

Appendix 1 - Questions from members of the public

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 1	Mrs Protherough, Birch Hill	I very much appreciate all the hard work and consideration which has contributed to the Transport Review and note the commitment to providing an affordable, safe and secure transport system for all sectors of society, and to follow the principles set out in the governments 'Inclusive Transport Strategy' 2018. Taking into account that older and disabled people probably make up a quarter of our population how is this going to be achieved for this sector of society in an inclusive and well informed manner?	Cabinet member Infrastructure and Transport
<p>Response:</p> <p>As is referenced in the question, the review process has taken into account inclusivity and this formed an important component of the assessment framework which assisted cabinet in determining its preferred strategy and the importance of increasing investment in public transport.</p> <p>Ongoing development of the preferred strategy will be informed by government guidance including its Inclusive Transport Strategy, public and stakeholder consultation and reference to local demographic information which includes information on age and disability. We will of course seek to ensure that we capture information in our consultation and engagement which enables us to understand the specific views of people with protected characteristics and particularly those with limited transport choice at present.</p>			
PQ 2	Ms Stace, Leominster	Herefordshire Wildlife Trust (HWT) supports cessation of all work on southern link road and western bypasses but remains opposed to the concept of an eastern bypass. This would have severe detrimental consequences on the environment, including the Lugg Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), the River Lugg SSSI and Special Area of Conservation and breeding curlews, a Red Data Book bird. We are also concerned about future pressure that such development might have on land north of the A428, including Lammas meadows owned and managed as Nature Reserves by HWT and Plantlife. Given the recent declaration of Climate and Ecological Emergency, and previous rejections of this eastern route on environmental grounds, how could the Council justify investing further funding to develop such a proposal. Will the Council therefore also reject Package E on the grounds on unacceptable environmental damage?	Cabinet member Infrastructure and Transport
<p>Response:</p> <p>I understand the concerns raised by the questioner in respect of the important environmental assets to the east of Hereford. I can confirm that the development of an eastern link between Rotherwas and the A438 Ledbury Road will include the appropriate assessment of all potential impacts and this will inform the process of identifying, initially, a corridor and then route options followed by identification of a preferred route. This process will include consultation and engagement with all relevant stakeholders and statutory bodies. It is important to note the entire Cabinet remains opposed to an 'Eastern Bypass' but recognises the resilience driven need to fully consider an Eastern crossing, going no further than the Ledbury road.</p>			

Supplementary Question: Can reassurance be provided that environmental impact and damage will be rigorously considered in the question of an eastern bypass?			
Response to supplementary question - Cabinet Member: If an eastern link road was shown to be a solution to improve resilience, the current administration did not intend to take an eastern link road, beyond the Ledbury road and all necessary impact assessments would be considered fully.			
PQ 3	Mr Morfett, Breinton	The South Wye Transport Package is now clearly a zombie project with no prospect of funding in the remaining term of this Coalition Council. If it was never-the-less retained in the capital budget would it hamper the Council's emergency response to Climate Change introducing modern sustainable transport solutions, by adding further delays on improvements to existing roads, road/rail bridges, cycle networks and new electric bus services?	Cabinet member Infrastructure and Transport
Response: Removing the SWTP from capital programme does not free up any capital funds for alternative projects as the funding for this scheme has already been withdrawn following the termination of the funding agreement by the Marches LEP. In general terms however, not progressing the southern link road and the western bypass will allow all available resources to focus on the alternative transport measures included in our preferred strategy. These were set out at the cabinet meeting of 3 December 2020 and have been summarised in the report to council at paragraphs 22 to 24.			
Supplementary Question: With all due respect you have not answered my question. I asked if retaining the SWTP as an unfunded 'zombie' project would hamper the Council's emergency response to Climate Change introducing modern sustainable transport solutions? Would it not seriously hamper new designs? For example: Mass transit options along the Abergavenny corridor include reopening the Pontrilas rail station to reduce commuter and school traffic into Hereford on the Belmont road, supported by our MP and Welsh government. Surely this would be far less of a priority if you retained the unfunded SWTP? In the previous administration all sustainable transport infrastructure was planned to be implemented after road construction. Since the SWTP project was 'dead on arrival' having its funding withdrawn by the Marches LEP even before a strategic review was completed, is there not a clear case for a clean sweep on designs to enable an urgent response to the Climate Emergency ?			
Response to supplementary question - Cabinet Member: The SWTP does not work and southern link road does not serve a purpose. In a sense it is a zombie project, it has no funding, requires additional planning permission and business cases to be completed. Until a river crossing is achieved or other measures achieved it will not produce congestion and pollution reduction in the south wye area. Other measures could be implemented much quicker and the active travel measures can be retained. The resource implications are large and only limited project resource exists in county therefore there is a need to focus on sound projects in the capital programme.			
PQ 4	Mr Palgrave, Hereford	The Hereford Transport Review's assessment framework was based on four key themes - Economy, Society, Environment and Climate Emergency - which underpinned the appraisal of an initial long-list of 18 possible interventions. Two interventions included the Southern Link Road as a component part of bigger schemes (Option 14, full Eastern bypass, and Option 18,	Cabinet member

		full Western Bypass). The long-list did not include a standalone Southern Link Road nor a combination of the SLR with the proposed short Eastern Link between Rotherwas and the A438 in Tupsley. Can the Cabinet Member confirm that if Council decide to reject Cabinet's decision and vote to keep the SLR - either standalone or combined with Eastern Link - that the same comprehensive assessment using the Transport Review methodology would be required to inform a decision whether to proceed or not with the SLR?	Infrastructure and Transport
<p>Response:</p> <p>Cabinet was not bound by the 6 package combinations looked at in the final stages of the review and determined to select a blended package which identified a combination of interventions not specifically assessed as a single package in the review. As such I do not believe that we would need to undertake a re-run of the review if council determined not to support the stopping of the southern link road and/or the western bypass but as identified by Mott MacDonald in the peer assessment of the prior SLR assessment and consultation process, national policy has changed and we would, particularly in relation to ecological, environmental and climate emergency factors, as far as I understand, need to rerun those elements of the work previously done. If council does not support the stopping of the two schemes cabinet would need to consider how to proceed and take advice from the statutory officers.</p>			
<p>Supplementary Question:</p> <p>Thank you for your answer, which confirms that the preparatory work done so far on the Southern Link Road is likely to need updating to reflect movement in national and local policy on climate change. Variations have been made to the design of the SLR since planning permission was granted in 2016, and I understand officers have said that further permissions will be needed for these variations before the SLR design and procurement can be taken forward.</p> <p>Together with the absence of funding, would you agree with me that these points illustrate the SLR is far from a shovel-ready project?</p>			
<p>Response to supplementary question - Cabinet Member:</p> <p>Yes – I agree entirely.</p>			
PQ 5	Mrs Palgrave, Hereford	Would the Cabinet member for Infrastructure please confirm the position regarding the provisional allocation of money from the Marches LEP Local Growth Fund for the South Wye Transport Package (SWTP). The arrangement as I understand it was that release of the £27m from Marches LEP was conditional on Department for Transport review and approval of a final business case, which I believe was not completed. Has the Marches LEP Local Growth Fund allocation for the SWTP now been irrevocably withdrawn?	Cabinet member Infrastructure and Transport
<p>Response:</p> <p>Yes. The local growth funding agreement for the South Wye Transport Package was terminated and funding withdrawn by the Marches LEP following a majority vote of its Board at its meeting of 27 January 2020. The administration does not agree with the approach taken by the LEP and is strongly resisting the LEP's attempt to clawback the monies already provided and spent by the council on the package. A business case for this project was not completed and the procurement process for the tendering of the road building element to a contractor was not completed and was formally terminated.</p>			

PQ 6	Mr Franklin, Bromyard	The Critical Friend Review (Appendix D) highlights uncertainty introduced by Covid-19 and suggests that travel patterns may change considerably. It seems certain that local businesses have suffered with consequent losses of employment and erosion of the revenue base. We may also see erosion of public transport and greater car use with people finding employment further afield plus additional vehicles if the proposed housing developments go ahead. The Critical Friend Review suggests development of multiple scenarios in response to the uncertainties. Have alternative scenarios been developed which would enable Councillors to consider whether continuation with the SLR and Western Bypass, with consequent stimulus to development and employment, which will surely be badly needed, and avoiding the write-off of £11.8 million of reserves which may also be badly needed, should be re-examined in the light of the impact of the Covid emergency?	Cabinet member Infrastructure and Transport
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Response:

Firstly, as I understand it, the reduction in the usage of public transport is widely believed to be a temporary issue and directly related to concerns around safe distancing and COVID-19 infection potential. As the country is vaccinated this risk will decrease and the belief is that a return to greater use of public transport will follow, most likely within the next 12 months. Therefore it is entirely sensible and appropriate to consider what measures locally could drive an increase in bus service provision and usage' – ideally along a Herefordshire 'Hopper' model of collaboration. The focus of provision of an improved and larger local bus network is entirely in line with the direction from Central Government and the DfT, with the minister, Grant Shapps ascertaining that, "We will use our cars less and be able to rely on a convenient, cost-effective and coherent public transport network."

The Hereford Transport Strategy Review (included at appendix 3 of the council papers) identified the potential future trends and scenarios which might impact transport strategy requirements over the longer term (pages 33 and 34) advising for the need for an agile and flexible approach. Alongside current DfT forecasts for transport the review also included an assessment of a scenario in which long term effects of covid might see a sustained reduction in commuting traffic (page 96).

With this in mind the cabinet selected a blended package which combines a range of different types of transport intervention including better walking and cycling infrastructure, behavioural change, shared mobility, mobility hubs, investment in public and school transport, demand management and some additional road building. This will provide flexibility as we move forward. Cabinet wished to consider if any new road building was required and the review allowed us to look at alternatives with and without new roads and ultimately enabled us to make a selection which we feel represents the best value for money, will improve choice and resilience and also support local growth. Whilst it will be important to maintain a focus for this strategy, which will provide a strong basis to develop clear and specific bids for external funding, we note the advice provided by the review to remain agile and flexible due to the acknowledged uncertainty of the future. We do not feel that this agility and flexibility should include ongoing uncertainty for people living in the vicinity of the western bypass and southern link road and do not see any value in maintaining these schemes as we pursue the preferred strategy.

Supplementary Question:

It seems to me that the short answer to my question is "NO". In my original question here and that to Cabinet on January 21, and I thank the Cabinet member for his response, I have attempted to discover whether adequate cost benefit analyses were carried out and whether these would support the change in transport policy. It would seem that these analyses do not exist and I am left with the impression that thus far the proposed policy change rests almost entirely on qualitative judgements, which are necessarily subjective.

What steps have been taken to ensure that throughout the process of policy change from the initial announcement of pause and review, through the selection of consultants and the scoping of the review, the selection of options for consideration, and future implementation, that obtaining best value for money and the best outcome for the citizens of Herefordshire, as a whole, can and will be demonstrated?

Response to supplementary question - Cabinet Member:

In any consultation or analysis there was not perfection and the high level review undertaken by our consultant was based on quantitative and qualitative assessments. The majority were qualitative assessments by experts taking modelling into account. I am satisfied that the review was done to good enough standard; a judgement Mott MacDonald also reached.

PQ 7	Dr Geeson, Hereford	We read that the purpose of the review was to “ensure any major scheme has a positive impact on the county to address travel issues, such as congestion and air quality”. Building the Southern Link Road would mean a Traffic Regulation Order on the A465 Belmont Road to stop lorries using that, therefore adding to traffic on the A49. Even if an eastern bridge were built, there would be likely to be restrictions affecting HGVs on that route. So please can you confirm that building the Southern Link Road on its own would be likely to increase congestion and air pollution on the A49 Ross Road?	Cabinet member Infrastructure and Transport
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Response:

As per the evidence presented at the SWTP Compulsory Purchase Order Public Inquiry, autumn 2018, if the Southern Link Road was built on its own, traffic on some sections of the A49 Ross Road would increase and on other sections traffic would decrease. Most of the increases are adjacent to the SLR roundabout as traffic re-routes to use the new road. However, most of the links on the A49 corridor south of the River Wye are forecast to experience a reduction in traffic flow upon construction of the SLR. These are ‘net’ effects with some traffic diverting to the new route, thereby creating spare capacity on the A49, some of which has been partially filled by other traffic.

Supplementary Question:

Most heavy traffic approaching Hereford city from the south uses the A465 Abergavenny Road or A49 Ross Road, converging at ASDA roundabout and Greyfriars Bridge. A Southern Link Road would link these roads, completing a triangle. As I understand it, if the SLR were built, a Traffic Regulation Order would put restrictions on the types and therefore numbers of vehicles using the Belmont Road. This was to facilitate measures such as a bus lane. Imagine a lorry coming north towards Hereford from Pontrilas on the Abergavenny Road. At the junction with a new SLR, due to new restrictions it would turn right onto the SLR. If it needed to access Hereford city it would then turn left onto the A49 Ross Road at Grafton roundabout. Surely such lorries would add to traffic already using the A49 Ross Road increasing congestion and air pollution in e.g. Redhill? I have looked at the modelling figures you mention in the reply to my first question. As you say, they show some decreases in traffic flow on parts of the A49, which seems strange in the light of the proposed Belmont Road restrictions. Please can you explain how such decreases in traffic flow could happen? Perhaps the model assumes a large volume of traffic from the SLR travelling E to Rotherwas rather than N to Hereford city, but is that likely?

Response to supplementary question - Cabinet Member:

The original modelling shows an increase and a reduction in the Ross Road, it shows an increase around junctions and decrease on some other parts but the assessment was undertaken without factoring in induced demand. The work on the Hereford transport strategic review most recently undertaken did factor in induced demand. Before the question was answered definitely a further understanding was required through engagement with the consultants but without another river crossing traffic would only be able to transfer between the A465 and A49.

PQ 8	Ms Sharp, Hereford	The school run increases congestion at peak times by over 50% on some key routes into Hereford. In particular the largest area of Hereford that generated the most traffic in the city, much more than any employer, is the North East quadrant of the City. By delivering on Safer Routes to School and improving school transport, how much could congestion be reduced at peak times?	Cabinet member Infrastructure and Transport
<p>Response:</p> <p>I believe that Safer Routes to School and improving school transport can make a significant contribution to reducing congestion. Whilst the review did undertake assessment of safer routes to school and school transport as individual options (options 3 and 4 respectively with assessment summaries at 103 and 104 of the report at appendix 3 of the council papers) they were not options which could be specifically modelled in detail. As components of package A and B we do have an assessment of impact on various aspects of congestion and these include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15% forecast reduced delay at junctions across the city • 7% forecast reduced delay at junctions in the city centre • 2% reduction in journey terms along key corridors <p>These figures relate to a comparison with do minimum (no new transport improvements) for the forecast year of 2026.</p>			
<p>Supplementary Question:</p> <p>Historically there has been little to no capital funding to help schools deliver ambitions for active school travel plans and school playing fields have been sacrificed to provide increased car parking.</p> <p>With some areas of Hereford suffering much higher levels of childhood obesity levels than the national average, is the prioritisation of safe, active travel measures to school in Hereford supported by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee & Directorate as well as the Health & Wellbeing Board and the Public Health officer?</p>			
<p>Responses to supplementary question:</p> <p><u>Chairperson of children and young people scrutiny committee</u></p> <p>The committee had undertaken some work on childhood obesity and diabetes. Government had put certain measures in place to reduce childhood obesity which was key to addressing childhood obesity which the pandemic would have impacted upon.</p> <p><u>Cabinet member children and families</u></p> <p>The Children and Families directorate was keen to encourage children to walk to school and recognised obesity problems. The cabinet member infrastructure and transport was being consulted on what further steps could be taken to encourage active travel to schools and was something that would be taken forward together with green school travel plans.</p> <p><u>Chairperson of the health and wellbeing board</u></p> <p>The concern regarding childhood obesity was felt by the health and wellbeing board and the item was on the board's agenda. It was being looked at with the assistance of the public health team.</p> <p><u>Cabinet member infrastructure and transport</u></p> <p>The problem relates to an underlying problem that there used to be proper funding for school travel plans and there used to be more effort to work with schools to provide provision and training for cycling and pedestrians but the little revenue that was dedicated to such initiatives had been directed</p>			

towards the two large road schemes more recently. There has been a disadvantage created by the desire to pursue road schemes against a more balanced approach.			
PQ 9	Mrs Richards, Hereford	The Transport report makes mention that without new road infrastructure, strategic housing sites in Hereford may not be built out to the inflated housing levels planned in the Core Strategy. According to the Core Strategy, the City Link Road would help unlock land for 800 new homes in the Urban Village. How many new homes for local people, particularly affordable homes, have been delivered in the Urban Village since the road was completed and opened 3 years ago?	Cabinet member Infrastructure and Transport
<p>Response: The Core Strategy in policy HD2 proposes that around 800 new homes will be accommodated in Hereford City Centre over the plan period 2011-31, which includes development within the urban village.</p> <p>Between April 2011 and April 2020 (which is the last monitoring period) there had been 372 housing completions in the central area 181 of which had been completed in the three years since 2017-18. In addition, there were 188 outstanding planning permissions as of April 2020.</p> <p>In respect of affordable housing, 76 have been provided in the past three years in central Hereford with a further 74 anticipated to be delivered in the next few months.</p> <p>Consideration is also being given to the opportunity to bring forward housing on Council owned sites in the vicinity of the city link road.</p>			
<p>Supplementary Question: Please confirm that the real reasons why housing at 3 Elms, in the Urban Village and Lower Bullingham has not been developed as proposed by the adopted Core strategy, is not to do with the lack of a new 60mph road through the new housing estates in the West of the City, but: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the inflated housing growth figures; b) the flood risk associated with the proposed development sites in Hereford; c) the risk of contamination of underground fresh water supplies to 2 of the largest employers in Hereford, posing a risk to over 5,000 jobs in the city and more within the supply chain? 			
<p>Response to supplementary question – Cabinet Member: In essence it is correct, permission already exists for development to begin if other conditions are met. The planning inspector of the core strategy did not base their acceptance of the allocations of development in the west of Hereford on the provision of a bypass. The issues that are holding up the developments are outlined in the supplementary question.</p>			
PQ 10	Mrs Morawiecka, Breinton	Core Strategy Policy HD5 Western Urban Expansion allowed for a minimum 1,000 new homes, “a mix of market and affordable house sizes and types that meet the requirements of policy H3 and the needs identified in the latest version of the Herefordshire Local Housing Market Assessment”. The developer informed Herefordshire Council that contributing to a Western Relief Road would make it unviable to deliver 35% affordable housing out of the 1,200 units in their planning application, 20% more homes than in the Core Strategy. This site is well linked to schools, employment and the city centre by flat cycling infrastructure and regular bus	Cabinet member Infrastructure and Transport

		services, which could be enhanced further with developer contributions. Surely cancelling the Western Bypass is an opportunity to promote truly sustainable development, whilst delivering much needed affordable housing, designed around people rather than the car?	
<p>Response: The question refers to an historic position taken by the developer of the site (HD5) which has been updated to confirm their intention to comply with the requirement for affordable housing.</p> <p>As is set out in the report to council, we will need to continue working with developers to ensure that any planning applications comply with Policy HD3 of the core strategy on Hereford Movement and include robust assessment of their transport impacts and identify and contribute to any mitigation required for the development to proceed. In addition, policy H1 states that evidence of housing need and an assessment of viability of developments will be necessary where viability is questionable.</p> <p>I agree that cancelling the Western Bypass is the right thing to do and the preferred transport strategy does indeed represent an opportunity to support sustainable development and for developers to bring forward such development, with significant investment in active travel measures and passenger transport.</p>			
<p>Supplementary Question: The Herefordshire Council Land Drainage report Nov 2020 on the 3 Elms development says: “The bypass is also likely to require provision of floodplain compensation to the west of the bypass (in the area of the proposed employment land), the partial realignment of the Yazor Brook to move the watercourse south and facilitate an improved crossing beneath the bypass, and the provision of surface water attenuation basins that will drain to the Yazor Brook” If the Council don’t cancel the Western Relief Road, where are Herefordshire Council anticipating the 1,200 new householders work when the construction of the road requires the 3 Elms Employment site to become a vast flood plain, upstream of the City and what risk does this new flood plain pose to the city of Hereford situated downstream of this location, considering weather events in recent years?</p>			
<p>Response to supplementary question – Cabinet Member: There are issues associated with bringing forward this site in relation to flood plains, the water table and to ensure the two large businesses nearby were not impacted adversely. It was a question that the council would need to consider further.</p>			
PQ 11	Ms Smith, Hereford	<p>We would like to know why Huntington Hamlet Association was not invited to attend a meeting with Herefordshire Council, Developers, Church Commissioners with reference to the proposed Western Bypass. The Consultants reports stated that 3rd party consent would be required from the Landowners with Riperian Ownership in Huntington Hamlet as the Yazor Brook, SINC, flowed through their land forming a pond at Huntington House Grade II and Huntington Court Grade II with a lake flowing through 4 acres.</p> <p>All activities undertaken to build the Western Bypass and bridge over the Yazor Brook which cause water pollution, increase the water levels causing flooding further downstream to Huntington Hamlet without the consent of the Riperian Owners will result in legal action being taken against all persons responsible. The developers have already stated that they cannot guarantee 100% protection.</p>	Cabinet member Infrastructure and Transport
Response:			

Technical meetings were held between the consultants progressing the HTP and consultants supporting the development of the Three Elms planning application to consider the delivery/impacts of delivering both projects. These were initial technical fact findings meetings not stakeholder events and these ceased at the point at which the HTP was paused.

Supplementary Question:

In 2015 we advised Herefordshire Council to conduct a full land survey, including FRA on the southern and northern boundaries of the Roman Road but no action taken. There are many overground and underground streams in the area which have not been identified or mapped. Those on the northern boundary flow under the Roman Road to Yazor Brook Sire of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). Huntington Hamlet and surrounding areas increasing the flood risks south. We are asking Herefordshire Council to conduct a survey as a matter of urgency.

Due to Climate Change storms have become more frequent, winters wetter and the land waterlogged. Flood events increasing and water levels rising rapidly over wider areas not known to previously flood. Due to planning applications (PAs) being passed on flood plains Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) drainage being used, surface waters cannot always be contained on site.

Response to supplementary question – Cabinet Member:

This concerns a period prior to my role as cabinet member and a written response can be provided. I appreciate the ecological value of the area around Huntington and Yazor Brook and if there is good evidence to take forward a study it would be supported.

PQ 12	Mr Price, Preston-on-Wye	<p>In response to public questions at Cabinet 21 Jan, Cllr Harrington said “. The Western Bypass package, is forecast to cost £261 million.”</p> <p>The technical review costs for HTP bypass including the SLR are estimated as £190m.</p> <p>The table at Agenda item 34 shows the total costs to date, of the HTP and SWTP as £17.764m with no revenue costs on the SWTP.</p> <p>Please explain how in one week the cost of the western bypass can change by £71m and the total cost of these projects to date aren't showing non-capitalised revenue spend for SWTP; what are the full costs that should be included in the table, and an explanation given as to what “earmarked” projects won't be delivered because of decapitalising these costs?</p>	Cabinet member Infrastructure and Transport
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Response:

I can clarify that the cost of £261m refers to the full estimated cost of package A+C+D as assessed in the review. Package D is the western bypass and southern link road with a combined estimated capital cost of £190m. The difference in the two figures of £71m is the estimated capital costs associated with package A (active travel measures) and package C (demand management including bus priority).

The table at paragraph 34 of the report shows the full costs of the Hereford and South Wye Transport Packages with final costs estimated to give an overall cost of £17.764m, including all revenue and capital spend. The tables are accurate and SWTP feasibility was treated as capital throughout as feasibility can be capital spend as there would potentially have been an asset created at the end of the project and therefore all costs included as capital. HTP was treated as revenue as per CIPFA guidance until a route was chosen as costs on option appraisal and options not being progressed is not eligible capital spend and at that point costs are then treated as capital included feasibility etc.

The use of earmarked reserves to cover the decapitalisation costs of the HTP and SWTP does not impact any planned projects.