

Supplement to the agenda for

Cabinet

Thursday 23 November 2023

2.30 pm

**Herefordshire Council Offices, Plough Lane, Hereford, HR4
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PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO CABINET – 23 November 2023

Question 1**Jeremy Milln – Hereford****To: Councillor Swinglehurst, Cabinet member Environment**

The five-storey steel tower at Jacob's Court in the Central Conservation Area, built in 2003 to a design by Angus Jamieson for Paul Tobin, is still scaffolded following concerns from the Council's Building Control of the safety of its glass panels. The ongoing charge for the scaffolding had exceeded £60k by the time Mr Willimont asked his question of Cabinet about it on 24th June 2021. Planning consent was granted over a year ago to replace the panels.

The matter is of considerable public concern, see <https://www.herefordvoice.co.uk/forums/topic/3031-jacobs-court-scaffolding/>

Companies House has no obvious record of a charge against the property company by which the expenditure may be recouped. So how much money is now owed to Herefordshire Council in respect of Jacob's Court, how will it be recovered and when will the eyesore scaffolding be removed?

Response

The scaffolding in question was erected in 2010 following concerns that the glazing installed had the potential to fail and was a potential risk through shattering and falling from a height. The scaffolding was erected to retain the glazing in position. The scaffolding has been regularly inspected and modified where required. The total cost of the scaffolding to date is circa £65,000. The council will seek to recover this cost.

Whilst retaining the scaffolding is a cost burden to the council, due to the public interest of maintaining safety, the responsibility of resolving the situation lies with the owners of the property. The Council has had recent dialogue with the owners but a solution has not yet been agreed.

Question 2**John Harrington – Hereford****To: Councillor Durkin, Roads and Regulatory Services**

In March, the previous administration's Cabinet voted to adjust the structure of the Public Realm contract with BBLP to bring back over staff, such as asset managers, technical staff, and inspectors (what BBLP call Locality Stewards) into direct Herefordshire Council employ. This decision was driven by the belief that without our own directly employed staff, the Council couldn't effectively monitor the extraordinary all-encompassing contract given to BBLP by the Conservative administration in 2013 - a contract abdicating such a broad extent of responsibility away from a local authority to a private commercial civils contractor that I do not believe has replicated by any Council anywhere else in the country. In accordance with the direct and democratic instructions given through that decision will members shortly be presented with the new model of the contract to vote on, which was due around now?

Response

The report to Cabinet on 2 March 2023 approved adaption of the Public Realm Contact to form a Future Operating Model that would best meet Herefordshire Council's key objectives. Since that time the Future Operating Model has been developed, and it is scheduled to bring a report

to Cabinet in March 2024, which will set out further details of the Future Operating Model, and seek support for its implementation to be operational from 1 April 2025.

COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS TO CABINET – 23 November 2023

Question 1

Councillor Pauline Crockett, Queenswood, Hereford

To: Councillor Stoddart, Cabinet member finance and corporate services

In Feb this year Full Council agreed a £4 million All Ages Social Care Budget, this appears to have now been omitted. Could I ask how we can be assured that savings and efficiencies will be delivered especially in Childrens without this investment going ahead?

Response

The Quarter 2 Budget Report for 2023/24 notes that the £4.0 million All Ages Social Care budget approved by Council in February 2023 has been applied to Directorate budgets in 2023/24 to meet additional demand and cost pressures in the Community Wellbeing (£2.6 million) and the Children & Young People (£1.4 million).

In the Community Wellbeing Directorate, the £2.6 million allocation has been applied to Physical Support and Learning Disability client budgets to manage additional demand and cost pressures in 2023/24.

In the Children & Young People Directorate, the £1.4 million allocation has been used to support delivery of the children's improvement plan.

