

Supplement to the agenda for

General scrutiny committee

Wednesday 18 July 2018

10.00 am

**Council Chamber, The Shire Hall, St Peter's Square, Hereford,
HR1 2HX**

Supplement 10 - Supplementary Questions and Answers

Pages

6. HEREFORD TRANSPORT PACKAGE (HTP)

3 - 6

1. **Mr. Milln - Hereford:** Disturbingly the council's response to my question shows that it believes that to comply with its duty under the 2010 equality act to advance equality of opportunity it needs only to demonstrate a '*process of assessment and review*'. Further, the council concedes that the proposed road has the potential to impact disproportionately upon the disabled and other less advantaged groups, even presuming beneficial impacts for them (see appendix 7 table 9). Yet, even its assessment acknowledges (section 5.2.9) would likely render the community farm at Wareham that provides land based therapy for the disabled unviable. That so, will the committee kindly advise the cabinet to abandon its road or at the very least withdraw its mendacious claim in respect of the disabled?

Response: The committee explored the issues raised by your question and have recommended to Cabinet that further information be sought from the community farm about the impacts of the proposed route on its viability.

2. **Mrs Morawiecka - Breinton:** The inquiry on the core strategy local plan planning inspector said the by-pass risks viability of the whole plan. The answer provided in the supplement says the benefits costs ratio does not form part of the methodology for determining a route for the by-pass. However, the cabinet and the general scrutiny committee are being asked at recommendation C to inform future decisions on the Hereford Transport Package for maximum cost of £2.45m. According to the report to full Council on 13th July, Herefordshire Council is having to borrow all of the £2.45m referred to in this report. If the road fails to show that it will deliver best value for money over any alternatives, why would HC wish to pursue any route if they will not secure government funding and this route will make the whole core strategy economically unviable. Where is the assessment of value for money for this road project and a comparison against the alternatives to inform both the scrutiny committee and the cabinet?

Response: Major schemes of this nature rightly require a significant amount of assessment and feasibility work; as the development of the scheme progresses the level of detail increases. In order to progress those assessments, which at this next stage will include benefits cost ratio, it is necessary to invest in the appropriate technical expertise, research and analysis. The strategic outline business case referenced in the resources section of the draft cabinet report provides an initial assessment of options and this assessment is reviewed and refined as the project moves forward in accordance with the recognised methodology for such schemes.

The approach taken to establish value-for-money for the Hereford Transport Package has followed the approach laid down by the Department for Transport's WebTAG process. This recommends a proportionate approach to be adopted at all stages of scheme development. The value-for-money assessment will consist of an assessment of the costs and benefits of the Bypass with the Active Travel Measures as set out in that guidance.

We previously developed a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) in 2015 and this is available on the Council's website

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/13069/hereford_transport_package_strategic_outline_business_case) The SOBC indicated a strong value-for money.

We will produce an Outline Business Case (OBC) later in 2018. This will combine the costs of both the bypass and the Active Travel Measures, with the benefits of the full HTP. The OBC will be presented to the Department for Transport for their consideration.

It should be noted that the issue of value-for-money is not relevant to the choice of bypass corridor.

- 3. Mrs. J Richards – Hereford:** I asked if there were written responses from Highways England and Natural England, surely this means that the consultations of the conclusion and the consultation report may be inaccurate and the scrutiny committee does not have all the information that they need to scrutinise effectively.

Response: The committee explored the issues raised by your question. It was explained that both organisations were engaged in the scheme development, but had not responded to the consultation. The committee have recommended to Cabinet that both organisations be invited to provide their views.

- 4. Dr. Geeson – Hereford:** On page 325 of appendix 1 – we read this from the Campaign for Better Transport: *'like the woodland trust we doubt that either of the two proposed bridging points over the river wye does actually avoid ancient woodland as claimed'*. I know that the woodland trust met with Herefordshire Council on 22 February to talk about the threat to woodland from a by-pass. Especially about their own Drovers Wood, but there is no mention of their views in these scrutiny agenda documents. Why not? And how many other unreported consultations from other organisation are missing and cannot be scrutinised?

Response: The committee explored the issue of unreported consultation responses raised by your question and received confirmation that all responses received are referenced. A number of meetings were held with interested parties, at their request, to provide them with further information. However not all organisations then went on to respond to the consultation.

- 5. Mrs. H. Powers – Breinton:** More organisations who responded to the consultation were against any of the route options, including the red route, than those who were in favour. Were the responses from organisations appropriately weighted when compared to individual response?

Response: The committee explored the issues raised by your question. Responses from organisations were, appropriately, given the same weighting as those from individuals.

- 6. Mr. R Palgrave – How Caple:** repeated original question.

Response: The information that you are requesting was published as part of the core strategy and local transport plan preparations and is available at:

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/download/123/adopted_core_strategy

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200185/local_plan/137/local_plan_-_core_strategy/1

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200136/travel_and_transport/220/local_transport_plan/1

- 7. Mr. P. Chapman – Breinton:** The supplementary reply cannot be right. Paragraph 1 said detailed traffic modelling is to be undertaken and that conflicts with paragraph 4 about monitoring of journey times. Para 4 is obviously *'tosh'* otherwise nobody would use the tube. Can I be sure that the council has assessed the success of the previous A49 route alterations in terms of journey times? For instance the A49 by-pass at the town of Weaverham promised alleviation of congestion, economic growth and better living standards just like Hereford. However, twenty years later in their design and parish landscape statement they said that the High Street is very narrow and that it's insufficient for some of the heavy goods vehicles that continue to use it, and

the large scale developments may add to this problem. Because of this it has in recent years been overwhelmed by modern traffic which has contributed to its decline as a commercial centre. After this road building failure, doesn't it seem perverse that Herefordshire Council is seeking to follow this disastrous route which will lead to a decline in our city and can the chair tell me when comparative traffic flow information will be properly open to scrutiny before the decision of the preferred route?

Response: The committee explored the issues raised by your question. Traffic modelling will be undertaken as part of the next phase of development. Comparison of average journey times with other cities are not appropriate given the significant range of variables involved relating to each location.

