

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

Question No.	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 1.	Peter McKay, Leominster	At April Local Access Forum were informed that a Handbook for Parish Footpath Officers had been raised, which was welcomed, but do not recall if was to be made viewable online. Could you kindly confirm that this Handbook will be made viewable online, and if it contains information about, or will be revised to include information about, (a) the Street Works Register contained in reply to my question to Cabinet on 16 May 2024 seeking to avoid needless footpath dmmoa's, and (b) representation Parish ought make if walked line deviates from legal line, and if the deviated line becomes obstructed?	Cllr Hurcomb
<b>Response:</b> <p>Thank you for your question.</p> <p>A guide has been produced for Parish Footpath Officers to assist them in their role when working on behalf of their Parish or Town Council on the Public Rights of Way network. We have made the guide available to Parish/Town Council Clerks and Parish Footpath Officers but as the guide contains links which should only be accessed by Clerks and Parish Footpath Officers, we will not be making it available to the wider public.</p> <p>In terms of content, the guide contains information on the different roles and responsibilities, policies and procedures, and how the help and support of Parish Footpath Officers can assist with the management and maintenance of the Public Rights of Way network in Herefordshire. It also sets out how Herefordshire Council will support Parish Footpath Officers with what they do in their Parish or Town.</p> <p>The guide does not provide information on the Street Works register as this is not in line with our aims of producing the document. As we have previously advised, unadopted Highways Not Maintainable at Public Expense are available on our website via the Street Works Register tab on the Highways and Public Rights of Way map, of which there are only two locations recorded in the county.</p> <p>We are clear in the guide that where concerns exist regarding the line of routes or any obstruction then this should be raised with the Public Rights of Way team directly.</p>			
<b>Supplementary question:</b>			

<b>Supplementary response:</b>			
<b>PQ 2.</b>	<b>Emil Morfett, Breinton</b>	<p><b>The SEA Strategic Environmental Assessment of the LTP5 assumes no increased flooding from proposed road development west of Hereford to access land for a new 10,000 house settlement. The Scrutiny Committee is aware that this is the catchment that still floods Hereford City, despite millions invested in the Yazor brook SuDS Sustainable Drainage System. It is also the catchment that required extensive remodelling of the proposed flood alleviation scheme, for just 350 houses in phase I of Three Elms development.</b></p> <p><b>Why is the risk of flooding from soil sealing west of Hereford, and the increased intensity of flooding from climate change, excluded from any Strategic Environmental Assessment, of LTP5 given the increasing threat to our largest city and the high capital costs of mitigation building and maintaining extensive flood retention tanks, ponds and reservoirs.</b></p>	<b>Cllr Swinglehurst</b>
<b>Response:</b> <p>The SEA for LTP5 does acknowledge the importance of flood risk and climate resilience as part of its environmental baseline. However, it is important to clarify that the SEA is a high-level strategic document. It does not replace the need for detailed site-specific flood risk assessments, which are required at the planning application stage for any new development or infrastructure. It would be at the submission of a planning request for the housing settlements where the developer will be required to provide the detail you are requesting. Additionally, these planning applications will be subject to scrutiny and the public may object at that time.</p>			
<b>Supplementary question:</b> <p>My initial question was referred to Cabinet and the response suggests it is not a high-level issue and not for the public to question at this stage.</p> <p>Surely the very essence of a high-level SEA strategic environmental assessment is to examine the location and impact of proposed new infrastructure and urban expansions in the LTP5 before any land is allocated for development.</p> <p>With this in mind, will this Council consider commissioning a hydrological survey of the Yazor catchment as a priority to evaluate the risk of</p> <p>1. major adverse impact on both the commercial aquifer (supplying Avara and Heineken) from road construction over source protection zones (SPZ1 and SPZ2) and</p>			

2. The inevitable increased risk of flooding in Hereford city from run-off and the risk of failure of substantial flood alleviation schemes required for the proposed western urban expansion?

**Supplementary response:**

Thank you for the supplementary question. The requirements around the SEA and its role to inform the development of the LTP is prescribed in legislation and Herefordshire Council have complied with all requirements. Therefore, the council does not intend to commission any additional surveys over what is legally required at this stage.

As the per the initial response, we will work with developers, and as the council brings forward our own schemes, we will ensure any further required surveys are commissioned.

PQ 3.	Gill Jinman, Ewyas Harold	<p>I am pleased to note that it is a core aim of the LTP 2025-2041 “to support rural mobility and connecting our people and services” However, despite the measure mentioned on p 41 to produce a rural mobility strategy to improve accessibility and inclusivity, there appear to be no plans to address the recognised challenges of improving or providing rural bus services, particularly in the area south west of Herefordshire that includes the Golden Valley South Ward, nor any mention of plans for the Golden Valley Parkway.</p> <p>How will the plan be amended to incorporate these much-needed services to help fulfil the LTP aim?</p>	Cllr Price
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**Response:**

The LTP is currently out for consultation. Once the consultation is closed, we will review and analyse the responses and amend the LTP to account for the views that residents, businesses and organisations have submitted. We would welcome the comments raised within this question to be submitted as part of the formal consultation process as set out on the council website - [Latest consultations – Herefordshire Consultations](#) - so that these views can be considered alongside all other formal responses. All Local Authorities are required to have an up to date Local Transport Plan (LTP). LTP’s provide a framework for the council’s vision for transport and enables strategic integration with growth and housing plans; they do not generally reference specific schemes – unless they have already been agreed upon.

There are no published plans as yet, because one of the measures of the LTP is to produce a rural mobility strategy, which will address the recognised challenges of improving rural connectivity. Some of the options for doing so may well be through rural bus services combined with other forms of connectivity. As the LTP is in consultation we would expect there to be amendments based on consultation responses. There is currently a section in the draft LTP covering rail connectivity in the county. Even though the council do not have any statutory powers over rail infrastructure or operations our ambition is to work closely with Network Rail and Train Operating Companies to improve transport connectivity. Depending on the responses to the rail section of the LTP we will aim to dovetail our rail ambitions to work alongside stakeholders with the LTP consultation responses.	
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**Supplementary question:**

I am grateful to learn that the comments I raised in my question and which I have submitted as part of the consultation process will be welcomed. As Cllr Price has said (in response to a public question to Cabinet on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023) that “the reopening of a station at Pontrilas has long been a priority of Herefordshire Council”, and (in response to my question on 27<sup>th</sup> March this year) that “the Council continues to support the Golden Valley Parkway station plan as a strategically important proposal for the county and wider region”, please can he explain why it does not count as a specific scheme to be referenced in the LTP?

**Supplementary response:**

Thank you for your supplementary question. We remain fully supportive of the Golden Valley Parkway Station scheme, but it is still in the early stages of development and does not yet have the detailed business case, or funding commitments from government or Network Rail required for inclusion as a defined project within the draft LTP. The LTP prioritises schemes that are more advanced in terms of deliverability and alignment with current government funding programmes. The LTP is designed to be a flexible, evolving framework which allows for updates to it as projects develop and evolve.

We will also consider all comments received through the consultation in finalising the LTP.

PQ 4.	Sally Webster, Putley	<p><b>Are Cabinet aware that by approving road closures requested in connection with the Hills Ford Rally, that they would be in breach of their duties as laid out in advice received from Wye Valley and Malvern Hills National Landscapes Team.</b></p> <p><b>How does Cabinet propose that Herefordshire Council can demonstrate it has discharged its duty to further the purposes of Protected Landscapes in line with Section 85 of the CRoW Act (2000)?</b></p>	Cllr Durkin
<p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>Thank you for the question. The planned event has led to a number of issues which will need to be reviewed and addressed as part of any application process.</p> <p>Council officers are aware of the concerns raised by the Wye Valley and Malvern Hills National Landscape Team in relation to the planned event and the council's general duty in relation to land as set out in section 85 of the CRoW Act 2000.</p> <p>Additional supporting information and evidence has been requested, once received officers will review and make the final decision.</p> <p>Please note that information on the impact of the event is still being submitted and being reviewed, and so no decision has been made to date.</p>			
<p><b>Supplementary question:</b></p> <p>In the light of guidance to authorities on applying the strengthened duty to meet the Countryside &amp; Right of Way (CRoW) Act section 85 in National Landscapes (May 2025 briefing), and impacts of the Hills Ford rally last year on species and habitat, tranquillity and access, as evidenced by Wye Valley and Malvern Hills National Landscapes' consultation response, what further information is required before making a decision on whether the Hills Ford Stages rally takes place on the requested route this year?</p> <p>Additionally, in the event of any change to the requested route, when will this new route be published, how long will the period of consultation be, and how will Herefordshire Council meet its strengthened duty to sensitive areas adjacent to the National Landscapes?</p>			
<p><b>Supplementary response:</b></p> <p>Thank you for your supplementary question. All information submitted and guidance provided is currently being collated and considered. The determination will be made by the relevant officers under the council's role as the highway authority. I'm unable to comment further on when that</p>			

decision will be made. The organisers are aware of the views expressed in the engagement response and will need to provide supporting information setting out how they are going to or intending to mitigate any perceived impact. At this stage we have not received any information as to a potential route change. Thank you.