



**Supplement to the agenda for**

# **Council**

**Friday 5 December 2025**

**10.00 am**

**Conference Room 1 - Herefordshire Council, Plough Lane  
Offices, Hereford, HR4 0LE**

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## Agenda item no. 5 - Questions from members of the public

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 1	Mr Banks, Hereford	<p>Under the Council's Planning Code, Rule 5.6.28 requires late representations received after the noon deadline to be either published in the Schedule of Updates or discounted, while Rule 5.6.60 permits deferral of an item if new material evidence changes circumstances immediately prior to a meeting.</p> <p>Can the Chair clarify whether the Council interprets these rules as permitting material received after the noon deadline to be presented to Committee without prior publication in the Schedule of Updates, provided it is referenced verbally in the officer's presentation?</p> <p>Does the Council accept that if late material is not published in advance, objectors are denied the opportunity to respond, thereby undermining natural justice and procedural fairness?</p> <p>Will the Council commit to publishing all late material or deferring items in accordance with these rules going forward?</p>	Cabinet member environment

### Response:

The Council always suggests that, in line with the Council's Planning Code (referenced) late representations are received before 12pm on the day before the committee meeting. This allows the officers time to add representations to the Updates sheet for publication. Planning code rule 5.6.28 provides that "papers received after that time will normally be discounted, since time will not be available to check their accuracy or to give consideration to their implications".

There are times where representations are sent directly to the Members of the Planning Committee after this time. This is not uncommon and members are asked to send this to the officers (if they have not already been copied in) so that officers can review this and make a decision as to whether the information raises matters that would require the deferral of the application for further consideration. Officers will refer to this correspondence in their verbal updates.

It should also be noted that verbal representations received on the day by members can also be taken into account. These do, on occasion also raise matters not previously received in writing.

If members, having reviewed the late representation, require further information or clarity from officers, then they can resolve to defer the item.

Officers will, where possible, continue to review late submissions and provide a verbal update. They will also consult with the Chair of the Committee, in accordance with rule 5.6.60, if it is considered that new, material evidence changes circumstances and it is appropriate to defer the item to avoid procedural unfairness.

PQ 2	Ms Mathias, Hereford	<p>Herefordshire Council's taxi licensing policy emphasises public safety, including safeguarding against child sexual abuse and exploitation. But the safety of women and children cannot be secured without enforcement of the policy. Taxi driver identification is paramount for passenger safety, accountability and maintaining public trust. The fact that individuals may be operating licensed taxis without matching identification is concerning and may suggest potential misuse of taxi licences.</p> <p>What precautions does Herefordshire Council take to make sure their strict licensing regulations are adhered to?</p>	Cabinet member roads and regulatory services
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**Response:**

As part of the Winter of Action 2025/26, and through Operation Radiate, we are planning joint patrols and targeted licensing activity to strengthen visibility and assurance. Passenger safety is reinforced through the conditions attached to every licence, including the requirement for CCTV in licensed vehicles. This work is supported by close partnership arrangements with West Mercia Police, Children's Services, the Community Safety Partnership and safeguarding boards to identify and address risks quickly.

Public safety is central to Herefordshire Council's taxi licensing responsibilities, and we take robust steps to ensure that only safe vehicles and fit and proper drivers operate within the county. Before a licence is granted, applicants undergo enhanced DBS checks with barred-list information, right-to-work verification, medical and driving-standards assessments, and mandatory safeguarding and child-exploitation training. A licence is only issued once all requirements have been fully met.

All licensed drivers must wear their council-issued photo identification badge, and every licensed vehicle must display the correct licence plate. These identifiers are tightly controlled and traceable, and any report that a driver or vehicle may be using incorrect or mismatched identification is treated as a safeguarding concern and investigated immediately. In practice, such incidents are extremely rare, and the close-knit nature of Herefordshire's taxi community means potential issues are brought to our attention very quickly.

Through this combination of stringent licensing checks, intelligence-led enforcement and strong partnership working, the Council ensures that taxi licensing regulations are adhered to and that the public can have confidence in the safety of licensed taxis in Herefordshire.

PQ3	Mr Morfett, Hereford	<p>The Herefordshire Biodiversity Action Plan is not a credible plan to tackle climate change while protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment.</p> <p>In the Local Transport Plan the Biodiversity Net Gain Policy TN13 states: "We will support local groups and volunteers to keep the Herefordshire Biodiversity Action Plan updated."</p>	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure
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	<p>This statement by Herefordshire Council lacks any commitment to actually protect and enhance the environment through its transport policies by environmental impact analysis, net biodiversity loss assessment, mitigation and full offset of the inevitable environmental impacts. It only commits to update the plan.</p> <p>How could policy TN13 possibly deliver on the Council's strategic objective of "Tackling climate change and protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment" ?</p>	
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**Response:**

Policy TN14 in the Local Transport Plan is regarding biodiversity and TN13 is regarding carbon; as your question refers to biodiversity I have answered the question based on biodiversity which is why there will be difference between the policy numbers in the question and this answer. TN14 reflects our commitment to ensuring transport planning supports biodiversity and environmental objectives. We recognise that tackling climate change and protecting the natural and built environment requires a joined-up approach. The transport planning team will work closely with the Council's Natural Environment Team and other partners to integrate biodiversity considerations into the design and delivery of transport schemes.

TN14 is not just about keeping the Biodiversity Action Plan updated—it is about using that plan as a key reference point when developing transport projects. This means assessing environmental impacts, identifying opportunities for biodiversity net gain, and incorporating mitigation measures wherever possible. By aligning transport policies with sustainability priorities, we can ensure that infrastructure improvements contribute positively to Herefordshire's unique environment.

As detailed in the LTP the council have invested £250,000 in supporting highways biodiversity net gain plus we detail a case study where through FCC Environment grant we awarded up to £35,000 for community projects to improve biodiversity.

Alongside TN14, the LTP includes wider commitments such as reducing carbon emissions, promoting active travel, and embedding environmental appraisal into scheme development. Together, these measures help deliver the Council's strategic objective of tackling the climate and ecological emergency and protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment.

PQ 4	Mrs Morawiecka, Hereford	Investing in safe, active travel measures and 20mph in urban and residential areas is shown to reduce car use for short journeys and cut car insurance costs, in Wales by £50 per household. Reducing car use and lower traffic speeds, creates higher disposable incomes for residents and thus strengthens the local economy whilst also improving the health, access and productivity of residents. This view is supported by both Active Travel England and the Dept for Transport. Why then does the Herefordshire LTP Transport Network Strategy "Supporting a Thriving & Prosperous Economy" omit any mention of improving active travel networks?	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure
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**Response:**

The Local Transport Plan (LTP) fully recognises the importance of active travel and speed management in delivering economic, health, and environmental benefits. While the Transport Network Strategy focuses on the overall connectivity needed to support economic growth, active travel is a core element of the LTP and is addressed in detail within the plan and supporting Council policies.

The detailed active travel measures you mention are covered in the dedicated Active Travel Strategy; the Local Cycling, Walking and Wheeling Plan (LCWWIP). The LCWWIP will provide the detailed list of schemes and investment priorities for walking and cycling improvements across Herefordshire. This ensures that active travel receives the focus and resources it deserves, complementing the wider transport network strategy.

Together, these strategies work to deliver the Council's objectives of tackling climate change, improving health, and supporting a thriving and prosperous economy

PQ 5	Mr Milln, Hereford	Cabinet on 20th November agreed to make amendments consequential of the errors and omissions pointed out in the draft LTP before bringing it to Council today. This was confirmed in the response to Ms Martin's question regarding Active Travel England. Mine regarding the City Car Club based at Bartonsham & St James, about which the Cabinet member confessed ignorance, is another example. Yet these amendments have not been made in the so-called final version brought to Council today. How will the Cabinet Member ensure he delivers on his promise to make good the errors and omissions in the Local Transport Plan which have been pointed out to him so that members are not in a position where they must either refuse or defer its approval?	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure
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**Response:**

Thank you for raising this concern. Cabinet agreed on 20th November that any factual errors or omissions identified would be addressed where they materially affect the content of the Local Transport Plan (LTP). The reference to car clubs in the LTP states that the Council will explore opportunities to expand car club provision, which remains valid even though some schemes already exist. Therefore, no change to the LTP is required on this point.

The LTP is a strategic framework, not an exhaustive record of all current initiatives. Its purpose is to set direction and priorities, and the Implementation Plan that follows adoption will provide more detail on how existing schemes, such as car clubs, can be supported and expanded.

Adopting the LTP today ensures we maintain momentum on delivering transport improvements while allowing flexibility to reflect operational details in future implementation stages.

## Agenda item no. 6 - Questions from members of the Council

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
MQ 1	Cllr O'Driscoll, Ross East	Council agreed in July, on an overwhelming cross-party basis, to send a formal representation to Ministers and to publish a Herefordshire Advanced Manufacturing and Defence Prospectus. We now know the letter wasn't sent until I informed officers the decision had already been made, and we'd missed out. Additionally, the prospectus still remains unfinished while neighbouring counties have secured places on the Government's new munitions and energetics programme. This inaction means Herefordshire was not even considered for this substantial investment and the vital jobs it could have brought. Can you explain why your administration failed to carry out the clear instructions of Council, and do you understand why councillors and local people feel let down again by your administration's dithering and delay?	Leader

**Response:** Firstly, Herefordshire has not missed out on any opportunities, the government announced an intention to select locations for future munitions factories and identified some potential locations as part of that announcement. I also note that whilst there was strong support for the overall motion in the council meeting in July, a number of Cllrs expressed significant concerns over the munitions factory element. At the council meeting Cllr Simmons said that she had spoken to businesses in the lead up to the council meeting and questioned why there is a focus on munitions and would be 'astonished' if we attracted one of the factories. Cllr Harvey said its disappointing that motion misses the target and said that a munitions factory should not be where this council puts its energy, stating 'is a munitions factory the best we can come up with, I hope not'. Cllr Tully questioned 'how a munitions factory will support a safe and prosperous community. Cllr Bartlett said we have a lot of expertise in the county, but questioned the inclusion of the munitions factory and if businesses has been consulted, saying 'it's a flaw in the motion to include it'.

At the time of the council meeting the cabinet were happy to support the overall principles of the motion, and remain fully committed to supporting the growth of the defence and security sector, building on our local strengths to boost our economy and create more better paid jobs for local people. However, specific to the munitions factory element, in hearing the concerns raised by Cllrs, and the feedback from leading local businesses as to where our strengths and opportunities are, there has been a deliberate effort to take the time to ensure the we (the Cabinet) got the prospectus and the letter to government right. In this regard – this is not a missed opportunity.

As was summarised in email correspondence in October, from the Chief Executive, since the council meeting at the end of July, we have;

- Held a meeting of leading defence and security businesses in the county in early September to understand opportunities and barriers to growth.
- We have drafted and now finalised the Defence and Security Prospectus, which was circulated to these businesses for comment.

- We have sent a letter to the Secretary of State for Defence, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Ministry for Business and Trade highlighting local opportunities.
- We have supported the development of the new West Midlands Regional Defence and Security Cluster (being co-ordinated by the West Midlands Combined Authority and the MoD), ensuring Herefordshire businesses were invited and attended the foundation meeting in early October.
- The Economy and Place Board have commissioned a refresh of the Economic Plan, which again will have a key focus on Defence and Security opportunities.
- We have written to both local MPs and received positive follow-up from Jesse Norman

Looking forward,

- the county's first inward investment website, with a focus on defence and security, is due to launch in January 2026.
- We are planning a major presence with partners such as NMITE and local businesses at the SDSC-UK defence trade conference in February.
- We continue to be in discussions with leading defence and security businesses across the county as to how we can support their growth, including the potential for drone and communication technology test beds (raised as a need by local businesses)
- We are in discussions with international defence and security businesses interested in locating on the Hereford Enterprise Zone.

I trust this demonstrates our resolve and commitment to progressing this important work – it is a priority and we continue to take steps to unlock the opportunities it presents before us.

MQ 2	Cllr Taylor, Credenhill	Highways England say they support a bypass for Hereford if the new road will alleviate congestion on the motorway network by increasing road capacity by taking increased through traffic on the A49 with vehicle speeds in line with the national speed limit of 60mph. How will this be achieved if the Local Plan is proposing over 10,000 new homes to the west of Hereford though which the bypass is planned to be built?	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure
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**Response:**

National Highways (formerly Highways England) supports our calls for a Hereford Western Bypass, and they have written a letter of support to us during the LTP consultation confirming this. National Highways have placed no constraints on the design speed of the road other than they would seek journey times to be less than the current A49 were they to adopt the road. Modelling undertaken to date shows that the new road would offer an improvement in travel times - they agreed in principle to a 40mph limit to be used for the modelling, but it is likely that sections of it may be at national speed limit.

Modelling confirms that the bypass reduces long-distance and freight delays on the A49. The additional river crossing provides improved resilience to National Highways Strategic Road Network (SRN) which they very much support.

The bypass is designed to keep through-traffic separated, while local roads can be made safer (e.g., 20–30 mph zones, cycle lanes dependent upon local need and agreed policies). The long term vision for the bypass would see a road which works similar to the Worcester bypass, with just a few key junctions so that it provides a better alternative than traveling through the City centre. The key junctions would then contain distributor slip roads that provide the key link to new housing and employment sites.

MQ 3	Cllr Fagan, Birch	<p>The 33 bus (7.33am) service from Ross on Wye to Hereford has left students stranded since the beginning of November. According to parents this bus arrives in Ross on Wye from Gloucester already full. The second bus that eased the situation at the beginning of the academic year in September was axed after half term leaving fee paying students watching as a full bus drives past them - causing untold stress, disruption to studies - and adding to city congestion.</p> <p>How many bus passes were sold to students using this route, at what fee?</p> <p>How was consultation undertaken with students and parents before axing the second bus and how was the failure to provide transport communicated to paid-up users?</p> <p>When will the situation be rectified and is the Transport team aware of our commitment to Child Friendly Herefordshire?</p>	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure
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**Response:**

Please be assured that, I as Cabinet Member am working closely with the Public Transport Team and we are actively engaged in addressing this issue. We are actively looking for solutions around the specific issues you have identified and we will continue to work with partners to find this. Please also be assured that we remain committed and recognise the imperative to support all young people's access to education.

MQ 4	Cllr Hitchiner, Stoney Street	<p>The WSP Strategic Environmental Assessment contains at 5.1.1 some next steps including a requirement that the Report will be presented for public consultation alongside the Draft LTP5 and for the representations received to be documented and considered in reviewing the proposals for the LTP5. What steps were taken to consult with the public? How have the representations been documented?</p>	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure
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**Response:** The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) prepared by WSP was published for consultation alongside the Draft Local Transport Plan (LTP5) during the formal consultation period, which ran from 1st May to the end of June 2025. This ensured that the public could review both documents and provide feedback on the environmental implications of the proposed transport strategy as detailed in 5.1.1.

The consultation process included:

- Online publication of the Draft LTP5 and SEA on the Council's website with dedicated response forms.
- Public engagement events
- Promotion through press releases, social media, and stakeholder networks to encourage participation.

All representations received were documented in a Consultation Summary Report, which sets out the number of responses, key themes, and how these informed revisions to LTP5. Any feedback relating to the SEA was considered alongside transport policy responses to ensure environmental objectives were integrated into the final draft.

The Consultation Summary Report is available as part of the supporting documents for the LTP and will be published alongside the adopted plan for transparency.

MQ 5	Cllr Heathfield, Hope End	When is the last time that licensed taxi drivers were spot checked on the street that they were the licence holder, and how often are these checks carried out? If taxi drivers are not who they say they are, what is the point in any of the checks our hardworking taxi licensing team carries out?	Cabinet member roads and regulatory services
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#### Response:

Licensing officers confirm the identity of taxi drivers through an intelligence-led approach that focuses on information received from the public, the trade and the police. Whenever concerns are raised, officers verify that the person driving a licensed vehicle is the authorised licence holder, that the correct badge and plate are being used, and that the vehicle meets all licensing conditions. The most recent driver-identity enquiries were undertaken in response to intelligence received in recent weeks.

As part of the Winter of Action 2025/26, through Hotspot Policing under Operation Radiate, the Council is working with West Mercia Police to plan joint patrols and targeted licensing checks that will include on-street driver-identity verification. These operations are designed to provide increased visibility and reassurance during peak periods.

Incidents of individuals attempting to drive a Herefordshire-licensed taxi without holding the appropriate licence are extremely rare. The taxi community in Herefordshire is small and closely connected, and concerns about improper use of badges or vehicles are reported to the Council quickly. Identity checks are therefore an essential safeguard that ensures the extensive vetting carried out before a licence is granted is meaningfully linked to the person who is actually carrying passengers.

This approach helps maintain high standards across the trade, reinforces driver accountability, and provides assurance to the public, particularly vulnerable passengers, that licensed taxis in Herefordshire remain a safe and well-regulated form of transport.







Update to outstanding resolutions concerning motion: Securing Herefordshire's Role in the UK and European Defence Industrial Strategy

Date of meeting	Motion	Current Status
25 July 2025	Securing Herefordshire's Role in the UK and European Defence Industrial Strategy	<p>In summary, since the council meeting at the end of July, we have; Held a meeting of leading defence and security businesses in the county in early September to understand opportunities and barriers to growth.</p> <p>We have drafted and now finalised the Defence and Security Prospectus, which was circulated to these businesses for comment. We have sent a letter to the Secretary of State for Defence, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Ministry for Business and Trade highlighting local opportunities.</p> <p>We have supported the development of the new West Midlands Regional Defence and Security Cluster (being co-ordinated by the West Midlands Combined Authority and the MoD), ensuring Herefordshire businesses were invited and attended the foundation meeting in early October</p> <p>The Economy and Place Board have commissioned a refresh of the Economic Plan, which again will have a key focus on Defence and Security opportunities</p> <p>We have written to both local MPs and received positive follow-up from Jesse Norman</p> <p>Looking forward,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the county's first inward investment website, with a focus on defence and security, is due to launch in January 2026.</li> <li>We are planning a major presence with partners such as NMITE and local businesses at the SDSC-UK defence trade conference in February.</li> <li>We continue to be in discussions with leading defence and security businesses across the county as to how we can support their growth, including the potential for drone and communication technology test beds (raised as a need by local businesses)</li> <li>We are in discussions with international defence and security businesses interested in locating on the Hereford Enterprise Zone.</li> </ul>

**RESOLVED:**

This Council resolves to ask the executive to:

1. Develop a Herefordshire Advanced Manufacturing and Defence Prospectus, highlighting the county's strategic readiness to host defence-related investment, including a munitions facility, with a focus on clean and sustainable manufacturing.
2. Formally write to the Secretary of State for Defence, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Ministry for Business and Trade, urging them to consider Herefordshire as a location for one of the planned new factories and associated supply chain investment.
3. Call on the Government to support rural areas like Herefordshire by:
  - o Prioritising infrastructure upgrades in strategic industrial zones;
  - o Establishing an investment support scheme modelled on Enterprise Zones;
  - o Fast-tracking planning for clean-tech and defence-linked developments.
4. Engage with UK defence primes and SMEs to promote supply chain expansion in the county, particularly for dual-use and green defence technologies.

5. Work with FE and HE providers to align training and apprenticeships with the emerging needs of the UK and European defence sector.
6. Ensure that all defence-linked investment is underpinned by Herefordshire's values of environmental responsibility, ethical governance, and community benefit.