

Council

Date: Friday 4 February 2011

Time: 10.30 am

Place: The Shirehall, St Peter's Square, Hereford.

**SUPPLEMENT – ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS FROM
MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND FORMAL QUESTIONS
FROM COUNCILLORS**

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 4 FEBRUARY 2011

Question from D Phelps, Hereford

Question 1

The JOINT CORPORATE PLAN under 'Economic development and enterprise' seeks as a LONG TERM OUTCOME 1.1, 'Higher quality, better paid jobs and reduced unemployment' and one of the Council's justifications for growth is the need to improve wages and services in the county:

How many jobs have been created and how much have wages increased in Herefordshire as a result of new housing built over the last five years?

Answer from Councillor AJM Blackshaw Cabinet Member Economic Development and Community Services

Answer to Question 1

The data is not available to assess the difference housing building specifically has made. However we have maintained our record for low unemployment in the county. Given our sustained investment in regeneration initiatives, such as Hereford City and the current work on superfast broadband as an example, housing provision must reflect anticipated future growth as well as meeting the needs of the existing resident population in the county.

Question from A Fisher, Hereford

Question 2

The draft JOINT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2011/14 dated 12 January 2011 indicates Local Transport Plan funding has been cut but that further funding may be available for 'both capital and revenue need' through the new Local Sustainable Transport Fund (para 2.9.1)

What steps is the Council taking to ensure that it retains and enhances its capacity to plan and deliver modal shift to walking cycling and public transport in the face of cuts in grant funding, the availability of the new Local Sustainable Transport Fund and its decision to shed 250 FTE posts?

Answer from Councillor DB Wilcox, Cabinet Member Highways and Transportation

Answer to Question 2

The local sustainable transport fund provides a significant opportunity to secure funding for this important work and the Council plans to submit a bid. The changes to our delivery arrangements for highways and transport improvements with Amey Herefordshire have already reduced the cost of management of the service, and enables access to additional delivery capacity as and when funds become available.

Question from Mrs J Straker, Fownhope, Hereford

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Question 3

JOINT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2011/14 AND BUDGET UPDATE 2011/12, New Homes Bonus

How will the Council spend the estimated £660,000 p.a. it expects to receive from the New Homes Bonus?

Answer from Councillor H Bramer, Resources

Answer to Question 3

The Medium Term Financial Strategy sets out the Council's future spending plans; anticipated income from the New Homes Bonus is not ring-fenced for any specific purpose, and is being used as part of the overall funding target.

Question from D Straker, Fownhope, Hereford

Question 4

JOINT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2011/14 AND BUDGET UPDATE 2011/12, New Homes Bonus

Since the Council is expecting income from the New Homes Bonus, where will the new homes in Herefordshire be built between now and 2014 (please indicate numbers of homes in each location)?

Answer from Councillor JG Jarvis, Environment and Strategic Housing

Answer to Question 4

It is not possible to identify exactly either the number or location of future housing development; this will be guided by the current Unitary Development Plan and its successor, the Local Development Framework (LDF) which is currently in development.

The draft LDF does not project any significant growth in the rate of new housing provision from that which has been taking place in the county in the last 15 years. New and affordable homes will be built to match local need, the birth rate and economic growth, and the LDF reflects the need to ensure that this vital housing provision is closely aligned to improvements to the county infrastructure.

Question from C Nicholls, Sutton St Nicholas, Hereford

Question 5

JOINT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2011/14 AND BUDGET UPDATE 2011/12, New Homes Bonus.

Given the reduced resources in the period ahead and the Council's expectations of earnings from the New Homes Bonus, how many new homes earning the New Homes bonus will be built in Herefordshire between now and 2014 and of these how many will be affordable?

Answer from Councillor JG Jarvis, Environment and Strategic Housing

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Answer to Question 5

The rate of house building is outside the direct control of the Council. The typical annual house building rate for the County varies between 500 and 1000 depending on market conditions.

I would also refer the questioner to the answer provided to question 4 above.

Question from S Brown, Bucknell, Herefordshire

Question 6

THE HEREFORDSHIRE PUBLIC SERVICES VISION refers to Long Term Outcomes of 1.1 'The regeneration of Herefordshire', and 4.3 'Enhancing local democracy and community engagement' while the report to Cabinet on the Joint Corporate Plan states that 'all the key issues the people of Herefordshire regard as important, drawn from various consultations' are capable of being covered in the plan'...

What account has been taken of the 13000 signature petition given to Herefordshire Council asking for a halt to the ESG retail centre and a re-assessment?

Answer from Councillor AJM Blackshaw, Cabinet Member Economic Development and Community Services

Answer to Question 6

The petition was received in November 2009. The five recommendations contained in the petition have been taken into consideration, together with other consultations, and reflected in adjustments to the Master Plan.

It is not a simple case of 'either the redevelopment of the livestock market site or enhancement of the city centre'; these are not mutually exclusive. Both are vital elements to the future sustainability of the city and the county, and in addition to pursuing our longer-term ambitions for the old livestock market site and surrounding area we have continued to progress enhancements within the city itself including completing the redevelopment of Widemarsh Street, supporting retailers through activity such as the launch of the Truffle Card, and progressing plans for the enhancement of the Buttermarket site. At a time when, due to the economic climate, many other city regeneration plans are faltering, it is a mark of the value we all place on the future of our city and county that our plans continue to become a reality.

Question from B Mee, Hereford

Question 7

JOINT CORPORATE PLAN, 'PRIORITY THEMES', STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1. 'Improve infrastructure and learning and employment opportunities, enabling business growth and sustainable prosperity for all'; LONG TERM OUTCOMES 1.5, 'Better roads, reduced traffic congestion, with more people walking, cycling or using public transport'.

'More people walking, cycling and using public transport' has been a stated policy aim of Herefordshire Council for some time. As a result of its level of investment in sustainable transport measures in the Council's first two Local Transport Plans, how many car trips

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have been transferred to walking, to cycling, and to public transport so far and how many more car trips does the Council intend to transfer to these modes as a result of future investment under 'the reduced resources in the period ahead'? (para 5 in the report to Cabinet on the Joint Corporate Plan 20 January 2011)

Answer from Councillor DB Wilcox, Cabinet Member Highways and Transportation

Answer to Question 7

Since 2003/04 surveys indicate that the number of vehicle movements on non-trunk roads within Hereford has decreased somewhat and on rural routes the number of vehicles has remained constant. Over the same period cycle and rail use has increased. Overall countywide bus use has declined slightly, but there is a marked difference where this decline has occurred. Within Hereford City bus use has declined significantly. This is in large part due to commercial decisions made by the bus operator regarding profitability of underused routes. Within rural areas where the Council has provided investment through the Low-Floor Bus Project bus usage has been increasing. Future targets for transfer have not yet been set.

Question from Mrs P Hughes, Hereford

Question 8

JOINT CORPORATE PLAN, 'PRIORITY THEMES', STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1. 'Improve infrastructure and learning and employment opportunities, enabling business growth and sustainable prosperity for all'; LONG TERM OUTCOMES 1.5, 'Better roads, reduced traffic congestion, with more people walking, cycling or using public transport'.

What levels of walking, cycling and public transport use (and by what year) will enable the Council to determine how well it is progressing on this 'long-term outcome'?

Answer from Councillor DB Wilcox, Cabinet Member Highways and Transportation

Answer to Question 8

Whilst the questioner refers to the outgoing plan, reduced congestion and a shift in transport habits remains important and the Council sees this as making an important contribution to securing the growth and sustainability of Herefordshire.

Question from Ms C Protherough, Clehonger, Hereford

Question 9

The draft JOINT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2011/14 dated 12 January 2011 states that 'the financial management strategy for increasing capital investment capacity centres on maximising developers' contributions ...' (para 7.9.6)

What impact will the Council's plans to maximise developer contributions have on the rate of house-building in the County and in particular on the rate of build of affordable homes?

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Answer from Councillor JG Jarvis, Cabinet Member Environment and Strategic Housing

Answer to Question 9

These plans will have no impact on the rate of house building.

Question from Ms P Mitchell, Hereford

Question 10

JOINT CORPORATE PLAN, 'VISION' Value for money

What are the Council's criteria for demonstrating 'value for money' and how will both these criteria and demonstrations of value for money be made available to the public?

Answer from Councillor H Bramer, Cabinet Member Resources

Answer to Question 10

As part of the external audit process the Audit Commission must assess the Council's performance in delivering Value for Money against nationally specified criteria contained in the Code of Audit Practice and can be found on Audit Commissions website at: <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/localgov/audit/auditmethodology/pages/valueformoneyconclusion.aspx>

As a result of the external auditor's independent assessment of the council's performance delivering Value for Money the Audit commission issued an unqualified conclusion on the Council's arrangements to secure the three key elements of Value for Money (economy, efficiency and effectiveness). This is part of the Annual Audit Letter which is a public document available on the Council's website at:

<http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=568&MIId=3222&Ver=4>

Question from Mrs M Brown, Hereford

Question 11

THE JOINT CORPORATE PLAN refers to 'Affordable housing appropriate to people's needs' (Long term outcome 5.3)

How have the Comprehensive Spending Review, public sector cutbacks, increased unemployment and the 'reduced resources for available in the period ahead' (Report to Cabinet on Joint Corporate Plan 2011-2014, para 5) affected the number of affordable homes needed in Herefordshire and the Council's ability to ensure that they are supplied over the life time of the JCP?

Answer from Councillor JG Jarvis, Cabinet Member Environment and Strategic Housing

Answer to Question 11

We anticipate more people will need access to affordable housing although the impacts of the changes referred to cannot at this stage be quantified. The Council is awaiting the outcome of a local housing market assessment to obtain an up to date view of affordable housing need; the results are expected by April.

Question from Ms M Burns, Hereford

Question 12

THE JOINT CORPORATE PLAN refers in 'OUR VISION' to 'avoidable ... accidents' and 'doing all we can to combat climate change' and its 'PRIORITY THEMES', STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES and 'LONG TERM OUTCOMES' specifically set many goals that would be supported by fairer management of the road network to improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists of all ages (for example LONG TERM OUTCOMES 1.5, 'Better roads, reduced traffic congestion, with more people walking, cycling or using public transport', 3.1 'Children and young people are healthy and have healthy lifestyles with less obesity...', 4.5 'Fewer accidents and injuries', 6.2 'Reduced CO2 emissions ..', 6.5 'Investment in high quality streets...' etc. etc.

When will the Council 'spend to save' and get value for money by introducing 20mph speed limits in all residential and shopping streets and continuous pavements and mandatory cycle lanes on higher speed roads in order to ensure that the road networks in Hereford and our market towns are attractive and safe for sustainable active travel on foot and by bicycle?

Answer from Councillor DB Wilcox, Cabinet Member Highways and Transportation

Answer to Question 12

It is not the Council's policy to pursue such a blanket aim, even were it affordable. However, we are progressively implementing 20mph zones around schools and 30mph zones in villages and will continue to implement measures that improve safety and encourage walking/cycling, within the resources available.

Question from S Rowe, Hereford

Question 13

JOINT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY According to p65 of the draft Joint Medium Term Financial Strategy, annual capital expenditure will fall from nearly £75m in 2010/11 to under £15m in 2013/14.

What specific areas of the Council's operations are covered by this capital expenditure and how will the proportions of the available funds spent on each vary between 2010/11 and 2013/14?

Answer from Councillor H Bramer, Cabinet Member Resources

Answer to Question 13

Capital expenditure delivers projects which are essential to the local community including; Riverside School, Leominster swimming pool, the new Crematorium, Rotherwas Relief Road, enhancements to Hereford City Centre, Kington Library, the Mortgage Reserve Scheme, the Museum Resource and Learning Centre at Friars Street and improvements to disability access.

Over the period 2010/11 to 2013/14 the Council will see a reduction in capital expenditure across all areas largely as a result of central government funding for major schemes such as the

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replacement schools programme coming to an end. In 2013/14 our two largest areas of capital expenditure will still be in Children's Services with £4.8m for Schools Maintenance and Sustainable Communities with £9.8m for Highways Maintenance.

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 4 FEBRUARY 2011

Question from Councillor A Seldon of Councillor AJM Blackshaw, Cabinet Member Economic Development and Community Services with regards to Agenda Item 7

- 1A *How much money, if any, has the Courtyard Theatre complex received in subsidy in 2007/08, 2008/09, 2009/10 and 2010/11?*
- 1B *Is there any subsidy projected for 2011/12?*
- 1C *What are the attendance figures for the same periods?*
- 1D *What percentage utilisation does the complex achieve?*
- 1E *Do any other theatres in Herefordshire receive a subsidy?*

Answer from Councillor AJM Blackshaw, Cabinet Member Economic Development and Community Services

Answer to question 1

1A & B Funding provided to the Courtyard is on the basis of a commissioning agreement not subsidy. The funding is:

2007/08	£386,080
2008/09	£387,588
2009/10	£385,931
2010/11	£366,520
2011/12	£348,194

1C

2007/08	82,576
2008/09	95,390
2009/10	95,316
2010/11	NYA

1D It is not clear whether the question refers to building utilisation percentages in relation to event capacity. If Cllr Seldon would care to let me have more precise details of the information he is seeking I will be happy to provide a written response.

1E No

Question from Councillor AT Oliver of Councillor PD Price Cabinet Member ICT, Education and Achievement with regards to Agenda items 7 and 8

2 *In the proposed budgetary savings for 2011/12, reference is made to £46,000 savings on*

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school transport.

2A *Is this saving being achieved by cutting out the discretionary travel subsidy to all 16+ students?*

2B *How many students will be affected and what is the current annual cost per student?*

Answer from Councillor PD Price Cabinet Member ICT, Education and Achievement

Answer to question 2

2A For the 2010/11 academic year, parents/carers make an annual contribution of £405 towards the cost of providing discretionary travel assistance to post-16 students. The level of this contribution is being reviewed.

2B The annual contribution is paid by the parents/carers of approximately 900 students. The average cost of travel assistance, per student, is £600.

Question from Councillor AT Oliver of Cllr H Bramer, Cabinet Member Resources with regards to Agenda item 7

3 *The new homes bonus is estimated to be worth £660,000 plus each year to Herefordshire. What plans are there to use this funding in the budgets for 2011/12 and 2012/13 to increase the housing stock in the county and in particular the stock of affordable homes?*

Answer from Cllr H Bramer, Cabinet Member Resources

Answer to question 3

3 I refer to the answer provided to Mrs J Straker (public question number 3).

Questions from Councillor AT Oliver of Councillor DB Wilcox, Cabinet Member Highways and Transportation with regards to Agenda item 7

4A *What funding, if any, is provided within the local transport plan budget for 2011/12 for improvements to the Holme Lacy Road?*

4B *As the proposed improvements were a condition of planning agreement being given for the Rotherwas Relief Road, should not this funding be a priority for the Council?*

4C *Is the Council preparing a bid for a grant from the Government's local sustainable transport, and if so, what is the size of the bid and how might it help the local transport budgets for 2011/12 and 2012/13.*

Answer from Councillor DB Wilcox, Cabinet Member Highways and Transportation

Answer to question 4

4A LTP funding contributes to the Council's programme of highway works. The Holme Lacy

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works are among those being considered for inclusion in the 2011/12 programme.

- 4B The Council remains committed to delivering this scheme and this will be taken into account when prioritising delivery within the available budget for 2011/2012.
- 4C Yes. Government guidance on bid submission is awaited, and will inform the size and content of the bid.
-

Question from Councillor RI Matthews of Councillor DB Wilcox, Cabinet Member Highways and Transportation with regards to Agenda item 7

- 5 *Under the funding arrangements for Capital Investments, one of the funding opportunities is the Local Sustainable Transport fund [for sustainable transport initiatives]. Have the Council submitted a bid for any of this funding, considering that the first bidding round closes in April 2011?*

Answer from Councillor DB Wilcox, Cabinet Member Highways and Transportation

Answer to question 5

- 5 I refer Cllr Matthews to the answer to Q4c above.
-

Question from Councillor MAF Hubbard of Councillor H Bramer, Cabinet Member Resources with regards to Agenda item 7

Impact of cuts on service delivery and capital investment.

- 6A *How far does the Council plan to secure developer gain to make up for the projected rapid contraction in capital expenditure and how will both the cuts and the developer gain be prioritised (please indicate by directorate, programme and relative proportions for each)?*
- 6B *What are the largest sources of developer gain for the Council and what calculations has the Council made into the impact of the current economic climate on future income from developer gain?*

Answer from Cllr H Bramer, Cabinet Member Resources

Answer to question 6

- 6A The council's capital programme makes no assumptions around potential developer gain. There is a well-established principle that the council does not incur capital expenditure on the basis on potential planning gain - developer funding is only planned to be spent when the necessary triggers occur and the funding is received.
- 6B Developer contributions at present are based on the published policies for Section 106 Planning Obligation Agreements. These deal with the detailed aspects of individual development proposals and only seek developer contributions where there is a specific impact of that development which needs to be addressed – and the contribution is ring fenced to addressing that impact. As I detail above, developer funding is only planned to be spent when the availability of that funding is confirmed.
- 7 Question withdrawn

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Question from Councillor MAF Hubbard of Councillor AJM Blackshaw, Cabinet Member Economic Development and Community Services with regards to Agenda item 8

Projects under the Joint Corporate Plan

- 8A *How much money has been spent so far on the new Plough Lane accommodation for the Council? Is this project to continue?*
- 8B *How much money has been spent so far on the plan to build a 600 space car park at Plough Lane for Council employees? Is this project still going ahead?*
- 8C *How much has been spent on the new Ledbury Library so far and has the funding for actually building Ledbury Library entirely disappeared?*

Answer from Councillor H Bramer, Cabinet Member Resources

Answer to question 8

- 8A £4.887m, of which £4.25m related to acquisition costs. This investment in the council's property portfolio has not only reduced future costs against the revenue budget, but provides a sound basis on which to undertake the property rationalisation needed within the public sector in the county. It provides an opportunity to reduce operating costs, work more efficiently and effectively and make a significant reduction in our carbon footprint.
- 8B Costs included within above. Yes. Given reducing staff numbers, the car park size has been reduced to 350 spaces.
- 8C £420,453 has been spent in prior years and £100,000 is expected to be spent in this current financial year on the Ledbury Project. This figure includes the costs of refurbishment works to convert St Katherine's to a TIC.

Question from Councillor JD Woodward of Councillor H Bramer, Cabinet Member Resources with regard to Agenda item 7

Council and council tax payer exposure to risk

- 9A *Are there any contracts for service delivery or capital expenditure in the lifetime of the Joint Medium Term Financial Strategy that the council will be unable to honour as a result of the cuts?*
- 9B *If so what are the contracts for and what are the cancellation costs, if any, for each?*

Answer from Councillor H Bramer, Cabinet Member Resources

Answer to question 9

- 9A No
- 9B Not applicable

Question from Councillor MD Lloyd-Hayes of Councillor RJ Phillips, Leader of the Council

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with regards to Agenda item 7

- 10 *In light of the Council's commitment to working with the Voluntary Sector, would the Leader agree that outsourcing the Youth Service to the third sector would be both financially prudent, more sustainable and community led?*

Answer from Councillor RJ Phillips, Leader of the Council

Answer to question 10

- 10 I fully acknowledge the valuable role the voluntary & community sector plays working with young people in the county, and have already commissioned a review of options for the future scope and delivery of youth services to inform the most effective and efficient delivery arrangements for the future to meet the needs of Herefordshire's young people.

Question from Councillor MD Lloyd-Hayes of Councillor H Bramer, Cabinet Member Resources with regards to Agenda item 7

11A *Question disallowed.*

11B *How much of the Council's budget for service delivery (including capital expenditure) over the lifetime of the Joint Medium Term Financial Strategy relies on outside party suppliers or agencies? Please specify by directorate.*

11C *Question disallowed.*

11D *How many of these third party suppliers or agencies are companies based in or with their headquarters in Herefordshire?*

Answer from Councillor H Bramer, Cabinet Member Resources

Answer to question 11

11B

	£000's
Sustainable Communities	28,000
Adult Services	59,000
Children & Young People	19,000
Resources	5,500
Deputy Chief Executive	5,000
Public Health	330
Central Services	934
Total	117,764

NB these figures relates only to current contractual arrangements and does not include the Joint Venture Company, Integrated Care Organisation or mental health trust, the detail of which is not yet available

11D This information will take time to collate and I will provide a written response in due course.

Question from Councillor MD Lloyd-Hayes

12 *Does Herefordshire Council have a strategic action plan for autism?*

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Answer from Councillor RJ Phillips, Leader of the Council

Answer to question 12

12 No.

Question from Councillor GFM Dawe of Councillor H Bramer, Cabinet Member Resources with regards to Agenda item 7

13A *Question disallowed.*

13B *Page 44 of full Council report: Government will not make new supported borrowing allocations as part of the Formula Grant. How much from the Formula Grant is projected to be spent on servicing loans in 2012, 2013, 2014?*

13C *How much from Council Tax is projected to be spent on servicing loans in 2012, 2013, 2014?*

13D *The Government has increased the PWLB (Public Works Loan Board) rate to 1% over the gilt rate. How much of the council borrowing does this affect? How much has it added to Council expenditure?*

13E *Can you provide a breakdown of capital expenditure under the draft MTFS (See Table 7.10.2, Capital Investment Programme); can you break this down into named projects? How much is the interest on each of these projects?*

Answer from Councillor H Bramer, Cabinet Member Resources

Answer to question 13

13B It is not possible to accurately allocate net borrowing costs to the different sources of finance.

13C The Council's funding for borrowing costs comes from various sources of finance and it is not possible to precisely allocate borrowing costs to the Council's various sources of finance.

13D All council borrowing consists of fixed rate loans and so the impact will not be felt until the council wishes to take out new loans. It will then have to pay approximately 0.75% more (or £7,500 per annum per £1 million borrowed).

13E

Scheme	2011-12 £'000	2012-13 £'000	2013-14 £'000
Academy-Wyebridge Replacement School	5,166		
Targeted Capital Fund 14-19	7,090		
Primary grant	5,566		
Co-location	52		

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Schools Capital Maintenance	2,695	2,695	2,695
Individual Pupil Needs	2,154	2,154	2,154
Devolved Formula Capital	679		
Sub total	23,402	4,849	4,849
Corporate Accommodation	4,784	7,028	
Hereford Leisure Pool	945		
Small holdings	500		
Sub total	6,229	7,028	
Systems costs	482	208	
Social Care SCP	453		
Mental Health	370		
Community Equipment	300		
Sub total	1,123		
LTP Funded Capital Highway Maintenance	10,348	9,985	9,792
Sustrans Lottery Match Funding	1,460	351	
Yazor Brook Flood Alleviation Scheme	1,648		
Livestock Market	2,314		
Belmont pools	79		
Rural Enterprise grant	1,667		
Ledbury Project	2,402		
Halo Golf Driving Range	347		
Disabled Facilities Grants	1,098		
Affordable Housing Grants	1,000		
Housing Condition Survey	50		
Broadband Pilot	1,000	5,000	
Sub total	23,413	15,336	9,792
Leominster Closed Landfill Site Monitoring Infrastructure	233		
Stretton Sugwas Closed Landfill Site	28		
Strangford Closed Landfill Site	28		

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Sub total	289		
Contingency	539	224	147
TOTAL	55,477	27,645	14,788

It should be noted that these figures do not necessarily reflect the whole cost of the scheme and that some will be re-paid to the Council. Approximately three quarters of the total is government funded.

It is not possible to provide figures for interest by project as in some cases the capital grant is received in advance of spend thereby earning interest, whereas in other cases we will borrow to fund schemes at the best interest rate available as and when cash balances deplete.

Question from Councillor GFM Dawe of Councillor DB Wilcox, Cabinet Member Highways and Transportation with regards to Agenda items 7 and 8

- 14A *Buses: I am pleased that money has been found to continue with concessionary fares (p. 45 of full council agenda). However, how much money is saved by not allowing concessionary fares before 9.30 am on the buses?*
- 14B *Question disallowed.*
- 14C *Buses: Has the Council's Sustainable Communities Directorate, Transport Section, applied to the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (for sustainable transport, initiatives) which is available for both capital and revenue need (first bidding round closes in April 2011) for money to fund rural buses in Herefordshire?*
- 14D *The Joint Corporate Plan has many stated aims to Preserve and Enhance the Environment, Combat Climate Change and Increase Cycling and Pedestrians. Given that we know from national and local studies, such as the Council's own TPi August 2010 Sustainable Options Package Report that building a new bypass will induce traffic and have a discouraging effect on walking, cycling and public transport, and a severely detrimental impact on the environment, will the Council now do what it says, abandon plans for a bypass and instead plan for easing traffic congestion through traffic management and encouragement of sustainable transport measures?*

Answer from Councillor DB Wilcox, Cabinet Member Highways and Transportation

Answer to question 14

14A It is projected to be in the region of £100k

14C I refer Cllr Dawe to the answer to question 4c above

14D No. As Cllr Dawe will recall, at its meeting on 13 November 2009, Council overwhelmingly resolved that:

This Council affirms that the sustainable future for our City and County depends on creating more and better paid jobs, significantly increasing the number of homes, particularly affordable, improving leisure and shopping and procuring the supporting infrastructure. This must include another bridge crossing over the Wye and relief roads for Hereford and Leominster.

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Question from Councillor GFM Dawe of Councillor AJM Blackshaw, Cabinet Member Economic Development and Community Services with regards to Agenda item 7

15 *Has funding for the 'Link Road', an integral part of the Edgar Street Grid, now entirely disappeared?*

Answer from Councillor AJM Blackshaw, Cabinet Member Economic Development and Community Services

Answer to question 15

15 No. A "package" approach is being pursued with a number of different potential sources being explored.

Question from Councillor GFM Dawe of Councillor RJ Phillips, Leader of the Council with regards to Agenda item 7

16 *Can I have Cllr. Phillips' assurance that none of the static (as opposed to mobile) libraries in Herefordshire, which constitute important front line services, are to have their staff numbers cut, and that 'co-location' is not a euphemism for this (paragraph 35, page 52)?*

Answer from Councillor RJ Phillips, Leader of the Council

Answer to question 16

16 No. Co-location means exactly that. It has been a long-standing policy to pursue co-location of services (as demonstrated in Bromyard and Kington), providing a single 'shop-front' for services. This both improves access for local people and delivers savings through efficiencies around building, staffing and management costs. It is because we have been taking these actions over recent years that Herefordshire has been better placed than most to manage the current budget reductions with a minimum of impact on front line services.

Question from Councillor SJ Robertson of Councillor DB Wilcox, Cabinet Member Highways and Transportation with regards to Agenda item 7

17 *In view of the proposed spending cuts what measures are being taken now to ensure that vital bus services for rural areas are protected and not cut, which could lead to wider implications on other Council services caused by social isolation?*

Answer from Councillor DB Wilcox, Cabinet Member Highways and Transportation

Answer to question 17

17 The Joint Medium Term Financial Strategy 2011/14 seeks to protect bus services. There will be a review of the bus network in 2011/12 and this will include consultation with members, parish and town councils, bus operators, community groups and other stakeholders to ensure that any changes to the network are focussed on the best outcome for local communities.

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PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 4 FEBRUARY 2011

Question from D Phelps, Hereford

Question 1

The JOINT CORPORATE PLAN under 'Economic development and enterprise' seeks as a LONG TERM OUTCOME 1.1, 'Higher quality, better paid jobs and reduced unemployment' and one of the Council's justifications for growth is the need to improve wages and services in the county:

How many jobs have been created and how much have wages increased in Herefordshire as a result of new housing built over the last five years?

Answer from Councillor AJM Blackshaw Cabinet Member Economic Development and Community Services

Answer to Question 1

The data is not available to assess the difference housing building specifically has made. However we have maintained our record for low unemployment in the county. Given our sustained investment in regeneration initiatives, such as Hereford City and the current work on superfast broadband as an example, housing provision must reflect anticipated future growth as well as meeting the needs of the existing resident population in the county.

Question from A Fisher, Hereford

Question 2

The draft JOINT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2011/14 dated 12 January 2011 indicates Local Transport Plan funding has been cut but that further funding may be available for 'both capital and revenue need' through the new Local Sustainable Transport Fund (para 2.9.1)

What steps is the Council taking to ensure that it retains and enhances its capacity to plan and deliver modal shift to walking cycling and public transport in the face of cuts in grant funding, the availability of the new Local Sustainable Transport Fund and its decision to shed 250 FTE posts?

Answer from Councillor DB Wilcox, Cabinet Member Highways and Transportation

Answer to Question 2

The local sustainable transport fund provides a significant opportunity to secure funding for this important work and the Council plans to submit a bid. The changes to our delivery arrangements for highways and transport improvements with Amey Herefordshire have already reduced the cost of management of the service, and enables access to additional delivery capacity as and when funds become available.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 4 FEBRUARY 2011

Question from Mrs J Straker, Fownhope, Hereford

Question 3

JOINT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2011/14 AND BUDGET UPDATE 2011/12, New Homes Bonus

How will the Council spend the estimated £660,000 p.a. it expects to receive from the New Homes Bonus?

Answer from Councillor H Bramer, Resources

Answer to Question 3

The Medium Term Financial Strategy sets out the Council's future spending plans; anticipated income from the New Homes Bonus is not ring-fenced for any specific purpose, and is being used as part of the overall funding target.

Question from D Straker, Fownhope, Hereford

Question 4

JOINT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2011/14 AND BUDGET UPDATE 2011/12, New Homes Bonus

Since the Council is expecting income from the New Homes Bonus, where will the new homes in Herefordshire be built between now and 2014 (please indicate numbers of homes in each location)?

Answer from Councillor JG Jarvis, Environment and Strategic Housing

Answer to Question 4

It is not possible to identify exactly either the number or location of future housing development; this will be guided by the current Unitary Development Plan and its successor, the Local Development Framework (LDF) which is currently in development.

The draft LDF does not project any significant growth in the rate of new housing provision from that which has been taking place in the county in the last 15 years. New and affordable homes will be built to match local need, the birth rate and economic growth, and the LDF reflects the need to ensure that this vital housing provision is closely aligned to improvements to the county infrastructure.

Question from C Nicholls, Sutton St Nicholas, Hereford

Question 5

JOINT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2011/14 AND BUDGET UPDATE 2011/12, New Homes Bonus.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 4 FEBRUARY 2011

Given the reduced resources in the period ahead and the Council's expectations of earnings from the New Homes Bonus, how many new homes earning the New Homes bonus will be built in Herefordshire between now and 2014 and of these how many will be affordable?

Answer from Councillor JG Jarvis, Environment and Strategic Housing

Answer to Question 5

The rate of house building is outside the direct control of the Council. The typical annual house building rate for the County varies between 500 and 1000 depending on market conditions.

I would also refer the questioner to the answer provided to question 4 above.

Question from S Brown, Bucknell, Herefordshire

Question 6

THE HEREFORDSHIRE PUBLIC SERVICES VISION refers to Long Term Outcomes of 1.1 'The regeneration of Herefordshire', and 4.3 'Enhancing local democracy and community engagement' while the report to Cabinet on the Joint Corporate Plan states that 'all the key issues the people of Herefordshire regard as important, drawn from various consultations' are capable of being covered in the plan'...

What account has been taken of the 13000 signature petition given to Herefordshire Council asking for a halt to the ESG retail centre and a re-assessment?

Answer from Councillor AJM Blackshaw, Cabinet Member Economic Development and Community Services

Answer to Question 6

The petition was received in November 2009. The five recommendations contained in the petition have been taken into consideration, together with other consultations, and reflected in adjustments to the Master Plan.

It is not a simple case of 'either the redevelopment of the livestock market site or enhancement of the city centre'; these are not mutually exclusive. Both are vital elements to the future sustainability of the city and the county, and in addition to pursuing our longer-term ambitions for the old livestock market site and surrounding area we have continued to progress enhancements within the city itself including completing the redevelopment of Widemarsh Street, supporting retailers through activity such as the launch of the Truffle Card, and progressing plans for the enhancement of the Buttermarket site. At a time when, due to the economic climate, many other city regeneration plans are faltering, it is a mark of the value we all place on the future of our city and county that our plans continue to become a reality.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 4 FEBRUARY 2011

Question from B Mee, Hereford

Question 7

JOINT CORPORATE PLAN, 'PRIORITY THEMES', STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1. 'Improve infrastructure and learning and employment opportunities, enabling business growth and sustainable prosperity for all'; LONG TERM OUTCOMES 1.5, 'Better roads, reduced traffic congestion, with more people walking, cycling or using public transport'.

'More people walking, cycling and using public transport' has been a stated policy aim of Herefordshire Council for some time. As a result of its level of investment in sustainable transport measures in the Council's first two Local Transport Plans, how many car trips have been transferred to walking, to cycling, and to public transport so far and how many more car trips does the Council intend to transfer to these modes as a result of future investment under 'the reduced resources in the period ahead'? (para 5 in the report to Cabinet on the Joint Corporate Plan 20 January 2011)

Answer from Councillor DB Wilcox, Cabinet Member Highways and Transportation

Answer to Question 7

Since 2003/04 surveys indicate that the number of vehicle movements on non-trunk roads within Hereford has decreased somewhat and on rural routes the number of vehicles has remained constant. Over the same period cycle and rail use has increased. Overall countywide bus use has declined slightly, but there is a marked difference where this decline has occurred. Within Hereford City bus use has declined significantly. This is in large part due to commercial decisions made by the bus operator regarding profitability of underused routes. Within rural areas where the Council has provided investment through the Low-Floor Bus Project bus usage has been increasing. Future targets for transfer have not yet been set.

Question from Mrs P Hughes, Hereford

Question 8

JOINT CORPORATE PLAN, 'PRIORITY THEMES', STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1. 'Improve infrastructure and learning and employment opportunities, enabling business growth and sustainable prosperity for all'; LONG TERM OUTCOMES 1.5, 'Better roads, reduced traffic congestion, with more people walking, cycling or using public transport'.

What levels of walking, cycling and public transport use (and by what year) will enable the Council to determine how well it is progressing on this 'long-term outcome'?

Answer from Councillor DB Wilcox, Cabinet Member Highways and Transportation

Answer to Question 8

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 4 FEBRUARY 2011

Whilst the questioner refers to the outgoing plan, reduced congestion and a shift in transport habits remains important and the Council sees this as making an important contribution to securing the growth and sustainability of Herefordshire.

Question from Ms C Protherough, Clehonger, Hereford

Question 9

The draft JOINT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2011/14 dated 12 January 2011 states that 'the financial management strategy for increasing capital investment capacity centres on maximising developers' contributions ...' (para 7.9.6)

What impact will the Council's plans to maximise developer contributions have on the rate of house-building in the County and in particular on the rate of build of affordable homes?

Answer from Councillor JG Jarvis, Cabinet Member Environment and Strategic Housing

Answer to Question 9

These plans will have no impact on the rate of house building.

Question from Ms P Mitchell, Hereford

Question 10

JOINT CORPORATE PLAN, 'VISION' Value for money

What are the Council's criteria for demonstrating 'value for money' and how will both these criteria and demonstrations of value for money be made available to the public?

Answer from Councillor H Bramer, Cabinet Member Resources

Answer to Question 10

As part of the external audit process the Audit Commission must assess the Council's performance in delivering Value for Money against nationally specified criteria contained in the Code of Audit Practice and can be found on Audit Commissions website at: <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/localgov/audit/auditmethodology/pages/valueformoneyconclusion.aspx>

As a result of the external auditor's independent assessment of the council's performance delivering Value for Money the Audit commission issued an unqualified conclusion on the Council's arrangements to secure the three key elements of Value for Money (economy, efficiency and effectiveness). This is part of the Annual Audit Letter which is a public document available on the Council's website at: <http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=568&MIId=3222&Ver=4>

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 4 FEBRUARY 2011

Question from Mrs M Brown, Hereford

Question 11

THE JOINT CORPORATE PLAN refers to 'Affordable housing appropriate to people's needs' (Long term outcome 5.3)

How have the Comprehensive Spending Review, public sector cutbacks, increased unemployment and the 'reduced resources for available in the period ahead' (Report to Cabinet on Joint Corporate Plan 2011-2014, para 5) affected the number of affordable homes needed in Herefordshire and the Council's ability to ensure that they are supplied over the life time of the JCP?

Answer from Councillor JG Jarvis, Cabinet Member Environment and Strategic Housing

Answer to Question 11

We anticipate more people will need access to affordable housing although the impacts of the changes referred to cannot at this stage be quantified. The Council is awaiting the outcome of a local housing market assessment to obtain an up to date view of affordable housing need; the results are expected by April.

Question from Ms M Burns, Hereford

Question 12

THE JOINT CORPORATE PLAN refers in 'OUR VISION' to 'avoidable ... accidents' and 'doing all we can to combat climate change' and its 'PRIORITY THEMES', STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES and 'LONG TERM OUTCOMES' specifically set many goals that would be supported by fairer management of the road network to improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists of all ages (for example LONG TERM OUTCOMES 1.5, 'Better roads, reduced traffic congestion, with more people walking, cycling or using public transport', 3.1 'Children and young people are healthy and have healthy lifestyles with less obesity...', 4.5 'Fewer accidents and injuries', 6.2 'Reduced CO2 emissions ..', 6.5 'Investment in high quality streets...' etc. etc.

When will the Council 'spend to save' and get value for money by introducing 20mph speed limits in all residential and shopping streets and continuous pavements and mandatory cycle lanes on higher speed roads in order to ensure that the road networks in Hereford and our market towns are attractive and safe for sustainable active travel on foot and by bicycle?

Answer from Councillor DB Wilcox, Cabinet Member Highways and Transportation

Answer to Question 12

It is not the Council's policy to pursue such a blanket aim, even were it affordable. However, we are progressively implementing 20mph zones around schools and 30mph

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 4 FEBRUARY 2011

zones in villages and will continue to implement measures that improve safety and encourage walking/cycling, within the resources available.

Question from S Rowe, Hereford

Question 13

JOINT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY According to p65 of the draft Joint Medium Term Financial Strategy, annual capital expenditure will fall from nearly £75m in 2010/11 to under £15m in 2013/14.

What specific areas of the Council's operations are covered by this capital expenditure and how will the proportions of the available funds spent on each vary between 2010/11 and 2013/14?

Answer from Councillor H Bramer, Cabinet Member Resources

Answer to Question 13

Capital expenditure delivers projects which are essential to the local community including; Riverside School, Leominster swimming pool, the new Crematorium, Rotherwas Relief Road, enhancements to Hereford City Centre, Kington Library, the Mortgage Reserve Scheme, the Museum Resource and Learning Centre at Friars Street and improvements to disability access.

Over the period 2010/11 to 2013/14 the Council will see a reduction in capital expenditure across all areas largely as a result of central government funding for major schemes such as the replacement schools programme coming to an end. In 2013/14 our two largest areas of capital expenditure will still be in Children's Services with £4.8m for Schools Maintenance and Sustainable Communities with £9.8m for Highways Maintenance.

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 4 FEBRUARY 2011

Question from Councillor A Seldon of Councillor AJM Blackshaw, Cabinet Member Economic Development and Community Services with regards to Agenda Item 7

- 1A *How much money, if any, has the Courtyard Theatre complex received in subsidy in 2007/08, 2008/09, 2009/10 and 2010/11?*
- 1B *Is there any subsidy projected for 2011/12?*
- 1C *What are the attendance figures for the same periods?*
- 1D *What percentage utilisation does the complex achieve?*
- 1E *Do any other theatres in Herefordshire receive a subsidy?*

Answer from Councillor AJM Blackshaw, Cabinet Member Economic Development and Community Services

Answer to question 1

1A & B Funding provided to the Courtyard is on the basis of a commissioning agreement not subsidy. The funding is:

2007/08	£386,080
2008/09	£387,588
2009/10	£385,931
2010/11	£366,520
2011/12	£348,194

1C

2007/08	82,576
2008/09	95,390
2009/10	95,316
2010/11	NYA

1D It is not clear whether the question refers to building utilisation percentages in relation to event capacity. If Cllr Seldon would care to let me have more precise details of the information he is seeking I will be happy to provide a written response.

1E No

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 4 FEBRUARY 2011

Question from Councillor AT Oliver of Councillor PD Price Cabinet Member ICT, Education and Achievement with regards to Agenda items 7 and 8

- 2 *In the proposed budgetary savings for 2011/12, reference is made to £46,000 savings on school transport.*
- 2A *Is this saving being achieved by cutting out the discretionary travel subsidy to all 16+ students?*
- 2B *How many students will be affected and what is the current annual cost per student?*

Answer from Councillor PD Price Cabinet Member ICT, Education and Achievement

Answer to question 2

- 2A For the 2010/11 academic year, parents/carers make an annual contribution of £405 towards the cost of providing discretionary travel assistance to post-16 students. The level of this contribution is being reviewed.
- 2B The annual contribution is paid by the parents/carers of approximately 900 students. The average cost of travel assistance, per student, is £600.

Question from Councillor AT Oliver of Cllr H Bramer, Cabinet Member Resources with regards to Agenda item 7

- 3 *The new homes bonus is estimated to be worth £660,000 plus each year to Herefordshire. What plans are there to use this funding in the budgets for 2011/12 and 2012/13 to increase the housing stock in the county and in particular the stock of affordable homes?*

Answer from Cllr H Bramer, Cabinet Member Resources

Answer to question 3

- 3 I refer to the answer provided to Mrs J Straker (public question number 3).

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 4 FEBRUARY 2011

Questions from Councillor AT Oliver of Councillor DB Wilcox, Cabinet Member Highways and Transportation with regards to Agenda item 7

- 4A *What funding, if any, is provided within the local transport plan budget for 2011/12 for improvements to the Holme Lacy Road?*
- 4B *As the proposed improvements were a condition of planning agreement being given for the Rotherwas Relief Road, should not this funding be a priority for the Council?*
- 4C *Is the Council preparing a bid for a grant from the Government's local sustainable transport, and if so, what is the size of the bid and how might it help the local transport budgets for 2011/12 and 2012/13.*

Answer from Councillor DB Wilcox, Cabinet Member Highways and Transportation

Answer to question 4

- 4A LTP funding contributes to the Council's programme of highway works. The Holme Lacy works are among those being considered for inclusion in the 2011/12 programme.
- 4B The Council remains committed to delivering this scheme and this will be taken into account when prioritising delivery within the available budget for 2011/2012.
- 4C Yes. Government guidance on bid submission is awaited, and will inform the size and content of the bid.

Question from Councillor RI Matthews of Councillor DB Wilcox, Cabinet Member Highways and Transportation with regards to Agenda item 7

- 5 *Under the funding arrangements for Capital Investments, one of the funding opportunities is the Local Sustainable Transport fund [for sustainable transport initiatives]. Have the Council submitted a bid for any of this funding, considering that the first bidding round closes in April 2011?*

Answer from Councillor DB Wilcox, Cabinet Member Highways and Transportation

Answer to question 5

- 5 I refer Cllr Matthews to the answer to Q4c above.

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 4 FEBRUARY 2011

Question from Councillor MAF Hubbard of Councillor H Bramer, Cabinet Member Resources with regards to Agenda item 7

Impact of cuts on service delivery and capital investment.

- 6A *How far does the Council plan to secure developer gain to make up for the projected rapid contraction in capital expenditure and how will both the cuts and the developer gain be prioritised (please indicate by directorate, programme and relative proportions for each)?*
- 6B *What are the largest sources of developer gain for the Council and what calculations has the Council made into the impact of the current economic climate on future income from developer gain?*

Answer from Cllr H Bramer, Cabinet Member Resources

Answer to question 6

- 6A The council's capital programme makes no assumptions around potential developer gain. There is a well-established principle that the council does not incur capital expenditure on the basis on potential planning gain - developer funding is only planned to be spent when the necessary triggers occur and the funding is received.
- 6B Developer contributions at present are based on the published policies for Section 106 Planning Obligation Agreements. These deal with the detailed aspects of individual development proposals and only seek developer contributions where there is a specific impact of that development which needs to be addressed – and the contribution is ring fenced to addressing that impact. As I detail above, developer funding is only planned to be spent when the availability of that funding is confirmed.
- 7 Question withdrawn

Question from Councillor MAF Hubbard of Councillor AJM Blackshaw, Cabinet Member Economic Development and Community Services with regards to Agenda item 8

Projects under the Joint Corporate Plan

- 8A *How much money has been spent so far on the new Plough Lane accommodation for the Council? Is this project to continue?*
- 8B *How much money has been spent so far on the plan to build a 600 space car park at Plough Lane for Council employees? Is this project still going ahead?*

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 4 FEBRUARY 2011

- 8C *How much has been spent on the new Ledbury Library so far and has the funding for actually building Ledbury Library entirely disappeared?*

Answer from Councillor H Bramer, Cabinet Member Resources

Answer to question 8

- 8A £4.887m, of which £4.25m related to acquisition costs. This investment in the council's property portfolio has not only reduced future costs against the revenue budget, but provides a sound basis on which to undertake the property rationalisation needed within the public sector in the county. It provides an opportunity to reduce operating costs, work more efficiently and effectively and make a significant reduction in our carbon footprint.
- 8B Costs included within above. Yes. Given reducing staff numbers, the car park size has been reduced to 350 spaces.
- 8C £420,453 has been spent in prior years and £100,000 is expected to be spent in this current financial year on the Ledbury Project. This figure includes the costs of refurbishment works to convert St Katherine's to a TIC.
-

Question from Councillor JD Woodward of Councillor H Bramer, Cabinet Member Resources with regard to Agenda item 7

Council and council tax payer exposure to risk

- 9A *Are there any contracts for service delivery or capital expenditure in the lifetime of the Joint Medium Term Financial Strategy that the council will be unable to honour as a result of the cuts?*
- 9B *If so what are the contracts for and what are the cancellation costs, if any, for each?*

Answer from Councillor H Bramer, Cabinet Member Resources

Answer to question 9

- 9A No
- 9B Not applicable
-

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 4 FEBRUARY 2011

Question from Councillor MD Lloyd-Hayes of Councillor RJ Phillips, Leader of the Council with regards to Agenda item 7

- 10 *In light of the Council's commitment to working with the Voluntary Sector, would the Leader agree that outsourcing the Youth Service to the third sector would be both financially prudent, more sustainable and community led?*

Answer from Councillor RJ Phillips, Leader of the Council

Answer to question 10

- 10 I fully acknowledge the valuable role the voluntary & community sector plays working with young people in the county, and have already commissioned a review of options for the future scope and delivery of youth services to inform the most effective and efficient delivery arrangements for the future to meet the needs of Herefordshire's young people.

Question from Councillor MD Lloyd-Hayes of Councillor H Bramer, Cabinet Member Resources with regards to Agenda item 7

- 11A *Question disallowed.*
- 11B *How much of the Council's budget for service delivery (including capital expenditure) over the lifetime of the Joint Medium Term Financial Strategy relies on outside party suppliers or agencies? Please specify by directorate.*
- 11C *Question disallowed.*
- 11D *How many of these third party suppliers or agencies are companies based in or with their headquarters in Herefordshire?*

Answer from Councillor H Bramer, Cabinet Member Resources

Answer to question 11

11B

	£000's
Sustainable Communities	28,000
Adult Services	59,000
Children & Young People	19,000
Resources	5,500
Deputy Chief Executive	5,000
Public Health	330
Central Services	934
Total	117,764

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 4 FEBRUARY 2011

NB these figures relates only to current contractual arrangements and does not include the Joint Venture Company, Integrated Care Organisation or mental health trust, the detail of which is not yet available

11D This information will take time to collate and I will provide a written response in due course.

Question from Councillor MD Lloyd-Hayes

12 *Does Herefordshire Council have a strategic action plan for autism?*

Answer from Councillor RJ Phillips, Leader of the Council

Answer to question 12

12 No.

Question from Councillor GFM Dawe of Councillor H Bramer, Cabinet Member Resources with regards to Agenda item 7

13A *Question disallowed.*

13B *Page 44 of full Council report: Government will not make new supported borrowing allocations as part of the Formula Grant. How much from the Formula Grant is projected to be spent on servicing loans in 2012, 2013, 2014?*

13C *How much from Council Tax is projected to be spent on servicing loans in 2012, 2013, 2014?*

13D *The Government has increased the PWLB (Public Works Loan Board) rate to 1% over the gilt rate. How much of the council borrowing does this affect? How much has it added to Council expenditure?*

13E *Can you provide a breakdown of capital expenditure under the draft MTFs (See Table 7.10.2, Capital Investment Programme); can you break this down into named projects? How much is the interest on each of these projects?*

Answer from Councillor H Bramer, Cabinet Member Resources

Answer to question 13

13B It is not possible to accurately allocate net borrowing costs to the different sources of finance.

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 4 FEBRUARY 2011

13C The Council's funding for borrowing costs comes from various sources of finance and it is not possible to precisely allocate borrowing costs to the Council's various sources of finance.

13D All council borrowing consists of fixed rate loans and so the impact will not be felt until the council wishes to take out new loans. It will then have to pay approximately 0.75% more (or £7,500 per annum per £1 million borrowed).

13E

Scheme	2011-12 £'000	2012-13 £'000	2013-14 £'000
Academy-Wyebridge Replacement School	5,166		
Targeted Capital Fund 14-19	7,090		
Primary grant	5,566		
Co-location	52		
Schools Capital Maintenance	2,695	2,695	2,695
Individual Pupil Needs	2,154	2,154	2,154
Devolved Formula Capital	679		
Sub total	23,402	4,849	4,849
Corporate Accommodation	4,784	7,028	
Hereford Leisure Pool	945		
Small holdings	500		
Sub total	6,229	7,028	
Systems costs	482	208	
Social Care SCP	453		
Mental Health	370		
Community Equipment	300		
Sub total	1,123		
LTP Funded Capital Highway Maintenance	10,348	9,985	9,792
Sustrans Lottery Match Funding	1,460	351	
Yazor Brook Flood Alleviation Scheme	1,648		
Livestock Market	2,314		
Belmont pools			

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 4 FEBRUARY 2011

	79		
Rural Enterprise grant	1,667		
Ledbury Project	2,402		
Halo Golf Driving Range	347		
Disabled Facilities Grants	1,098		
Affordable Housing Grants	1,000		
Housing Condition Survey	50		
Broadband Pilot	1,000	5,000	
Sub total	23,413	15,336	9,792
Leominster Closed Landfill Site Monitoring Infrastructure	233		
Stretton Sugwas Closed Landfill Site	28		
Strangford Closed Landfill Site	28		
Sub total	289		
<i>Contingency</i>	539	224	147
TOTAL	55,477	27,645	14,788

It should be noted that these figures do not necessarily reflect the whole cost of the scheme and that some will be re-paid to the Council. Approximately three quarters of the total is government funded.

It is not possible to provide figures for interest by project as in some cases the capital grant is received in advance of spend thereby earning interest, whereas in other cases we will borrow to fund schemes at the best interest rate available as and when cash balances deplete.

Question from Councillor GFM Dawe of Councillor DB Wilcox, Cabinet Member Highways and Transportation with regards to Agenda items 7 and 8

14A *Buses: I am pleased that money has been found to continue with concessionary fares (p. 45 of full council agenda). However, how much money is saved by not allowing concessionary fares before 9.30 am on the buses?*

14B *Question disallowed.*

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 4 FEBRUARY 2011

14C *Buses: Has the Council's Sustainable Communities Directorate, Transport Section, applied to the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (for sustainable transport, initiatives) which is available for both capital and revenue need (first bidding round closes in April 2011) for money to fund rural buses in Herefordshire?*

14D *The Joint Corporate Plan has many stated aims to Preserve and Enhance the Environment, Combat Climate Change and Increase Cycling and Pedestrians. Given that we know from national and local studies, such as the Council's own TPi August 2010 Sustainable Options Package Report that building a new bypass will induce traffic and have a discouraging effect on walking, cycling and public transport, and a severely detrimental impact on the environment, will the Council now do what it says, abandon plans for a bypass and instead plan for easing traffic congestion through traffic management and encouragement of sustainable transport measures?*

Answer from Councillor DB Wilcox, Cabinet Member Highways and Transportation

Answer to question 14

14A It is projected to be in the region of £100k

14C I refer Cllr Dawe to the answer to question 4c above

14D No. As Cllr Dawe will recall, at its meeting on 13 November 2009, Council overwhelmingly resolved that:

This Council affirms that the sustainable future for our City and County depends on creating more and better paid jobs, significantly increasing the number of homes, particularly affordable, improving leisure and shopping and procuring the supporting infrastructure. This must include another bridge crossing over the Wye and relief roads for Hereford and Leominster.

Question from Councillor GFM Dawe of Councillor AJM Blackshaw, Cabinet Member Economic Development and Community Services with regards to Agenda item 7

15 *Has funding for the 'Link Road', an integral part of the Edgar Street Grid, now entirely disappeared?*

Answer from Councillor AJM Blackshaw, Cabinet Member Economic Development and Community Services

Answer to question 15

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 4 FEBRUARY 2011

- 15 No. A “package” approach is being pursued with a number of different potential sources being explored.
-

Question from Councillor GFM Dawe of Councillor RJ Phillips, Leader of the Council with regards to Agenda item 7

- 16 *Can I have Cllr. Phillips' assurance that none of the static (as opposed to mobile) libraries in Herefordshire, which constitute important front line services, are to have their staff numbers cut, and that 'co-location' is not a euphemism for this (paragraph 35, page 52)?*

Answer from Councillor RJ Phillips, Leader of the Council

Answer to question 16

- 16 No. Co-location means exactly that. It has been a long-standing policy to pursue co-location of services (as demonstrated in Bromyard and Kington), providing a single ‘shop-front’ for services. This both improves access for local people and delivers savings through efficiencies around building, staffing and management costs. It is because we have been taking these actions over recent years that Herefordshire has been better placed than most to manage the current budget reductions with a minimum of impact on front line services.
-

Question from Councillor SJ Robertson of Councillor DB Wilcox, Cabinet Member Highways and Transportation with regards to Agenda item 7

- 17 *In view of the proposed spending cuts what measures are being taken now to ensure that vital bus services for rural areas are protected and not cut, which could lead to wider implications on other Council services caused by social isolation?*

Answer from Councillor DB Wilcox, Cabinet Member Highways and Transportation

Answer to question 17

- 17 The Joint Medium Term Financial Strategy 2011/14 seeks to protect bus services. There will be a review of the bus network in 2011/12 and this will include consultation with members, parish and town councils, bus operators, community groups and other stakeholders to ensure that any changes to the network are focussed on the best outcome for local communities.

