of each other;**

- **Ongoing planned activity, programmed in to take place during the pause, continues while the review is underway;**
- **The cabinet member hosts a time limited series of ‘open days’ with parish councils, businesses and members of the public to ensure their views are taken into account on all of the evidence under consideration as part of the review; and**
- **That all council, and council contractors, contact databases, as far as is practicable, are kept up to date ahead of contacting members of the public.**

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that, subject to confirmation, the next meeting was scheduled for Monday 23 September at 10.15 am.

public questions (Pages 9 - 12)

member questions (Pages 13 - 16)

The meeting ended at 1.13 pm

Chairperson

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.

MEMBER QUESTIONS TO GENERAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 9 SEPTEMBER 2019

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Question 1

Councillor Nigel Shaw – Bringsty and Bromyard

Can the Chairman advise who discussed with the LEP, and when, prior to the decision to pause being made by cabinet member, to ensure that the proposed pause does not impact the secured funding?

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

Who in Highways England had been consulted and when prior to the cabinet member's decision to ensure that the proposed pause did not impact on the secured and earmarked funding?

Response

The matter would be explored by the Committee.

Question 2

Councillor Mark Millmore – Holmer

The proposals for Hereford Bypass have been developed to enable the city centre to be decarbonised and improve air quality. To this end, the traffic that does not need to be in the city centre must be removed so that the city centre space can be enabled for active travel and public transport. This means preventing car use in defined areas. How does pausing or cancelling improve the air quality within the city?

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

How does the council reconcile its promotion of healthy activities within an environment in the city that is a hazard to health?

Response

The matter would be explored by the Committee.

Question 3**Councillor Carole Gandy – Mortimer**

In the Cabinet Member's report there are references to no fewer than 17 consultations pertaining to the HTP and the SWTP. Given the new administration's emphasis on openness, transparency and increased community engagement, can you advise me as to over what period of time this consultation was undertaken, with whom and can you explain to me how you ensured it was open and transparent?

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

A summary of the decision had been sent to all directly affected ward members but it had been stated that this could not be discussed with anyone else. How could local members effectively engage with residents and represent their views in these circumstances?

Response

The matter would be explored by the Committee.

Question 4**Councillor Elissa Swinglehurst – Llangarron**

Ground (d) of the call in holds that the decision is disproportionate to the desired outcome. What exactly is the 'desired outcome' of the decision?

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

Why could the cabinet member not carry out a review while allowing the core strategy to continue be delivered?

Response

The matter would be explored by the Committee.

Question 5**Councillor Paul Rone – Redhill**

The reasons given by Cllr Harrington for pausing include a review of alternatives, one of the alternatives is an Eastern Route.

Does the committee feel that four months is sufficient time for commissioning reports and feasibility studies – all at immense cost – especially when there are multiple reports already available?

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 6**Councillor Christy Bolderson – Wormside**

There was considerable public consultation during the development of the HTP and SWTP, however, there has been no formal consultation with the public in relation to pausing the HTP and SWTP. In addition, as Ward Councillor for Wormside I was asked to comment on a summary draft report, however, the report was being provided “in confidence in advance of the publication of the report itself and was not for forwarding to or discussion with anyone else”. This made it impossible to solicit feedback from Parish Councils and Ward Constituents. Would the Committee not agree that holding a referendum on the by-pass, and suspending the decision to pause until the result of that referendum, would be appropriate in light of the Administration’s commitment to increased public participation and decision making?

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

Why had there not been formal public consultation on the proposal to pause work? Would the committee recommend a referendum?

Response

The matter would be explored by the Committee.

