

MINUTES of the meeting of Council held at The Shire Hall, St Peter's Square, Hereford, on Friday 23 November 2012 at 10.30 am

Present: Councillor LO Barnett (Chairman)
Councillor ACR Chappell (Vice Chairman)

Councillors: PA Andrews, AM Atkinson, CNH Attwood, CM Bartrum, AJM Blackshaw, WLS Bowen, H Bramer, AN Bridges, EMK Chave, MJK Cooper, PGH Cutter, BA Durkin, PJ Edwards, DW Greenow, KS Guthrie, RB Hamilton, J Hardwick, EPJ Harvey, AJ Hempton-Smith, JW Hope MBE, MAF Hubbard, RC Hunt, JA Hyde, TM James, JG Jarvis, AW Johnson, Brig P Jones CBE, JLV Kenyon, JF Knipe, JG Lester, MD Lloyd-Hayes, RI Matthews, PJ McCaull, SM Michael, JW Millar, PM Morgan, NP Nenadich, C Nicholls, RJ Phillips, GJ Powell, R Preece, PD Price, SJ Robertson, P Rone, A Seldon, P Sinclair-Knipe, J Stone, DC Taylor, GA Vaughan-Powell, PJ Watts and DB Wilcox

52. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: PL Bettington, FM Norman and GR Swinford.

53. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

11. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME AND COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS
Councillor MAF Hubbard, Non-Pecuniary.

11. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME AND COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS.
Councillor CNH Attwood, Non-Pecuniary.

11. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME AND COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS.
Councillor DC Taylor, Personal, Property.

11. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME AND COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS.
Councillor DW Greenow, Personal.

11. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME AND COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS.
Councillor GA Powell, Personal.

11. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME AND COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS.
Councillor J Stone, Prejudicial.

11. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME AND COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS.
Councillor JF Knipe, Non-Pecuniary.

11. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME AND COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS.
Councillor KS Guthrie, Personal.

11. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME AND COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS.
Councillor MAF Hubbard, Non-Pecuniary.

11. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME AND COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS.
Councillor MAF Hubbard, Non-Pecuniary.

11. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME AND COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS.
Councillor MD Lloyd-Hayes, Personal.

11. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME AND COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS.
Councillor MJK Cooper, Personal.

11. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME AND COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS.
Councillor PJ Edwards, Personal.

11. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME AND COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS.
Councillor RI Matthews, Prejudicial.

11. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME AND COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS.
Councillor RJ Phillips, Personal.

11. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME AND COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS.
Councillor WLS Bowen, Prejudicial.

13. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL.
Councillor A Seldon, Non-Disclosable Pecuniary, Chairman of General Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

13. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL.
Councillor EPJ Harvey, Non-Disclosable Pecuniary, Vice Chairman of General Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

13. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL.
Councillor JW Millar, Prejudicial, Chairman of Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

13. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL.
Councillor PD Price, Prejudicial, Deputy Leader of the Council.

13. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL.
Councillor PM Morgan, Prejudicial.

13. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL.
Councillor SJ Robertson, Non-Disclosable Pecuniary, Vice Chairman of Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

14. BREACH OF THE MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT.
Councillor MAF Hubbard, Non-Pecuniary.

54. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendment that was made at the meeting to clarify the decision in respect of Minute No: 43, which was as follows.

Notice of Motion Three: Councillor Hubbard proposed the amendment to the motion with the addition of a final paragraph to the resolution of the motion.

RESOLVED:

THAT this Council:

- a) **embrace its new responsibilities for public health in accordance with the Health and Social Care Act 2012 that takes effect from 1 April 2013 by demonstrating its leadership as an exemplar employer;**
- b) **makes a clear commitment to the health and well-being of its staff, volunteers and their families through the introduction of support to adopt healthy lifestyles; and,**
- c) **makes a clear commitment to active travel arrangements across the County using the Council's public health role to promote and fund sustainable forms of active travel across the County.**

55. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman in her announcements:

- Informed Council of the Vice-Chairman's attendance at a concert hosted by The Rifles at the Royal Albert Hall on 18 October.
- Expressed her pleasure in officially opening the newly extended and refurbished facilities at the Hereford Leisure Pool.
- Reported that she launched the Herefordshire Poppy Appeal at Asda on 27 October 2012.
- Informed Council that the Vice-Chairman attended the opening of the Allpay Flavours of Herefordshire Festival on 27 October.
- Thanked all Herefordshire Councillors for attending remembrance services across the county.
- Expressed her pleasure in opening the launch of Herefordian Alfred Watkins' book Herefordshire.
- Advised that the Vice-Chairman attended the Sports Awards at which paralympian Josie Pearson was awarded the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Sports Personality of the Year 2012 award.
- Finally, Council was informed of the fund raising activities carried out by staff for the 2012 Children in Need appeal when £2,500 was raised.

PETITIONS

One petition was received from Councillor McCaull regarding the increasing of car parking charges in Leominster and was handed to the Cabinet Member Education and Infrastructure.

56. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A copy of the public questions and written answers, together with the supplementary questions and answers asked at the meeting are attached to the Minutes at Appendix 1.

57. PRAYERS

The Very Reverend Michael Tavinor led the Council in prayers.

Following prayers Council stood for a minute's silence in remembrance of Councillor Gordon Lucas.

58. FORMAL QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS TO THE CABINET MEMBERS AND CHAIRMEN UNDER STANDING ORDERS

A copy of the Member questions and written answers, together with the supplementary questions and answers asked at the meeting are attached to the Minutes at Appendix 2.

59. NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDERS

NOTICE OF MOTION – RETAIL DEVELOPMENT OLD CATTLE MARKET SITE

Moved by Councillor MAF Hubbard and seconded by Councillor RI Matthews.

Councillor Hubbard addressed Council and made the following points:

- In stating the historic city centre has an impact on the market towns the proposer of the motion stated that should a Member wish to amend the motion to reflect a cross county city centre, to ensure the market towns receive the same support, the proposer would be in agreement.
- Council was reminded that it was originally stated that 80% of retail space would be developed with new stores and only 20% of retail space given to current retailers in the city centre.
- As the economy has worsened the restriction on retail space has been removed and replaced by a list of high town retailers that it was originally agreed developers would not approach.
- Councillor Hubbard accepted there had been an issue of confidentiality and agreed to rule himself out with regards to recommendation (a) of the motion, which was to share the list of named retailers that could not be approached by developers.
- The administration was planning a rapid expansion of the retail quarter at a time of economic crisis nationally and believed the administration should work on what was already in place in the city.
- There was a need for a well researched retail impact assessment to be carried out covering heritage, tourism and retail and develop a cross county strategy encompassing all the market towns to provide vision for the county.
- Consideration should also be given to the rapid growth of internet shopping and to use what is already in the city to its best advantage.

The following points were made in debate.

- Council must look to the sustainability of the city centre and ensure it is viable for generations to come.
- Believe the points raised relate to the core strategy.
- Important to ensure processes are in place to engage with the public and as much information as possible should be put in the public domain.
- Proposed the notice of motion be amended, that Council accept points b) and c) and delete a) as it was not considered to be enforceable. Councillor Edwards proposed the amendment to delete recommendation a). This was accepted by Councillor Hubbard as the proposer.
- It was felt that because internet shopping had risen so significantly Council should take stock of what was already in place and revitalise the city centre, particularly as a further dip in the economy was predicted. Any analysis could be

undertaken by Council officers and therefore, there was no requirement to engage consultants.

- The Leader stated his support for Councillor Hubbard on recommendations b) and c) but stated the survey referred to had 4 been carried out and the information was available.

It was proposed by Councillor Wilcox and seconded by Councillor Taylor that the motion be put to a vote and following a vote this was agreed.

Following a vote the motion was declared carried with:

For	47
Against	3
Abstentions	0

RESOLVED:

- a) That the appropriate Cabinet Member be requested to arrange for a revised retail impact assessment to be undertaken to understand the potential impact of the new development on Hereford's historic retail area;**
- b) That the Leader be requested to arrange cross party talks to develop a comprehensive strategy to tackle issues arising out of the revised retail impact assessment detailed in a) above.**

60. APPOINTMENT OF HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND HEAD OF PAID SERVICE

Council considered a report of the Employment Panel which met on 13 November 2012. The Leader addressed Council and advised that the process for appointing the Chief Executive had been a clear, thorough and well conducted one with the final decision being a unanimous one of the Employment Panel. The Leader assured Council of the high quality of the candidates that had applied for the position and recommended to Council the appointment of Alistair Neill as Chief Executive.

Concern was raised by some Members with regards to the process and the Monitoring Officer assured Council that legal opinion had been sought and that the process had been robust, carried out correctly and was likely to withstand any potential legal challenge.

It was moved and seconded that the report be accepted. A vote was taken and it was agreed:

For	47
Against	0
Abstentions	6

RESOLVED: That the appointment of Alistair Neill as Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service for Herefordshire Council be approved.

61. LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarvis, presented his report to Council. The following comments were made by Council:

- Planning for the Future – agenda page 35. In response to a question on the provision of services and town and parish councils bidding to take over the provision of some services, the Leader said he would endeavour to ensure town and parish councils had all the information they required.
- In response to a question on the statistical accuracy on the Quality of Life survey, the Leader reassured Council of the reliability of the survey and noted the comments made on communications with the public.
- Planning for the Future – agenda page 36 5.3 and 5.4 – delivery of Core Strategy and how long it is taking. The Cabinet Member advised that a timetable was in place and the end date of completion had not changed even though further consultation was proposed.
- In referring to Adult Social Care Councillor Glenda Powell stated she could not support the administration in increasing fees and charges. In response the Cabinet Member reminded Council that the demands on Adult Social Care were great and that there were tough choices to be made. In consultation Councillors had supported the increases, however, any member of the public who was not able to pay would not be expected to do so. The Chairman of Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny confirmed to Council that the Committee had reviewed the changes to fees and charges and would be reviewing the budget. He added that as changes took place the Committee would look to carry out a review.
- In response to a question on the Ofsted report the Cabinet Member confirmed that the report had been sent to all Members prior to public release.
- Herefordshire People – agenda page 36 5.7 – taxi marshalling service. In response to a question on the new taxi marshalling service the Leader advised Councillor Kenyon that he would contact him separately on how much money the Council had put into the service.
- Herefordshire's Economy and Communities – agenda page 37 5.13. Councillor McCaull referred to the consultation on car parking charges and the proposed increase and stated all Councillors in Leominster were against the proposed fee for Etnam Street car park. Councillors asked that the fee to be reversed or reviewed in six months time. The Cabinet Member reminded Council that all Members for the City or market towns had been consulted, that it had been explained and agreement had been reached. He added that there was a revenue issue and this was a way of supporting the budget. During the course of the year a review would be carried out and all points set out in the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be taken into consideration.
- The Cabinet Member was congratulated on the H.Energy week and the Council's commitment to environmental sustainability.
- In response to a question on the sale price of the Edgar Street Grid the Leader reiterated that the quote of £90m for the site referred to its development value.
- In response to a question on the cycling project to support sustainable travel the Cabinet Member stated the project would be completed before the money ran out in 2015.

RESOLVED: That the overview of the Executive's activity be noted.

62. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME AND COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS

The Cabinet Member Corporate Services presented the report of the Chief Officer Finance and Commercial on the Council Tax Support Scheme and Council Tax Discounts.

Note: At this point those Members that had declared an interest left the chamber whilst the item was discussed.

The Cabinet Member advised that the current Council Tax Benefit subsidy was £13m. This was to be replaced with grant funding amounting to £11.6m leaving a funding gap of £1.4m. The Cabinet Member stated there were not the reserves to fall back on therefore savings had to be made. Council was referred to agenda page 36 paragraph 8.3 and the table outlining the proposed changes or funding streams. The Cabinet Member added that the proposed budget was intended to take the Council forward, but referred to paragraph 10.4 of the report, which stated the new scheme was no longer a national scheme and therefore there was potential for local challenges. It was not clear the impact this could have on the scheme or on the implementation timescales.

In response to a question of clarification Council was reminded that Government would be taking 10% off Council Tax support, which raised concern for young families on low incomes. Concern was also raised at the low percentage of the population that had responded to the consultation and at the way residents were being reached for consultation. Council was reminded that in the Government response it stated that all people should pay something towards Council tax. It was moved and seconded that the recommendation be adopted and upon a vote being taken:

For	24
Against	5
Abstentions	6

RESOLVED

THAT:

- a) **the Council Tax Transitional Grant be accepted;**
- b) **Council adopts a new Council Tax Support Scheme for 2013/14 based on the adoption of two of the principles that were consulted upon as indicated in paragraph 31 of the Cabinet report, so that the requirements of the grant be met; and**
- c) **changes to Council tax discounts outlined in the report be implemented from 1 April 2013.**

63. COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN 2013/15

The Cabinet Member Corporate Services presented the report of the Acting Chief Executive on the Council's Corporate Plan 2013/15.

RESOLVED

THAT:

- a) **the Corporate Plan 2013/15 as set out at Appendix B to the report be approved; and**

- b) authority be delegated to Cabinet to agree in year amendments to outcome measures as necessary.

64. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

The Leader of the Council presented the report of the Assistant Director Law, Governance and Resilience on the Independent Remuneration Panel. Council considered the recommendations and following a vote it was agreed to amend recommendation b) 2 – the number of Task and Finish Groups a Vice Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee must chair, from 50% to 40% of Task and Finish Group meetings.

RESOLVED

THAT:

- a) the Independent Remuneration Panel be thanked for its report;
- b) having regard to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel Council adopts the following:
 - 1 the level of allowance paid to the Chairmen of the two Overview and Scrutiny Committees be set at Band 2, and that this rate be reviewed not later than 2015;
 - 2 an allowance be paid to the Vice-Chairmen of the two Overview and Scrutiny Committees and that this be set at Band 4, subject to the Vice Chairmen chairing at least 40% of the Task and Finish Groups held by the Committee. An allowance to otherwise be set for Vice Chairmen at Band 5. These rates to be reviewed in 2015.
 - 3 that an allowance of £500 be paid to Chairmen of special Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups appointed by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee subject to appropriate criteria being met. The number of payments to be reviewed at the end of 12 months;
 - 4 that the Deputy Leaders', allowance be withdrawn from the Schedule of Member's Allowances.
 - 5 that Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs Service rates be paid regardless of the fuel type used by a vehicle and that these rates be reviewed by Herefordshire Council before 2016;
 - 6 that where practicable, Members requiring overnight accommodation utilise three star accommodation or equivalent, evidenced by receipts. If no suitable accommodation is available, Members may, with the approval of the Monitoring Officer, book accommodation to the value of £120 per night, evidenced by receipts;
 - 7 that no allowance be recommended for the Chairmen of the Rural and the Urban Forums. However, the activities of both Forums to be reviewed by the Panel in December 2013; and

c) the new Allowances Scheme to take effect from 23 November 2012.

Note: As the Council meeting had exceeded the three hours set aside for the meeting in accordance with the Council's Constitution 4.1.7, the Chairman determined that the remaining business be deferred to an extraordinary meeting of Council to be held on Friday 4 January 2013.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 23 NOVEMBER 2012

Question from Mrs P Churchward, Breinton

Question 1

Refurbishment of Hereford's Historic Butter Market

The Executive Rolling Programme indicated that the Cabinet Member Corporate Services and the Cabinet Member Enterprise and Culture were due to make a decision on the refurbishment of Hereford's historic Butter Market on 18 October 2012 and how the Council plans to fund that refurbishment. Considering that the Council has so far spent millions supporting the ESG retail development could one of these Cabinet Members please advise what the current situation is regarding funding the Butter Market refurbishment?

Answer from Councillor RJ Phillips Cabinet Member Enterprise and Culture

Answer to question 1

Options, including the potential for private sector investment, for refurbishment of the Buttermarket have been explored and a detailed survey of the structure and mechanical & electrical services must next be carried out along with an evidence based assessment of private sector market readiness.

The outcomes of this work will help to inform any decision to include the refurbishment of the Buttermarket in the council's Capital Programme. In the meantime we continue to support activities that bring increased footfall into the city and therefore support existing retailers, as evidenced by the recent Flavours of Herefordshire Food Festival and promotional activities such as the Truffle scheme and Shop Herefordshire.

Supplementary Question

The Butter Market refurbishment is now not intended to be started until April 2013. As the Butter Market refurbishment was part of a carefully considered and presumably financially secure rolling programme, I want to know why this delay has occurred and can Herefordshire Council explain to the independent traders involved in Hereford why we are now short of funds for this?

Cabinet Member Response

A written response will be provided.

Written Response

Various financial options have been examined to refurbish the Butter Market and it has now been agreed that this matter is to be considered as part of the future Capital Programme.

In order for this to progress more detailed costings need to be explored along with any potential funding methods. In addition, an evidence based assessment of some of the supporting documentation presented to the Council is now being carried out and should be

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 23 NOVEMBER 2012

concluded in the near future. The outcomes of this work will help to inform the decision to include the refurbishment of the Butter Market in the Council's Capital Programme.

The report to Council on the budget states

"In addition to the above the Butter Market will be subject to further feasibility studies and this may require a capital programme addition in the future."

Question from Mrs E Morawiecka, Breinton

Question 2

Webcasting of Council Meetings

As part of its drive to make democracy more transparent, accessible and open, Herefordshire Council carried out a trial webcast of a planning meeting in February 2012. The Head of Governance said that this was one of the Council's priorities and it also increased the accessibility of such meetings to members of the public and staff who cannot travel to meetings or miss them because of other commitments. The Council press release stated that "The first webcast of a Herefordshire Council meeting proved a resounding success with more than 1,000 people having viewed it...Consideration will now be given to extending webcasting to all of the council's public meetings".

With this resounding success and the fact that many other councils already provide this service for local taxpayers to engage in democracy, can the Cabinet Member responsible for Governance and Democracy confirm when they are due to extend webcasting of meetings to help deliver this priority of Herefordshire Council?

Answer from Councillor PD Price Cabinet Member Corporate Services

Answer to question 2

The trial webcast of the planning committee in February was successful and we received lots of positive feedback. This is an initiative that the Council is looking to extend and we are currently reviewing how best to achieve this as part of our new office accommodation plans for a civic hub at the Shire Hall. This approach will enable us to acquire the right technology, in the right place, at the right time and keep costs to a minimum.

Question from Mrs BC McHarg

Question 3

Herefordshire Council Capital Overspend on Supporting Retail Development

The budget report to Cabinet on 18 October 2012, in Appendix 2, states that there is already a "capital overspend on the Link Road in excess of £1.5million on property

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 23 NOVEMBER 2012

purchases”. What other additional costs is the Council incurring in order to facilitate the delivery of this new retail development?

Answer from Councillor GJ Powell Cabinet Member Education & Infrastructure

Answer to question 3

Capital expenditure on the Link Road is not linked to the retail development at the Old Market Site; the ‘capital overspend’ noted in the budget report is a matter of spend profile rather than capital budget overspend.

There is no ‘overspend’ on the retail development; as part of the variation agreed by Cabinet the Council will forego £500,000 of capital receipt from the £1.5m to be received from the developer, but there are no additional costs to the council.

Question from Mr P McKay, Leominster

Question 4

Car Parking Charges

Leominster Town Council minute 09.09.83 of 21 September 2009 records Leominster Town Council request to review waiting restrictions in Broad Street with objective of bringing parking bays marked double yellow lines outside Hintons into use, with minute 09.10.98 of 19 October 2009 advising will be included on list for ranking, with the June 2010 TRO work program showing review of Broad Street waiting restrictions has a project start date of 28 May 2013. Leominster Town Council minute 11.01.129 & 130 of 17/01/2011 record concern about the way in which other parking bays are marked with single and double yellow lines enforced by wardens throughout Leominster, due to waiting restriction orders dating back to 1977 not having been updated when town centre redesigned, seeking to bring all these other parking bays into use, with minute 11.02.159.2 of meeting 21/02/2011 recording that Leominster Town Council’s request for a review of waiting restrictions in the town was noted and that the request would be included on the lists for ranking in June/July 2011.

Requests asking for current information regarding these project start dates remain unanswered, so may I enquire just when we may expect these projects to start, aiming to make Leominster more parking friendly in these times of austerity, and to reduce parking demands on adjacent residential streets?

Answer from Councillor GJ Powell Cabinet Member Education and Infrastructure

Answer to question 4

It is unacceptable that the requests for an update on the progress of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) remain unanswered. We are currently reviewing our communication channels to resolve the issue.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 23 NOVEMBER 2012

In regard to this particular scheme, which affects Broad Street Leominster, it currently ranks at number 55 out of 99 TRO projects that are with the service to pursue. Realistically this means a projected start date of July 2014. I am working closely with the highway service to improve timescales for TROs as a consequence of greater productivity, improved resource management, and a revision of the current process. I anticipate issuing a briefing to all Members within 30 days.

Question from Mrs V Wegg-Prosser, Breinton

Question 5

5 year Housing Land Availability Target

Could the Cabinet Member responsible for Planning confirm that the Council's decisions to delay the completion of the 5 year housing land availability target and to delay the preparation of the core strategy were agreed in order to take advantage of the relaxation of planning rules that can occur (in accordance with the NPPF) in the event that 5 year housing land availability and core strategy are not in place?

Answer from Councillor RB Hamilton Cabinet Member Environment, Housing and Planning

Answer to question 5

No, the Leader's Report to Council (appearing elsewhere on the agenda today) provides an update regarding the progress of the Core Strategy, which itself will be used to establish the future 5-year housing land availability target for Herefordshire. There is certainly no hidden agenda as may be inferred from the question.

Question from Mr P Mitchell,

Question 6

Explanation and justification of capital funding priority over essential service provision

Against a background of tightened central government funding and relatively stagnant council tax receipts, would the Council explain and justify its reduced budgetary allocations to increasing demand and cost of social and health care support against its clear preference towards provision of land and funding significant project costs to underpin developer profit on the Edgar Grid development (thus compounding the reduction impact to budget due to debt financing costs).

I would ask the Council to address this (and any other) capital funding priority in the context of its primary duty to meet essential core services and especially to provide support to the most needy and vulnerable in society. In particular

- *Provide assurance and demonstrate how it will address recently reported management failures to meet adequate (legal minimum) requirements for ensuring safety and care of children at risk or in care and maintain necessary resources to*

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 23 NOVEMBER 2012

achieve its statutory and more important moral obligation to ensure good or excellent standards of care provision.

- *Explain and justify reported cuts in the extent of service provision for care of the elderly against an increasingly demanding demographic going forward.*
- *Explain and justify reported cuts in support to vulnerable families at a time when they are suffering particularly badly due to the current economic climate and are increasing in numbers.*
- *How it will ensure required resourcing of care and support to those with mental health problems under reported reductions in available funding having already being been targeted with more stringent benefits requirements (and will otherwise require more care and support getting into and maintaining suitable employment and safeguarding their personal circumstances).*

Answer from Councillor PM Morgan Cabinet Member Health & Wellbeing

Answer to question 6

I would like to make it clear that we have not reduced budgetary allocations to social care support or our support for vulnerable families. It is of course true that reducing central government funding and rising demographic pressures mean that resources are being stretched more thinly, that difficult choices around prioritisation of those resources are and will continue to be needed; however we remain committed to ensuring that vulnerable people receive the services they need, and to ensure that we do our best to support activities which help to prevent people requiring such services in the future. It is a principle underpinning our budget setting that resources are directed towards supporting the most vulnerable.

It is important to take an holistic approach to overall health and wellbeing. Without jobs and homes we know that people's health suffers and costs to health and social care services increase. That is why we must continue to invest in things that contribute to overall health and wellbeing within our community whilst ensuring that the most vulnerable receive the support they need.

We are very disappointed by the findings of the recent inspection of children's safeguarding but accept the findings and are using them as an opportunity to change and improve the support we provide to vulnerable families. The improvement plan in response to the findings has already been presented to the Health & Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the council and its partners are committed to maintain improvement over the coming weeks and months. Additional resources have already been identified to support these necessary improvements.

The scale of the issue we face is significant, and it is not Herefordshire's alone. Our proposed corporate plan (appearing elsewhere on the agenda today) makes clear our continued commitment in this area. Despite the challenge that exists we will, through our root & branch reviews and the budget planning process, continue to ensure that the right resources are in the right place to meet the needs of the most vulnerable as well as the wider community.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 23 NOVEMBER 2012

Supplementary Question

The Cabinet Member was thanked for her response, but resources are being stretched more thinly than ever due to value erosion by inflation and the burden arising from the recent capital commitment associated with the Edgar Street grid?

Cabinet Member Response

Social Care is difficult to fund. The Council is looking to provide a budget it can achieve and use money in the best way possible. It is the job of the Council to weigh up where money is spent on capital projects.

Question from Ms Paige Mitchell, Hereford

Question 7

Completeness of traffic modelling for policy evaluation and soundness of the Local Development Framework

The Council is about to embark on another consultation on another version of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy, in part because of concerns expressed by statutory organisations, including the Highways Agency, the Environment Agency and Natural England.

In their 28 November 2011 letter to the Council on the Revised Preferred Option consultation, the Highways Agency stated:

'The Agency currently finds the Revised Preferred Options Consultation as **unsound** due to lack of supporting transport evidence base.' (Letter from Serena Howell, NDD West Midlands Area 9 to Forward Planning)

To remedy this lack of 'supporting transport evidence base', the Council planners proposed, and the Cabinet agreed (at its meeting on the 12th of July), that from July to September of this year there would be 'continuing work on outstanding elements, including ... completion of road studies and **upgraded modeling**' in preparation for 'Consultation upon a Draft Plan and SA/SEA [Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment] and HRA [Habitats Regulation Assessment]' (para 50)

The Local Transport Plan 2011-12 Annual Progress Report (APR, October 2012) describes the 'Hereford Transport Model Upgrade' as

'a standard process all models go through every 5 years or so, [to] ensure the model accurately represents existing transport conditions for all types of transport and so can be used with confidence to predict transport conditions in the future to help the council develop its transport strategies and business cases for transport investment.'
(p6)

However the APR also reports that. due to 'the very poor weather in the spring' completion

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 23 NOVEMBER 2012

of the upgraded model is not expected until spring 2013.

This indicates that not only will the evidence base for revising the Core Strategy and presenting it at the forthcoming consultation still be incomplete but so will the statutory components of the plan — the Sustainability Appraisal, the Strategic Environmental Assessment, and the Habitats Regulation Assessment.

Can Cllr Hamilton confirm either that:

- a) *further consultation on the Local Development Framework will be delayed until the upgraded transport model is available to inform policy including 'the business cases for transport investment' and the statutory environmental assessments of the LDF;*

or that

- b) *if consultation is to proceed, reasonable alternative policies whose impacts can be assessed will be presented alongside the Council's preferred option which, it appears, must remain unsound until the problem of incomplete evidence has been addressed.*

Answer from Councillor RB Hamilton Cabinet Member Environment, Housing and Planning

Answer to question 7

I believe that there is widespread recognition and support for the need to have an agreed Core Strategy in place and that it is important that progress continues towards adoption, including the consultation that is planned for the spring. The council is continuing to work closely with the Highways Agency and others in respect of a number of important local proposals including the LDF Core Strategy and development of the Rotherwas Enterprise Zone. We are seeking to ensure that the Agency is supportive of the Core Strategy and its evidence base as this will be important in progressing it through to adoption. Officers are meeting with the Regional Director of the Highways Agency in the near future for further discussions on this issue.

Supplementary Question

Do you think it is reasonable to expect a 5% share for cycling in 2030 in a world with measures to prevent dangerous climate change, oil costing 20% more than today and where a local authority has followed best practice in promoting cycling?

Cabinet Member Response

I share concerns about issues relating to oil and support ideas of sustainable options. I will be guided by expert reports produced.

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 23 NOVEMBER 2012

Question from Councillor DC Taylor of Councillor PD Price Cabinet Member Corporate Services

Your Community Your Say Public Event

- 1A *What is the total number of members of the public that attended each of the Your Community Your Say public event?*
- B *How many public questions were submitted at each event?*
- C *What was the total cost of holding all of the events and can this be seen as providing value for money for the public?*

Answer from Councillor PD Price Cabinet Member Corporate Services

Answer to question 1

We held a total of 21 “your community – your say” (YCYS) events across Herefordshire with attendance numbers provided below:

Event	Date	Attendance
Ross-on-Wye	20 th September	40
St Peter's Centre, Peterchurch	22 nd September	20
Ledbury	24 th September	60
Ewyas Harold	25 th September	30
Leintwardine	26 th September	18
Dorstone	27 th September	19
Weobley	1 st October	23
Hereford (Belmont)	2 nd October	15
Shobdon	8 th October	9
Bromyard	9 th October	45
Kington	10 th October	52
Herefordshire International School	13 th October	18
Leominster	15 th October	14
Hereford (St Barnabas)	17 th October	20
Hereford Disability United	17 th October	14
Leominster Area Regeneration Company meeting	22 nd October	12
Burley Gate	23 rd October	10
Fownhope	24 th October	30
Ledbury children's centre	31 st October	10
Herefordshire Carers Support Group	7 th November	20
Cleghonger	8 th November	10
Total		489

In addition to these locality based events we also worked with eleven local organisations that helped us to hear the views of seldom heard and hard to reach groups, including Age UK and West Mercia Women's Aid. For those who didn't wish to or were unable to attend an event, there was the opportunity to have their say online.

In total we believe we reached approximately 1,000 residents through the YCYS process.

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 23 NOVEMBER 2012

The events were deliberately not based on a traditional public meeting format with questions and answers; rather the approach taken was designed to engage residents in a discussion around a number of key questions about future priorities. Of course any questions that attendees had and which we were not able to answer immediately are being followed up and answers will be provided to all residents who asked to be kept informed about the YCYS process and will be included on the council's website.

The total cost for the YCYS process is approximately £42,700. This does not relate solely to the events but includes, for example, production of an introductory DVD which can be used for future consultations. We have also created an online forum to capture the views of those people who did not wish to or could not attend the events. The online forum will be used for future public consultation.

Engaging the community in the future of service delivery has always been important and, as we face significant reductions in funding from central government together with increasing demographic pressures on services for the vulnerable, the need to inform the community of these issues and include their views in the process of prioritising those resources becomes even more important.

A members' seminar on the YCYS process is planned for 12 December and I would encourage all members to attend.

Question from Councillor RI Matthews of Councillor R Hamilton Cabinet Member Environment Housing & Planning

Eastern Access Road

2 *It is a well known fact that local businessmen generally support an eastern access road to serve the existing, and hopefully expanding, Rotherwas Industrial Estate. I understand that such a road could be constructed for substantially less than the proposed city link road, owing to the considerable cost of compulsory purchase orders and other associated expenditure. Which of these schemes does the executive believe would be of most benefit to the local economy in these difficult times?*

Answer from Councillor R Hamilton Cabinet Member Environment Housing & Planning

Answer to question 2

The council has, of course, already invested significantly in improving road access to the existing industrial estate at Rotherwas; indeed this investment contributed to the success of the bid for Enterprise Zone status which was in no way dependent on the additional access suggested by Cllr Matthews.

The already approved City Link Road and talk of any potential eastern access road to an expanding Rotherwas Industrial Estate that would serve a very different purpose and should not be confused or linked. Whilst I am aware that some members of the business community support the idea of an additional access road I know that this is not the view of the business community as a whole as may be inferred by the question. As Cllr Matthews

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 23 NOVEMBER 2012

knows, a recently commissioned assessment of the economic and wider social impacts of a potential eastern link road extending from the Rotherwas Enterprise Zone to the A438 recommended that the construction of an Eastern Link Road should be dismissed as providing insufficient economic impact and poor value for money.

In times of reducing finances we must ensure that future investment is directed towards those projects which best meet the needs and ambitions of the county as a whole; this prioritisation will inform our proposals for the future capital programme to be considered by Council in February.

Supplementary Question

I don't believe the question has been answered could the Cabinet Member please answer the question.

Cabinet Member Response

They are not directly comparable.

Question 3 disallowed under Herefordshire Council Constitution Part 4, 4.1.15.4 c on the grounds that the answer to the question will be substantially the same as a previous answer, public question 4, 20 July 2012.

Question from Councillor AJW Powers of Councillor RJ Phillips, Cabinet Member Enterprise and Culture

Board Meetings of Hereford Futures

- 4 Following a Freedom of Information request from a member of the public it has been confirmed that minutes of the Board meetings of Hereford Futures Ltd are not held by the Council, that no copies of minutes are kept by any Council staff present at those meetings and that, under Schedule 1 of the Freedom of Information Act, Hereford Futures is deemed not to be a 'public authority' and therefore not obliged to respond to FOI requests. The Old Cattle Market Development Agreement has finally been signed, and has gone unconditional, so "commercial confidentiality" ought no longer to be the justification for the non-disclosure of minutes.

As the providers of funding to Hereford Futures, when will members of the public, Councillors and Council officers be entitled to receive the minutes of previous and forthcoming HF Board meetings?

Answer from Councillor RJ Phillips, Cabinet Member Enterprise and Culture

Answer to question 4

Cabinet agreed with Overview & Scrutiny Committee's recommendation (number 5), and a review is underway.

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 23 NOVEMBER 2012

Of course, as with any project or organisation that receives funding from Herefordshire Council there are financial and performance reporting arrangements in place to ensure that funding is used for the purposes intended and to deliver agreed objectives or outcomes. If there is a particular performance concern that you have I would be happy to look into this for you.

Supplementary Question

Why does Hereford Futures Ltd., of which the Leader and the Chief Executive are Board members, appear to be exempt from the Council's 'principles to guide behaviour' (Corporate Plan) which include being 'open, transparent and accountable'.

Cabinet Member Response

There is a technical answer to your question, which I will ensure reaches you.

Written Response

Hereford Futures was established by the Council as an independent, arms-length company with separate governance and procedures set outside the Council's political process with a remit to deliver projects on the Council's behalf. As such, the company routinely deals with a great deal of commercially sensitive material. The Company reports to the Council, through a variety of channels, at both officer and member level. The Company is responsible for the delivery of a Business Plan which is a public document. In addition to appearing before Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Company also publishes an annual report, annually discloses financial information, operates a website and has Facebook and Twitter networks through which it publishes progress on the business with which it is charged. The Company has recently taken the decision to publish board minutes, commencing in January, 2013.

Furthermore at the Cabinet meeting on 12 November 2012, which discussed the development of the old livestock market, it was agreed that the Monitoring Officer would review the issues of disclosure and commercial confidentiality and report back further.

Question from Councillor GA Powell of Councillor PM Morgan, Cabinet Member Health and Wellbeing

Co-operation between the Council and the Health Authority

5 *During these difficult financial times can Cllr Morgan assure us that the co-operation between the council and health authority is still providing satisfactory results?*

Answer from Councillor PM Morgan, Cabinet Member Health and Wellbeing

Answer to question 5

Following the national changes to NHS commissioning structures it is true that the council, as with other local authorities across England, is developing new relationships with the Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group. We are of course building on existing section

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 23 NOVEMBER 2012

75 joint funding agreements to ensure that we effectively commission services that provide efficient and effective care pathways.

Whatever the structural changes, it remains true that all partners working across the health and social care system, under the leadership of the Health & Wellbeing Board, must continue to work together to ensure that our reducing resources are directed in the most effective way, to meeting the priority needs of the community.

The Health & Wellbeing Board has identified three priority work streams:

- Sustainability of the local health and social care system – focusing on financial sustainability and overall effectiveness of the system;
- Demand management – improving care pathways, raising awareness of factors influencing health and wellbeing and enabling individuals to take greater responsibility for their own health and care management
- Crisis prevention – ensuring the most vulnerable including older people, families and children have access to the services they need, when they need them

The Health and Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee will have a key role to play in providing robust challenge to all partners to ensure that our resources are used effectively and efficiently in delivering positive outcomes for Herefordshire people.

Supplementary Question

I acknowledge the work to be done by Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee, but what personally will you be doing to ensure in these difficult times that all our vulnerable people do receive the services they need?

Cabinet Member Response

I spend all my time ensuring services are available for peoples' needs.

Question from Councillor MAF Hubbard of Councillor GJ Powell, Cabinet Member Education & Infrastructure

Negotiations with Royal Mail and Delivery of the Link Road

6 Please would the Cabinet Member explain:

- a) what stage the negotiations with Royal Mail have got to with regard to the acquisition of part of their site to enable the delivery of the Link Road?
- b) an estimate of how much the deal with Royal Mail will cost?
- c) whether delivery of the Link Road will be within the £27million budget set aside by this Council to deliver the project?

Answer from Councillor GJ Powell, Cabinet Member Education & Infrastructure

Answer to question 6

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 23 NOVEMBER 2012

- a) Following the latest meeting with Royal Mail on 4 October, they have reconfirmed they are supportive of the scheme in principle and will be working with HC to agree options for re-provision of facilities to meet the current operational requirements of this site. However once a Compulsory Purchase Order is published, it could be expected that Royal Mail would be likely to lodge an objection to protect their position until formal agreement is reached regarding the delivery of any agreed works.
- b) The cost will be subject to commercial negotiations and agreement with Royal Mail regarding the extent of works required to meet their operational requirements.
- c) The budget for the scheme remains at £27million. Scheme cost estimates will be regularly reviewed during the project as the scheme design and accommodation works are developed in detail. Any changes to the estimated cost of the scheme would be reported in accordance with budget monitoring procedures and at key stages in the project.

Supplementary Question

Please would the Cabinet Member confirm that, other than an agreement 'in principle', there is nothing else in place pursuant to finalising a deal with Royal Mail and that this constitutes a major risk to delivery of the project and should be marked as such on the relevant risk register.

Cabinet Member Response

Supportive of scheme, they will at time of Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) register. They are in principle in agreement and do not see as risk, I will confirm in the next Cabinet report.

Question from Councillor WLS Bowen of Councillor RB Hamilton, Cabinet Member Environment, Housing and Planning

Energy Efficiency for all New Builds

- 7 *Is the Cabinet Member aware that I have asked many times that our Planning Department should demand much higher than national standards of energy efficiency for all new builds in Herefordshire? When can we expect to see some positive action taken on this matter?*

Answer from Councillor RB Hamilton, Cabinet Member Environment, Housing and Planning

Answer to question 7

I was not aware of Cllr Bowen's long-standing interest in this matter, but I would like to thank him for his interest.

Cllr Bowen will hopefully be aware of my own commitment to energy efficiency as evidenced by my recent significant announcements of energy efficiency measures including greater use of LED units in public street lighting, installation of photo-voltaic

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 23 NOVEMBER 2012

panels on public buildings and the installation of a network of electric car charging points throughout the County.

The national standards for energy efficiency in new development are applied through the planning process and by the Building Regulations; these national standards are regularly reviewed. With respect to the planning process in order to be able to apply a standard there must be an appropriate policy in place.

The Unitary Development Plan 2007 does not contain such a specific policy so progress on this issue has to date been through negotiation with the developer. However I believe that this needs to change and that the council will demonstrate leadership in this important area. I can reassure Cllr Bowen that I will be doing all that I can to ensure that policies that will be included in the emergent Local Plan (Core Strategy), will go as far as reasonably possible but as a minimum, conform to national policy as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. In addition to this I would strongly encourage local communities to embrace the opportunity to develop Neighbourhood Plans through which they will be able to develop their own planning policy in this regard should they choose.

Supplementary Question

Do you agree that Herefordshire Council planners should and could demand much higher standards of energy efficiency and design policy for all developments, and should implement these standards as soon as possible and not at some vague time in the future?

Cabinet Member Response

Set out is a clear commitment as to what to expect. There is a clear timetable around the core strategy and I hope that many of these issues will be addressed through the core strategy.

Question from Councillor WLS Bowen of Councillor RB Hamilton, Cabinet Member Environment, Housing and Planning

Protection of Locally Important Buildings

8 *Is the Cabinet Member aware that many, usually small, cottages which have recognition as being of local significance and importance are all too often wantonly destroyed? Can it be ensured that these locally important buildings can be given the protection that they deserve? Is the Cabinet Member aware that these cottages can be saved and adapted for modern use and thereby preserve the historic, and beautiful look of our villages and also retain important relics of our local vernacular architecture? Please, can action be taken before these local treasures are torn down to appease the greed of developers?*

Answer from Councillor RB Hamilton, Cabinet Member Environment, Housing and Planning

Answer to question 8

I am aware of the importance of character buildings to the environment and diversity of the county.

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 23 NOVEMBER 2012

Clearly buildings which are listed buildings and/or those in a Conservation Areas are subject to protection. For other buildings the Unitary Development Plan 2007 contains a policy which protects "locally important buildings". A similar policy context will be included in the emerging Local Plan (Core Strategy). Local communities if they choose to develop a Neighbourhood Development Plan could choose to include more locally specific policies in this area. In every case there is of course a balance to be struck between retaining the historic character and adapting the building for modern use.

I know that the Council's development control officers, local communities and town/parish councils attach great importance to the desirability of retaining local buildings of character; and buildings considered to be of special architectural or historic interest and in danger of demolition or alteration in such a way as to affect their special character may receive temporary protection through issue of a Building Preservation Notice. Local members are best advised to raise issues of concern directly with the relevant case officer when a planning application has the potential to impact on any building of local character, or should they become concerned about a particular building of local interest.

Supplementary Question

Is the Cabinet Member aware that Herefordshire planning officers seem to be totally unaware of the policy of respecting 'locally important buildings' and consequently we are constantly losing locally important historic and irreplaceable buildings?

Cabinet Member Response

I would object to anyone saying planning officers are not aware of issues in their remit of work and feel this is a generalised statement. I am aware of one property that has been brought to my attention by a Councillor, but if the Councillor knows of another property then please let me know.

Question from Councillor SJ Robertson of Councillor PM Morgan, Cabinet Member Health and Wellbeing

Ofsted Safeguarding Report

9 Following release of the September 2012 OFSTED Safeguarding report, it was noted that there had been significant improvements in early help services. Therefore:

- a) *How is the Cabinet Member going to ensure that this continues, particularly with the government reducing the size of the early intervention grant and the predicted rise in the number of children in care and children in the early help system?*
- b) *With demands on the Council's budget for implementing the Improvement Plan, can the Cabinet Member give an assurance that funds for early intervention will not be siphoned away from this area, especially as resources to support costs relating to the Improvement Plan have yet to be identified?*

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 23 NOVEMBER 2012

Answer from Councillor PM Morgan, Cabinet Member Health and Wellbeing

Answer to question 9

I hope all councillors will be aware, given the importance of this issue, that following the findings of the inspection we have moved swiftly to increase the pace of our improvement under the guidance of an independently chaired improvement board. The improvement plan rightly tackles the areas identified as of greatest risk and lays the foundation for good practice and these improvement actions must be resourced and delivered in a way that minimises any adverse impacts on other valued services.

This council has protected and enhanced the child protection budgets over the past three years at a time when overall council funding has seen significant reductions. We know that we are facing further significant cuts in funding from central government at a time when service demand amongst the most vulnerable in our community is increasing. This challenge will need to be addressed when Council sets its budget in February 2013 to ensure we continue to direct our resources to meet our agreed priorities.

Supplementary Question

In light of recent media coverage and the very worrying report from the Office of the Children's Commissioner, does the Cabinet Member not agree that early intervention is crucial to ensuring children are protected from harm or neglect and, therefore, should have the financial support to achieve this aim?

Cabinet Member Response

Would absolutely agree with Councillor Robertson, we must do all we can to stop children from being harmed and ensure a budget is in place to support this.

Question from Councillor MD Lloyd Hayes of Councillor JG Jarvis, Leader of the Council

Cattle Market Development

- 10 *Having provided Stanhope to the tune of £500,000 to prop up the deal for the Cattle Market development – Can the Leader of the council reassure me that no further council assets, in cash or in kind , will be employed ,transferred, paid, waived, channelled or borrowed in aid of this project ?*

Answer from Councillor JG Jarvis, Leader of the Council

Answer to question 10

I do not envisage any further resource requirements beyond those agreed.

Supplementary Question

Can the leader provide reassurance with regards to leases taken up for the cattle market development?

Leader's Response

Since last I spoke on this matter three parties have signed leases. With regards to queries regarding availability of minutes on the web for Hereford Futures. Full discussion has taken place with the Board with a view to publishing minutes in an appropriate way for the public to view.

Question from Councillor MD Lloyd Hayes of Councillor GJ Powell, Cabinet Member Education and Infrastructure

Replacement of Trees in High Town

11 *What is the programme for replacing the trees in high town as promised when the Hereford bull was installed?*

Answer from Councillor GJ Powell, Cabinet Member Education and Infrastructure

Answer to question 11

Discussions have taken place with interested parties, including local traders, regarding the location and number of trees. Opinions vary regarding the number and location of trees to be replaced and the provision of benches. A final decision will be taken early in the New Year in consultation with the local ward member.

Supplementary Question

As the decision has been made on the replacement of trees in high town what consultation was carried out?

Cabinet Member Response

Consultation was carried out with traders not long ago as to the best thing to do and there was some disagreement as some didn't want trees. I have discussed with traders what we are going to do in high town and I think the number of trees to be planted in town will meet all expectations.

Question from Councillor JLV Kenyon of Councillor RJ Phillips, Cabinet Member Enterprise and Culture

Council Priorities

12 *Where on this Council's list of priorities for economic development does active support to the historic city centre come?*

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 23 NOVEMBER 2012

Answer from Councillor RJ Phillips, Cabinet Member Enterprise and Culture

Answer to question 12

As you will see from the corporate plan report appearing elsewhere on Council's agenda today, supporting a successful economy that includes vibrant city and market town centres that are attractive and keep people spending locally, is and will continue to be a key priority for this council together with our support for vulnerable people.

Supplementary Question

What is the Cabinet Member doing to ensure that Hereford Futures adhere to their priority to support the historic core, and as leader of the Council for four years prior why wasn't it done?

Cabinet Member Response

This has been on the Council's priority list from 2003. No one has spent more money in the city centre than I have. It can be shown exactly how much has been spent in the city centre compared to the market towns. The city centre must always be the focus as a city retail centre.

Question from Councillor EPJ Harvey of Councillor RJ Phillips, Cabinet Member Enterprise and Culture

Town Team Partnerships

- 13 This month four towns in Herefordshire will each receive £10k towards the launch of Town Team Partnerships as a result of the work they have done this year under the Portas initiative to encourage community use and economic enhancement of their town centres.

If the Town Teams are successful in acquiring further contributions to these projects from parish councils and local businesses by the end of this financial year, what level of additional or matched funding would Herefordshire Council be prepared to contribute to these community-led economic development projects in 2013?

Answer from Councillor RJ Phillips, Cabinet Member Enterprise and Culture

Answer to question 13

Firstly I would like to congratulate Hereford, Ledbury, Leominster and Ross on Wye; the energy they put into their initial bids for Portas Pilot funding and their subsequent activities which have resulted in this award of funding are an excellent demonstration of what communities can achieve when they work together.

We are of course in the process of developing our budget proposals for the coming financial year and it would be inappropriate to speculate at this stage on any of the detail within those proposals. I am however pleased to note that Cllr Harvey is participating in the

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 23 NOVEMBER 2012

economic review and would hope that we can identify opportunities for support to market towns through this process.

Supplementary Question

I remain disappointed that no assurance in principle has been made to provide matched funding. I ask why this council has shown no inclination in the last four months, despite my repeated requests, to make any progress in implementing the unanimously supported notice of motion from July's Council meeting to realise the local government level recommended from the Portas review.

Cabinet Member Response

Pleased to see that we are on the list of Portas review. I know work has been done with the Hereford Business Board. There has been heavy criticism for moving the livestock market from the town centre, but I note that the Portas report states that's exactly what should be done.

Question from Councillor EPJ Harvey of Councillor RB Hamilton, Cabinet Member Environment, Housing and Planning

Adoption of the Core Strategy and the County's Economic Future

- 14 The adoption of the core strategy is central to the delivery of the county's economic future.

What level of importance does this council place on ensuring consistency between this strategy and those policies in development by business, economic and community stakeholders within the county and beyond; and how is this coherence being realised?

Answer from Councillor RB Hamilton, Cabinet Member Environment, Housing and Planning

Answer to question 14

The adoption of the Core Strategy is central to the development and prosperity of the county as a whole. The strategy will address a wide range of important subjects that together will underpin the economic prosperity of the county for the future.

It is critically important that the Core Strategy provides a suite of positive policies and proposals which will meet the needs of business and enable economic development over the lifetime of the plan.

The council has engaged with the business community throughout the preparation of the Core Strategy and will continue with this engagement in on-going work and through the future consultation processes.

In addition I have had helpful meetings with rural members, four of the five market towns and the city (and further meetings are scheduled with those I have not yet met) so that we can collectively ensure that the core strategy provides an effective tool to pull the different

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 23 NOVEMBER 2012

housing planning and land use policies together and demonstrate how all areas of the county contribute to its overall prosperity of Herefordshire.

The Core Strategy continues to be prepared in such a fashion so that it will be consistent with (amongst others) the council's Sustainable Community Strategy, Health & Wellbeing Strategy, the Economic Development Strategy and the Local Transport Plan.

Supplementary Question

I thank the Cabinet Member for his answer, but I direct my supplementary question to the Leader. Despite my asking this Council back in May, again in July and September, why has the Leader persisted in his failure to explain why this Council is not using the LFD Task Group?

Leader's Response

The Cabinet Member and I have discussed this and we feel it is better to have Member seminars and therefore, dates have been organised for both rural and urban seminars. I suggest that we meet to discuss this with Councillor Hamilton. A letter can then be sent to Members.

