

Agenda item no. 4 - Questions from members of the public

Question No.	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 1	Peter McKay, Leominster	The Unclassified Roads, UCR's, shown on the Highways and Public Rights of Way Map include an estimated 90 miles of roads that are unsurfaced, and I ask if you could differentiate these by recording them as uUCR's, show with a different colour line, and add a section to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, presently at draft stage, covering the management policy for these?	Cllr Durkin
<p>Response:</p> <p><i>Thank you for your question.</i></p> <p><i>In response, I can confirm that not all our unclassified roads have a tarmac surface. Whilst I have noted the suggestion that the surface be referenced on our highway map, this would not be a current priority for the team due to the current amount of work currently being undertaken with regard to focussing on reopening Public Rights of Ways that are currently closed or dealing with the high volume of Definitive Map Modification Order requests.</i></p> <p><i>We will bear this in mind when the team have available time to reconsider our priorities.</i></p>			
<p>Supplementary question:</p>			
<p>Supplementary response:</p>			
PQ 2.	Mrs E Morawiecka, Hereford	<p>The Local Plan Regulation 18 Strategic Policies Document of March 2024 stated that the whole county of Herefordshire required only 9,608 new homes to be built to 2041, with 5,600 to be allocated to Hereford City along with 80 hectares of employment land.</p> <p>The 2025/26 Capital Investment Budget claims that the Hereford bypass “will deliver the Western Growth Corridor creating over 10,000 new homes and over 300 acres of new employment land”. Development to the west of Hereford poses the risk of the loss of over 3,000 existing jobs from pollution of water</p>	Cllr Swinglehurst

		supplies to 2 of the city's largest employers and increases the risk of flooding the City that lies downstream of the Yazor Brook.	
		When and where did Herefordshire Council agree this scale of development to be allocated to the West of the City?	

Response:
The council has not yet agreed to this scale of the development to the west of the city, it will be included in the re-drafted Local Plan which will be subject to a further Regulation 18 consultation period later in the year.

Government launched the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on 12th December 2024, which identifies a mandatory housing target for the county of 27,260 in the next Local Plan period (up to 2041). This is an increase from 16,100 new houses previously. To meet this increased requirement the council is reviewing where this level of growth could be accommodated, including the possible western growth corridor. The changes to the NPPF are so significant that the council will need to re-draft the current Local Plan which will be subject to a further Regulation 18 consultation period later in the year.

Supplementary question:

Supplementary response:

Question No.	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 3	Carole Protherough, Hereford	"This Cabinet has said that the reopening of the Pontrilas Railway Station is a priority of this administration. If so, why is there no capital investment in the Capital Strategy or Capital budgets for the next 3 years for this transport project?"	Cllr Price

Response:
The council has committed revenue funding to the development of a business case for a new station serving the Golden Valley area around Pontrilas and has set up a task force of key stakeholders to support this work. Until the business case has been completed to demonstrate that there is a viable proposal supported by DfT and Network Rail, it would be inappropriate to allocate any funding into the capital programme at this time.

Supplementary question:

Supplementary response:

Question No.	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 4	Jeremy Milln, Hereford	The proposed Southern Link Road (aka Western Bypass Phase 1) is now estimated to cost £40.3 million (£35m construction, £5.3m for D&M), apparently to be funded using £5M of capital receipts and £35.3M of public borrowing. The Capital Strategy states that funding above £6.7m is available to support capital investments that give a clear pay back through revenue budget savings. How much of the interest payable on this borrowing is contributing to the deficits of £1.217m in 2026/27 and £5.266m in 2027/28 and what revenue will be generated by the scheme to pay back the £35.3m of borrowings and interest over the 40 year repayment period?	Cllr Stoddart

Response:

The additional borrowing to fund the proposed £30m addition to the capital programme for 25/26 has a revenue budget impact aligned to the term of borrowing.

Repayments of borrowing and interest will be accounted for by reducing the value of the borrowing in the council's balance and recognising an interest expense in the revenue account.

The impact on the revenue budget in each year of the MTFS is noted below:

- **2026/27:** revenue impact of £0.25m (assuming borrowing of £5m in 25/26)
- **2027/28:** total revenue impact of £1.0m (assuming borrowing of £5m in 25/26 and further borrowing of £15m in 26/27)
- **2028/29:** total revenue impact of £1.5m (assuming borrowing of £5m in 25/26, and further borrowing of £15m in 26/27 and £10m in 27/28)

The council is committed to bringing forward the first phase of the Western Bypass. Once completed, this new bypass connection for the A49, from the south to the north of the city, will deliver the Western Growth Corridor, creating over 10,000 new homes and over 300 acres of employment land.

Supplementary question:

Supplementary response: