

SUPPLEMENT TO THE AGENDA FOR

Council

Friday 18 November 2011

10.30 am

The Shirehall, St Peter's Square, Hereford.

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

MEETING:	COUNCIL
DATE:	18 NOVEMBER 2011
TITLE OF REPORT:	QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC
REPORT BY:	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR LAW, GOVERNANCE AND RESILIENCE

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To receive any questions from members of the public deposited more than eight clear working days before the meeting of Council.

Introduction and Background

- 1 Members of the public may ask a question of a Cabinet Member or Committee or other Chairmen. Written answers will be circulated to Members, the press and public prior to the start of the Council meeting. Questions subject to a Freedom of Information request will be dealt with under that separate process.
- 2 Standing Order 4.1.14.4 of the Constitution states that: a question may only be asked if notice has been given by delivering it in writing or by electronic mail to the Monitoring Officer no later than midday eight clear working days before the day of the meeting (ie the Monday of the week preceding the Council meeting where that meeting is on a Friday). Each question must give the name and address of the questioner and must name the person to whom it is to be put.
- 3 A questioner who has submitted a written question may also put **one** brief supplementary question without notice to the person (if s/he is present at the meeting) who has replied to his or her original question. A supplementary question must arise directly out of the original request or reply. The Chairman may reject a supplementary question on any of the grounds for rejecting written questions set out in these Council rules or if the question is too lengthy, is in multiple parts or takes the form of a speech. In any event, any person asking a supplementary question will be permitted only **1 minute** to do so.
- 4 The Monitoring Officer may reject a question or a supplemental question if it:
 - Is not about a matter for which the Council has a responsibility or which affects the County or a part of it;
 - Is illegal, scurrilous, defamatory, frivolous or offensive or otherwise out of order;

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Chris Chapman, Assistant Director Law, Governance and Resilience on (01432) 260200

- Is substantially the same as or similar to a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past six months or relates to the same subject matter or the answer to the question will be substantially the same as the previous answer;
 - Requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information;
 - Relates to a planning or licensing application;
 - Relates to an employment matter that should more properly be dealt with through the Council's Human Resources processes.
- 5 There will be a time limit of a maximum of 30 minutes for public questions and of 30 minutes for Members' questions. If either public or Member questions are concluded in less than 30 minutes, then the Chairman may allow more time for either public or Member questions within an overall time limit of one hour for all questions and supplementary questions. There will normally be no extension of time beyond one hour, unless the Chairman decides that there are reasonable grounds to allow such an extension, and questions not dealt with in this time will be dealt with by written response. The Chairman will decide the time allocated to each question. The register of questions put to the Council meeting, both questions allowed or rejected, is available at a Council meeting for members of the public to view.

Questions

- 6 Five questions have been received by the deadline and are attached at Appendix 1.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 18 NOVEMBER 2011

Question from Mr P Mitchell, Herefordshire

Question 1

It was recently reported in the Hereford Times that the Council will press ahead with their commitment to a new bypass for Hereford without further public consultation on the assumption that the wider council taxpaying public would support this – and by implication this priority over other capital spend options such as schools, care homes, other essential civic infrastructure maintenance or new build.

Given the adverse Council funding conditions which have been prevailing in recent years and which are likely to continue for some time (inflationary costs have risen significantly ahead of Council's funding receipts)

Can the Council justify and demonstrate the wisdom, feasibility and financial affordability of committing to its decision (and explain its assumption of public support).

This against a backdrop of confirming its first priority must always be to meet rising financial costs of maintaining essential public services and support to the vulnerable whilst at the same time also ensuring council tax payments will not be allowed to rise. Even if justifiable in this context, in the absence of suitable asset disposals this will inevitably result in reducing its available funding to meet any of its capital spend aspirations.

There has previously also been implied dependency that developer/s will be sufficiently commercially incentivized to meet a substantial proportion of the 9 figure cost of this bypass. The extent is also a highly questionable contention and equally difficult to justify and demonstrate given that unless the developer can commit to on balance sheet funding they will otherwise (in an unfavorable climate) need to seek very difficult to obtain project finance. In either event to be justifiable any such development will have to generate sufficiently attractive and financially sustainable rates of returns to cover their financing costs, overall development costs (including contribution to the bypass) against realistic and achievable asset valuations and any associated supporting income streams going forward in today's less than rosy economic climate. Always of course assuming mutual desirability of associated proposed developments – with Council meeting their civic duty to ensure they socially and responsibly achieve, not at the expense of, the wishes, aspirations, interests and needs of the people of Hereford.

The wisdom and validity of such assumptions and commitments by the Council and the dependency on the developer to deliver low risk (to the Council / Taxpayer) and suitable support in meeting what the City wants and needs must be very questionable at least for some considerable time to come. Particularly given that council taxpayers themselves are under enormous similar financial pressures and are therefore likely to find **any** increased risk of council tax rises unwelcome if not intolerable.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 18 NOVEMBER 2011

Question from Mr P McKay, Hereford

Question 2

With a year having passed since I last enquired and it still not being known which of our unsurfaced roads suffer from long term obstructions to equestrians, even though they are inspected annually on foot if need be, and our meeting subject of reply to question at May Full Council meeting being unrecorded, may I enquire if you could confirm that Council is considering modification to the roles of Highways and Rights of Way to make them more efficient and effective, so that highways undertake all surface maintenance functions, that being what they are best at, and more importantly that Rights of Way undertake all access inspections with any follow up actions, that being what they are best at, so that it will be known within 12 months which of our unsurfaced maintained and non-maintained roads are obstructed, ploughed, have broken gates, where signs would be beneficial, etc., they comprising about 30% of available equestrian routes, with appropriate action being taken in similar manner as is done for our ramblers with footpaths?

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 18 NOVEMBER 2011

Question from Mr T Packham, Grafton, Hereford

Question 3

I refer to routes A301 SC1 and A302 SC2 in the October 2010 Amey Plan. Link SC2 runs to the south of Hayleasow Wood to avoid what is an area of Ancient Woodland and a SWS, and was the route favoured by the Study of Options Environmental Assessment Report Hereford Relief Road August 2010 (see page 51).

I am therefore very concerned about the 3rd route, shown red, that has now been hastily proposed, without any consultation with the Parish Council or local residents and which has not been assessed for its environmental impacts on the surrounding area, in particular the Ancient Woodland site.

Why has the Council re-routed the road in response to just three objections from the Haywood Lodge area, without wider consultation, and with no environmental assessment of this new proposed route?

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 18 NOVEMBER 2011

Question from P Churchward, Breinton, Hereford

Question 4

Can the Council confirm the value of its assets, loans and liabilities and the ratio of this figure against assets held on the balance sheet?

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 18 NOVEMBER 2011

Question from AT Oliver, Hereford

Question 5

In the light of the fact that violence towards women is said to be increasing; that on average one woman per week in the UK is killed by their partner; that apparently a significant number of young people believe it is alright to slap, punch, abuse a female partner for any misdemeanour and that teenage pregnancies are still increasing.

Would the Cabinet Member for Children's Services give a categorical assurance that this Council will insist on Herefordshire's secondary schools providing comprehensive sex education?

(Sex education which includes not only the biology of sex but also the issue of relationships between the sexes, which makes clear that it is not acceptable behaviour to abuse, or use violence towards your partner, and also informs young women that it is not normal to be in a relationship which involves physical violence and controlling behaviour and that society will provide help and support if they are trapped in such a relationship.)

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Can the Council justify and demonstrate the wisdom, feasibility and financial affordability of committing to its decision (and explain its assumption of public support).

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Answer from Councillor DB Wilcox, Cabinet Member Environment, Housing & Planning

Answer to question 1

Whilst it is true that this administration remains committed to the delivery of a Hereford relief road, we are currently carrying out further consultation as part of the development of

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 18 November 2011

the Local Development Framework (LDF) for the county. This consultation includes a proposal for a preferred western route for a relief road, on which we are seeking comments. The inclusion of a route in the adopted LDF does not constitute a financial commitment by the Council; it is however an essential first step to securing funding for any such scheme and its deliverability and sources of funding will have been fully tested before the submission of the LDF to the Inspector.

Question from Mr P McKay, Hereford

Question 2

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Answer from Councillor AJM Blackshaw Cabinet Member Highways, Transportation and Sustainability

Answer to question 2

These services are provided for the Council by Amey Herefordshire. Amey are responsible for structuring their service to maximise efficiency and effectiveness; we continue to monitor outcomes achieved within the budgetary constraints existing.

Question from Mr T Packham, Grafton, Hereford

Question 3

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PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 18 November 2011

Why has the Council re-routed the road in response to just three objections from the Haywood Lodge area, without wider consultation, and with no environmental assessment of this new proposed route?

Answer from Councillor AJM Blackshaw Cabinet Member Highways, Transportation and Sustainability

Answer to question 3

The route referred to is based on the previously safeguarded route for the former Hereford bypass scheme between the A49(S) and the A465. Consultation is underway, as part of the Local Development Framework process, on the inclusion of this route within the overall southern route corridor, and the results of that consultation will be taken into account in determining the route corridor to be included within the submission Core Strategy. The eventual route of the relief road within that corridor will only be able to be determined following further scheme engineering design and assessment.

Question from P Churchward, Breinton, Hereford

Question 4

Can the Council confirm the value of its assets, loans and liabilities and the ratio of this figure against assets held on the balance sheet?

Answer from Councillor PD Price, Cabinet Member Corporate Services & Education

Answer to question 4

This information can be found in the Council's balance sheet at 31st March 2011, forming part of the statement of accounts presented to Audit & Governance Committee in September 2011 the papers for which are available on the council website. The Council's audited accounts have received an unqualified opinion.

Included in the liabilities figures are £145.6m loans outstanding, which is 29.7% of long-term assets.

It should be noted however, that only a relatively small proportion of borrowing is 'prudential' borrowing (the costs of which are met by the local taxpayer); the majority is 'supported' borrowing funded by other government sources. A number of factors, including movement in working capital and investment balances, influence when and how much is borrowed so it is not possible to provide a static figure for the split between the types of borrowing, or indeed the allocation of that borrowing to individual schemes; however on an assumption of average prudential borrow levels for the current capital programme, this percentage reduces to 7.5%.

Without such borrowing it would not be possible to deliver projects which are essential to the local community including: Riverside School, Leominster swimming pool, Hereford crematorium, Rotherwas relief road, enhancements to Hereford city centre, Kington library,

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 18 November 2011

the mortgage rescue scheme, the museum resource & learning centre at Friars Street, improvements to public toilets and improvements to disability access.

Question from AT Oliver, Hereford

Question 5

In the light of the fact that violence towards women is said to be increasing; that on average one woman per week in the UK is killed by their partner; that apparently a significant number of young people believe it is alright to slap, punch, abuse a female partner for any misdemeanour and that teenage pregnancies are still increasing.

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Answer from Councillor P Price, Cabinet Member Corporate Services & Education

Answer to question 5

The Council cannot require action as requested, as the responsibility for the school curriculum, including sex and relationship education, lies with the governing bodies and head teachers of maintained schools.

Secondary schools must provide sex education (including education about HIV and AIDS and other sexually-transmitted diseases), and all maintained schools should teach human growth and reproduction as set out in the statutory national curriculum for science. All governing bodies must have a written statement of whatever policy they adopt on sex and relationship education and make it available to parents. The governing body and head teacher should also make sure that Personal, Social, Health and Economic education encourages pupils to consider the moral aspects of sex education and to develop loving and caring relationships.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of any sex and relationship education provided (but not from the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction necessary under the national curriculum for science).

It should be said that whilst Herefordshire schools do adopt a strong approach the approaches taken by them are only part of the learning which children have; families and local communities also play a strong part.

Question from Councillor Sinclair-Knipe

- 1 *Given the recent publication of the excellent food and drink strategy document for Herefordshire, produced by the Herefordshire Food Partnership, can you confirm or give some assurance, that the Council will adopt this strategy document, particularly in the area of local food consumption?*

Answer from Councillor AJM Blackshaw Cabinet Member Highways, Transportation and Sustainability

Answer to question 1

Herefordshire Council is an active member of the Herefordshire Food Partnership and as Chair of the group that led the development of the strategy I have recommended its adoption. I hope that we all share the enthusiasm for this excellent report that celebrates the rich tradition of food and drink production in the County.

Question from Councillor PJ McCaul

- 2 *Affordable Housing and Housing Associations*

Young couples without children are unable to find affordable accommodation through Housing Associations in Herefordshire and have to move outside the County as privately rented accommodation has become so expensive due to the high demand. The last housing development in Leominster had the first ten families move in from Manchester, so how is the Council solving the problem of housing for young Herefordshire couples?

Answer from Councillor DB Wilcox, Cabinet Member Environment, Housing and Planning

Answer to question 2

Since January 2011, 27 affordable homes have been developed in Leominster at Ryelands Road and Quarry Bank Mews. To ensure a balanced and mixed community the size of accommodation secured by the Council ranged from 1 to 3 bed properties for both sale and rental.

With regards to allocating the properties, Ryelands Road was subject to a S106 agreement, local connection criteria and it can be evidenced that all units were allocated to those living or working in Leominster.

With regards to Quarry Bank Mews, this site was originally to be developed by a private house builder, but as the site was stalled due to the economic climate a housing association purchased and built out the site with additional funding from the Homes and Communities Agency. Whilst the site was not subject to a S106 agreement requiring local connection criteria, I can advise that 9 of the properties were let to those living or working in Leominster with the remainder currently living elsewhere in Herefordshire.

Housing young couples is a nationally recognised problem but Herefordshire Council is working hard in the context of our agreed Housing Strategy, to deliver affordable homes to meet a wide variety of needs in a challenging economic climate. The Local Development

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 18 NOVEMBER 2011

Framework, currently under consultation, is clearly the most important policy tool available to the council in addressing this issue and I would urge everyone to ensure they make their views known on this important issue.

Question from Councillor PJ McCaull

3 Hereford New Market

The former Leader stated the new market cost £6 million not £10 million as I had stated. Now the market has been completed can the following be provided:

- 3.1 *Cost of site*
- 3.2 *Cost of road works and ground works*
- 3.3 *The total cost of the building works including the amount that will have been held in retention until any minor faults are dealt with.*
- 3.4 *The cost of interest on money borrowed to do the development.*
- 3.5 *The architects and surveyors fees.*
- 3.6 *The cost of officers' time in seeing the project through from start to finish.*
- 3.7 *The rental income and other income such as a figure per beast sold as the market.*
- 3.8 *Will there be enough funds from the sale of the old market to cover all these costs or will the rate payers of the County be subsidising the Market forever?*

Answer from Councillor PD Price, Cabinet Member Corporate Services & Education

Answer to question 3

Cllr McCaull will know that on the 24 September 2009 Cllr Phillips chaired the cabinet meeting which confirmed the livestock project with the identified cost indicated at £7.7m for building and infrastructure with the potential to drive down that cost. Press releases indicating that figure were released to councillors, staff and media. It was made clear that the figure did not include the purchase of the land. In response to specific questions:

- 3.1 The site was purchased for £1.5m.
- 3.2 The main market infrastructure costs total £250k.
- 3.3 The total cost is £6.9m which includes a £92k retention.
- 3.4 No monies have been borrowed to fund the capital costs incurred. We have used capital receipts rather than borrowing; this is because interest rates on investments are at a very low rate thus making it appropriate to use our reserves.
- 3.5 These costs have been incurred by Amey and payments total £1.2m.

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 18 NOVEMBER 2011

- 3.6 The project formed part of the day to day activity of various officers and as such has been absorbed within base budgets. However, we have identified that £74k relates to specialist officer time and is being charged to the project.
- 3.7 Rental income is calculated at 0.5% of gross turnover. The increased level of activity at the new livestock market that is expected will increase income when the position is calculated at the end of the financial year. In addition the rent "toll" receipts are charged at a rate of 10p per beast, sheep, pigs or goats sold.
- 3.8 (See answer 3.4) – a capital receipt is expected from the development; the actual sum cannot be confirmed at this stage, the amount received will replenish the capital receipts reserve funding used.

Question from Councillor PJ McCaull

4. Apprentice Placing and Job Experience

With the unemployment of young people leaving college and universities rising rapidly and already over 1 million:

- 4.1 *As one of the highest employers in the County, what has this Council done in finding placements?*
- 4.2 *How many apprentices and job experience placements have the Council provided?*

Answer from Councillor PD Price, Corporate Services & Education

Answer to question 4

- 4.1 Since April 2009 the Council, and its partner NHS Herefordshire, have jointly offered an apprenticeship scheme; this scheme remains under continuing review to ensure it is maximising opportunities available both to young people in our care for whom we have a corporate parenting responsibility, and to those from the wider community seeking employment opportunities. We also work with our major supply partners, such as Amey, as part of the commissioning process, to encourage an increase in the availability of apprenticeships within the county.

We work closely with Job Centre Plus to provide work experience placements to their customers. We have signed up to 'Get Britain Working' to help young people gain experience in a work setting and to update their CV whilst still receiving their benefits through Jobcentre Plus. In addition, we also support schools and colleges in work experience placements.

More broadly we support interview and employment skills workshops within schools and colleges and regularly attend employment and recruitment fairs to promote employment opportunities across the partnership.

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 18 NOVEMBER 2011

- 4.2 Since the apprenticeship scheme began in April 2009 we have provided 33 apprenticeships within the council; 15 of those apprentices have gone on to find permanent employment within the council.

During the last financial year, we provided 40 work experience placements across the authority.

Question from Councillor DW Greenow

- 5 *The livestock market has been up and running for nearly 6 months now and appears to be very busy.*

Is there any evidence that livestock numbers have increased through the market and is the market attracting new buyers?

Answer from Councillor AJM Blackshaw Cabinet Member Highways, Transportation and Sustainability

Answer to question 5

The figures provided below relate to the period from 22nd June 2011 (the first day of trading) to 16th November 2011. The significant increases these figures demonstrate, justify the investment made to support our local agricultural community, which is not just part of the county's heritage but a real contributor to the local economy.

Total animals sold against 2010 (% increase)

June	24%
July	26.4%
August	38%
September	4.26%*
October	15.5%

**September last year was particularly busy with a total of 34,000 animals sold*

2011	136,656 animals (June – November)
2010	114,949 animals whole year

Animals sold against 2010 figures (% increase)

Prime Fat Lambs	24.4%
Cull Ewes	18.75
Breeding Ewes	2.0%
Store Lambs	23.53
Breeding Rams	21.9
Cows and calves	62.6
Pigs	55.1
Barren Cows	44.1
Store Cattle	72.3

It is of interest that the auctioneers report the greatest increase of customers to be from the Bromyard to Worcester area.

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 18 NOVEMBER 2011

Question from Councillor FM Norman

- 6.1 *Why are children in our local schools who are eligible for free fruit, being given apples and pears from other countries such as South Africa, Portugal and Germany when our local fruit farmers are having difficulties selling the fruit that is produced locally? Purchasing local fruit would benefit the local economy and help to re-establish links between us and our food through schools.*
- 6.2 *What percentage of food served in Herefordshire schools and hospitals is:*
- a) *local?*
 - b) *organic?*

Question 6.3 disallowed on the grounds that it is the same or similar to Question 1 (Herefordshire Council Constitution Part 4, 4.1.15.4 c)

Answer from Councillor AJM Blackshaw, Cabinet Member Highways, Transportation and Sustainability.

Answer to question 6

- 6.1 The provision of school fruit is through a nationally procured contract and not one held or procured through Herefordshire Council. It should be noted however, that the contract has been awarded to Redbridge (S & A Produce) who are a local supplier; Redbridge currently support the Duchy of Cornwall School Food initiative to promote the supply of local produce. We continue to work with local suppliers to maximise the use of local produce within the county.
- 6.2 We do not currently collect this information. (It should be noted that the Council does not supply catering services to all schools, or to the hospitals)

Question from Councillor FM Norman

- 7.1 *In March 2009 Herefordshire County Council was awarded PFI credits of £115.3 million towards a new waste treatment facility. How much is the Council committed to spending as our share of the joint Herefordshire and Worcestershire project to build a waste incinerator at Hartlebury in Worcestershire, especially at a time when other Local Authorities have abandoned such plans, and at least one is building an Anaerobic Digester instead, far less polluting and producing far less carbon.*
- 7.2 *How much is Herefordshire's share of the costs of the enquiry taking place later this month?*
- 7.3 *Why is household green waste and food waste going to landfill, instead of for composting, or, if we built one, to an Anaerobic Digester?*
- 7.4 *Why do we not have a 'bring and take' section at our Recycling/Waste centres, as many other counties do, where re-usable, repairable items such as bicycles and furniture could be taken, for removal by anyone who could use them, thus reducing*

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 18 NOVEMBER 2011

significantly the amount of waste going to landfill. This would help to reduce the huge fines we pay in landfill tax.

Answer from Councillor AJM Blackshaw, Cabinet Member Highways, Transportation and Sustainability.

Answer to question 7

- 7.1 The Council was awarded PFI Credits under a joint contract with Worcestershire County council 1998, when the contract was originally signed, Herefordshire's share amounts to £1.4 million p.a. for the 25 years of the contract (ie £35m in total). To date there is no financial commitment to the building of a plant at Hartlebury which has not yet received planning permission.
- 7.2 Nothing.
- 7.3 The costs of introducing collection and disposal of green waste and food waste are prohibitively expensive; however we promote a range of recycling opportunities including low-cost compost bins to encourage home recycling. I am pleased to note the recent government announcement about the positive impact of the 'Love Food, Hate Waste' campaign and other national initiatives resulting in the amount of food we throw away every year in the UK dropping from 8.3 million tonnes to 7.2 million tonnes. We have, of course, been actively promoting this campaign providing publicity and advice through regular features in Herefordshire Matters and the local press as well as attendance in High Town and at the Food Festival.
- 7.4 I am pleased to say that re-use facilities are being gradually introduced by our contractors at recycling centres across the two Counties

Question from Councillor FM Norman.

8. *Can the Council consider a comprehensive strategy for insulating our older housing stock to improve energy efficiency, as well as fitting Solar PV panels, as some Councils such as Birmingham are now doing. Such a scheme would lead to warmer homes, lower energy bills and reduced carbon, while creating hundreds of jobs. If introduced before the Government Green Deal is launched, then costs would be lower and local businesses and employment would benefit.*

Answer from Councillor DB Wilcox, Cabinet Member Environment, Housing and Planning.

Answer to question 8

Projects such as that launched in 2010 by Birmingham City Council to fit power generating solar panels to council-owned properties are not practicable in Herefordshire where housing stock is no longer under the control of the council, and private sector incentives through the provision of financial assistance have been removed.

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 18 NOVEMBER 2011

However, Herefordshire Council retains a clear commitment to improving the energy efficiency of the county's housing stock, as demonstrated in the Herefordshire Affordable Warmth Strategy, the Herefordshire Partnership Climate Change Strategy and the Household Sustainable Energy Action Plan.

Indeed, Herefordshire Council's Affordable Warmth and Special Energy Efficiency schemes (SEES) were featured in the 2011 national publication "Our World, Our Wellbeing" by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health.

During the period July 2007 to March 2011 this Scheme assisted over 3,500 households with financial assistance to install appropriate energy efficiency and micro-generation technologies.

The total amount of funding committed from all sources via these schemes during 2007–2011, excluding local installations by EAGA Warm Front scheme, was £3,666,190.

Question from Councillor KS Guthrie

9 Queenswood

Could Councillor Blackshaw please confirm for the public record that he has decided not to accept officers' advice to introduce car parking charges at Queenswood Country Park.

Answer from Councillor AJM Blackshaw, Cabinet Member Highways, Transportation and Sustainability

Answer to question 9

Although consideration was given to the introduction of car parking charges at Queenswood, this has not currently been pursued.

Question from Councillor KS Guthrie

10 Speeding Enforcement

Is it correct that the decision to not provide funding to the Safer Roads Partnership for 2011/12 has resulted in a reduction in speed enforcement in Herefordshire?

Answer from Councillor AJM Blackshaw, Cabinet Member Highways, Transportation and Sustainability

Answer to question 10

No. 576 hours of speed enforcement has taken place in Herefordshire this year (April to September period). This is 2% up on the same period last year.

Question from Councillor A Seldon

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 18 NOVEMBER 2011

- 11 *Given the High Court judgements last week against Sefton and Isle of Wight Councils, what impact is there likely to be on the Adult and Social Care budget in Herefordshire?*

Answer from Councillor PM Morgan, Cabinet Member Health and Wellbeing

Answer to question 11

None. The judgements relate to processes undertaken by the two authorities in question that are not being pursued by this authority; they do however underline the importance of undertaking appropriate consultation and equality impact assessment to inform decision making.

Question from Councillor DC Taylor

- 12 *How many jobs have gone in Herefordshire Council in the last 18 months? Could the numbers be provided per department?*

Answer from Councillor PD Price, Cabinet Member Corporate Services and Education

Answer to question 12

The net reduction in staff numbers for Herefordshire Council, between 1 April 2010 to 31 October 2011, has reduced by 195.

The reduction by Directorate in 2010/11 is as follows:

Children's Services	42
Deputy Chief Executive	15
Environment & Culture	6
Integrated Commissioning	7
Provider Services	5
Public Health	-3
Regeneration	9
Resources	10
Sustainable Communities	36
Total	127

The reduction by Directorate in 2011/12, up to 31 October 2011 is as follows:

People's Services	18
CE, DCE & Corporate Services	39
Places and Communities	11
Total	68*

**This excludes TUPE transfers to Hoople, Wye Valley NHS Trust and 2gether*

Question from Councillor DC Taylor

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 18 NOVEMBER 2011

- 13 *I have been contacted by a resident in my Ward who is concerned about the potential numbers of Herefordshire residents who are affected by the loss of the parking permits for the over 65s. I find that quite a number from my ward are travelling to other towns such as Hay-on-Wye or Abergavenny to do their shopping which must have a detrimental effect on local businesses within the City which we as a Council are trying to promote with the new Edgar Street Grid retail quarter. Due to this would it be possible to revisit the decision to remove concessionary parking for the over 65s?*

Answer from Councillor AJM Blackshaw, Cabinet Member Highways, Transportation and Sustainability

Answer to question 13

This change was agreed as part of the council's overall charging strategy and was part of a package of measures needed to ensure a balanced budget. All car parking charges are being monitored to assess the impact and inform any further changes that may be required.

Question from Councillor WLS Bowen

- 14 *What help and advice can Herefordshire Council give to Parish Councils who wish to build their own affordable housing? Are you aware that local housing associations are very slow to help, if they can help at all and say that they have very little or no money to spend on housing in parishes.*

Question 15 disallowed on the grounds that it is the same or similar to question 8 - Herefordshire Council Constitution Part 4, 4.1.15.4 c.

Answer from Councillor DB Wilcox, Cabinet Member Environment, Housing and Planning

Answer to question 14

A guide to the development of affordable housing specifically for Parish Council's was distributed to all parishes in 2009. The document is amended periodically and Parish Council's are notified of where and how to obtain updated copies. Copies are also available on the council's website.

Parish Council meetings are attended by officers when appropriate to promote housing need surveys and encourage support for potential development opportunities that may arise in specific parishes.

Resources to develop affordable housing are scarce nationally and rural Community Land Trust schemes have delivered comparatively low housing numbers nationally. However, officers are investigating how community-led schemes might work in Herefordshire despite limited national funding and changes are being considered to planning policy through the emerging Local Development Framework currently under consultation; this will provide the framework within which future opportunities for delivering affordable housing can be generated. I have been having discussions with all housing associations locally to ensure

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 18 NOVEMBER 2011

we work together to make the best use of the limited resources available for the provision of affordable housing.

Question from Councillor RI Matthews

- 16 *Can we please be given the full details of what Council Assets have been disposed of, or are in the process of being so, since this Executive came into power in May 2011?*

Answer from Councillor PD Price, Corporate Services and Education

Answer to question 16

The management of Council assets, whether acquisition or disposal, are guided by the Council's Asset Management Strategy to ensure that assets are used to best effect to support the delivery of Council policy and priorities, as evidenced by the opening of a new Livestock Market for the county.

Completed asset disposals are listed below; a further thirteen are in process and therefore may be subject to commercial confidentiality.

Completed:

Burcott Road, Hereford – land
No. 135 Eign Street, Hereford – previously Homepoint office
Royal College for the Blind, Hereford – land at entrance
St Guthlac Street, Hereford – sub-station site
Whitfield, (Smallholding Estate) – land
Wilton Sports Centre, Wilton Road, Ross on Wye – Sports Centre

Question from Councillor RI Matthews

- 17 *The Info in Herefordshire Offices have recently been moved once again, at great cost, into Franklin House in Blueschool Street, Hereford. Can we be told if this is a permanent move, or are there plans to move this Department once again in the not too distant future?*

Answer from Councillor PD Price, Corporate Services and Education

Answer to question 17

The Council had a contractual obligation to provide vacant possession of the Garrick House site to Stanhope (developers of the Retail Quarter) by end of July 2011, to enable the delivery of their development to progress. The project will be funded by a future receipt from Stanhope.

As the current development has fully realised the brief for accommodating the customer service organisation and continues to demonstrate enhanced customer outcomes, bringing together a greater number of customer services previously located in other council or NHS owned or leased premises, not solely Garrick House, thereby securing revenue savings

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 18 NOVEMBER 2011

through release of surplus property; there are currently no plans to move the location of the service.

Question from Councillor SJ Robertson

- 18 *How many employees of Herefordshire Council and Amey Herefordshire have been employed on delivering the Local Development Framework plans over the last three years and how many are expected to work on delivering these plans over the next five year? What is the predicted cost?*

Answer from Councillor DB Wilcox, Cabinet Member Environment, Housing and Planning

Answer to question 18

Given the multi-disciplinary nature of the process it is not possible to give precise numbers of employees involved. The development of the Local Development Framework is a statutory requirement and has to follow a statutory process. Costs to date have been reported in response to questions at a previous meeting of Council; future costs cannot be predicted with accuracy given the number of variables such as length of Examination in Public and the implications of new Neighbourhood Plans.

Question from Councillor SJ Robertson

- 19 *The additional car parking and access road from Plough Lane to Yazor Road has been abandoned? How much has been spent on this project?*

Answer from Councillor AJM Blackshaw, Cabinet Member Highways, Transportation and Sustainability

Answer to questions 19

Given the significant reduction in space requirement due to the organisation reducing in size, the proposed refurbishment of Plough Lane does not necessitate the delivery of the car park and link road. However the Council is investigating with partners possible opportunities for use of the land adjacent to the existing Plough Lane office. Development of this could involve provision of this car park scheme and link to Yazor Road. In the event of this happening the current designs could be used at that point. Fees incurred to date are £241,602

Question from Councillor MD Lloyd-Hayes

- 20 *With the integration of Health and Social Care Services, what percentage of the two budgets are pooled?*

Answer from Councillor PM Morgan, Cabinet Member Health and Wellbeing

Answer to question 20

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 18 NOVEMBER 2011

The amount within the commissioning line of the pooled budget with the PCT is 65% of total Commissioning (adults) budgets.

I am unable to provide information about the budgets of other bodies.

Question from Councillor JLV Kenyon

21 *Since becoming a Councillor I have spent a disproportionate amount of time dealing with Parks and Highways, Amey investigating tree problems. How do we remove trees of unsuitable species that are affecting the development of adjacent trees as well as local residents having quiet enjoyment of garden?*

Answer from Councillor AJM Blackshaw, Cabinet Member Highways, Transportation and Sustainability

Answer to question 21

Any reports of trees which are causing a problem or are inappropriate will be investigated. However due to the considerable amenity value of trees, Herefordshire Council has a policy of not carrying out works on trees unless it is for the health of the tree, safety of the public or if they are encroaching onto neighbouring properties. There is no obligation on the authority to carry out works on a tree for the convenience of the neighbouring property.

Question from Councillor PJ McCaull

Question 15 disallowed on the grounds that it relates to a planning or licensing application - Herefordshire Council Constitution Part 4, 4.1.15.4 e.

Question from Councillor EPJ Harvey

This autumn most energy suppliers have increased their tariffs across the board by ~20%. Herefordshire has one of the highest proportions of timber framed and solid-walled houses, and users of LPG (Liquefied Petroleum Gas)/oil-fired heating systems of any county in the country. Last month:

- A Hereford householder was given the first national award under the new European Passivhaus energy standard for upgrading his older-style home; and
- The Council approved the accelerated upgrade of some street-lighting and all traffic lights to reduce energy consumption and maintenance costs.

23 *Where on its risk register does the Council place the subject of fuel poverty, and how is it planning to use its buying power, position of influence and asset base to reduce energy consumption, encourage investment in energy saving/micro-generation and support the many businesses based in Herefordshire which specialise in this technology?*

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 18 NOVEMBER 2011

Answer from Councillor DB Wilcox, Cabinet Member Environment, Housing and Planning

Answer to question 23

Fuel poverty is not a risk to Herefordshire Council and therefore is not on its risk register.

Recognising the significance of this issue for local residents, the Council seeks to mitigate fuel poverty through its Affordable Warmth Strategy where there is a dedicated officer dealing with this and related issues. The Council is using its influence and asset base to reduce energy consumption, encourage investment and support businesses through its sustainable procurement policy that seeks to promote the purchase of goods and services based on best value for economic, environmental and social considerations, and encourage contractors to do the same.

The Council adopted its "Carbon Management Plan" in March 2011 which contains an action plan with a target of 30% carbon reduction by 2015.

We have also adopted a sustainable procurement policy to ensure that we purchase goods and services based on best value for economic, environmental and social considerations, and encourage our contractors to do the same.

Question from Councillor MAF Hubbard

Change in the October version of the background papers to the LDF

In the draft back in July it states on page eight that "Further modelling based upon the proposed reduction in housing numbers still confirms a need for the road".

In the October version, same page, the wording now reads "Further modelling based upon the proposed reduction in housing numbers is being undertaken".

24.1 Please can you explain the need for the revision in the wording; whether the modelling is now complete; if so, what are its conclusions; and if not, how the case can be made for the road and its route under this consultation?

24.2 I note you say that the existence of the Rotherwas Enterprise Zone is now recognised in the October version of the Background Paper. What modelling has been done of the impact on the Core Strategy and its evidence base of the EZ as a growth employment area and how has this modelling been related to any associated impact on the Employment Area identified in the plan for Three Elms?

Answer from Councillor DB Wilcox, Cabinet Member Environment, Housing and Planning

Answer to question 24

24.1 Further traffic modelling based upon the reduction in housing numbers is continuing. The need to carry out such modelling was acknowledged in a LDF report to Cabinet in July. The initial outcomes from this work confirm the continuing requirement for

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 18 NOVEMBER 2011

the relief road and full results will be made available as soon as possible. The Draft Background Paper was amended before the final version was published.

- 24.2 In respect of Rotherwas Enterprise Zone (EZ), it is intended to consider this aspect further as the Core Strategy is progressed. The land presently within the EZ is already allocated employment land. Enterprise Zone status will help to bring forward this employment development effectively implementing existing plans. The Three Elms proposal is part of the positive planning needed to ensure that there continues to be a ready supply of employment land, available in planning terms, with a particular need to make supply available to the north of the Wye to complement Rotherwas to the south.

Question from Councillor MAF Hubbard

Modelling Alternatives to Road Building

- 25.1 *The Cabinet has gone to great lengths to test various 'East is Best' alternatives to a Western Relief Road proposed in response to the autumn 2010 consultation. What modelling has been done on the sustainable transport (non road) alternative to a Western Relief Road commissioned by local people from consultants MTRU in 2010 and updated in 2011?*
- 25.2 *What modelling has been done of any No Road Sustainable Options and the Western Relief Road options with the assumptions used in the East is Best modelling — that is, **both** reduced housing numbers and the removal of bus lanes and bus priority from the A49?*

Answer from Councillor DB Wilcox, Cabinet Member Environment, Housing and Planning

Answer to question 25

- 25.1 The proposed housing growth set out in the LDF preferred options has been modelled with reference to a number of strategic transport options including no road, east or west road and strategic sustainable transport options. This work has confirmed that a relief road with complementary sustainable measures which support modal shift performs best in terms of the growth proposals

We will be undertaking more detailed assessments of how specific sustainable transport measures perform, including cycle network improvements and bus priority, in the development of the Local Transport Plan.

- 25.2 None. Let me be perfectly clear that this Council is not currently proposing any action over bus lanes and bus priority on the A49, which is in any event, not within this Council's control.

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 18 NOVEMBER 2011

Question from Councillor MAF Hubbard

Protection for Wildlife and the Natural Environment

- 26.1 *What is the Cabinet's position regarding statutory protection for wildlife and the natural environment in national and international law?*
- 26.2 *Are there any circumstances under which the Council would consider alternatives to proposals entailing environmental damage of international significance? If so, what are these?*

Answer from Councillor DB Wilcox, Cabinet Member Environment, Housing and Planning

Answer to question 26

- 26.1 The Council always seeks to comply with national and international law; guidance from Natural England is sought to ensure compliance.
- 26.2 The Council **must** consider alternatives to proposals that will cause environmental damage to sites of international significance. It may be that there are no alternatives that would have no (or a lesser) effect on the European site but there must also be Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI) as well as provision of compensatory habitat.

Question from Councillor MAF Hubbard

Contribution of Broad Street Shared Space Scheme to Sustainable Travel in Hereford

Sixty percent of the £5 million funding from the Department for Transport for sustainable transport in Hereford will be spent on the Broad Street Shared Space Scheme. The successful 'Destination Hereford' bid to the Department for Transport stated that the Broad Street scheme would 'address' the 'barrier to increasing pedestrian and cyclist use' posed by 'the volume of traffic and the resulting poor quality environment experienced along busy highways' (para B2, 'Peak Hour Congestion').

- 27.1 *What evidence does the Council have of Broad Street's effect as a barrier to walking and cycling in and across Hereford? How does it compare in importance to other streets?*
- 27.2 *What estimates has the council made of the reductions in car use (i.e., sustainable travel) that will be achieved by the £3 million expenditure on enhancing Broad Street?*
- 27.3 *Before bids for the Local Sustainable Travel Fund were invited from local highway authorities, what schemes to promote walking and cycling in Broad Street were in the Council's prioritised programme of sustainable transport measures?*

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 18 NOVEMBER 2011

Answer from Councillor AJM Blackshaw, Cabinet Member Highways, Transportation and Sustainability

Answer to question 27

- 27.1 The scheme's aims are to contribute to supporting regeneration and the city economy, creating continuity with existing refurbished areas including the recently completed Widemarsh Street and Cathedral Close and the opportunities it would present to improve pedestrian and cycle access and linkages to the sustainable transport network.
- 27.2 The Council has not estimated car reductions for this element of the bid.
- 27.3 Broad Street is clearly identified in the Streetscape Design Strategy as a 'principal' street and the implementation of this scheme follows on from the recently completed Widemarsh Street scheme. A cycle contraflow for Broad Street has been included in the Local Transport Plan cycle ranking list since 1998 and incorporating cycle contraflow is within the scope of the upgrading scheme.
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Question from Councillor DC Taylor

- 28 *In the preparation of the Revised Preferred Options for the Local Development Framework which is at present out for public consultation, what evidence was available to the Council from the Primary Care Trust and Hospital Trust concerning the ability of the existing hospital services to cope, without expansion, with additional hospital episodes resulting from the influx of population to the envisaged 16,500 new homes in Herefordshire, and did this take into account not only inpatient bed occupancy but the full range of services such as maternity services and out patient appointments.*

Answer from Councillor DB Wilcox, Cabinet Member Environment, Housing & Planning

Answer to question 28

The PCT have been consulted and have indicated, in response to these discussions, that bed capacity at Hereford Hospital has to be considered alongside other developments in community based local health care. In line with national and local policy, models are being developed that will provide care differently, closer to home, reducing the reliance on hospital beds and improving patient outcomes and experience.