

Minutes of the meeting of Council held at Council Chamber, The Shire Hall, St Peter's Square, Hereford, HR1 2HX on Friday 14 February 2020 at 10.00 am

Present: Councillor Sebastian Bowen (chairperson)
Councillor Kema Guthrie (vice-chairperson)

Councillors: Paul Andrews, Polly Andrews, Jenny Bartlett, Chris Bartrum, Christy Bolderson, Dave Boulter, Tracy Bowes, Ellie Chowns, Pauline Crockett, Gemma Davies, Barry Durkin, Toni Fagan, Elizabeth Foxton, Carole Gandy, John Hardwick, John Harrington, Liz Harvey, Jennie Hewitt, Kath Hey, David Hitchiner, Phillip Howells, Bernard Hunt, Helen I'Anson, Terry James, Peter Jinman, Tony Johnson, Graham Jones, Mike Jones, Jim Kenyon, Jonathan Lester, Trish Marsh, Bob Matthews, Mark Millmore, Jeremy Milln, Felicity Norman, Roger Phillips, Tim Price, Paul Rone, Alan Seldon, Nigel Shaw, Louis Stark, John Stone, David Summers, Elissa Swinglehurst, Paul Symonds, Kevin Tillet, Diana Toynbee, Ange Tyler, Yolande Watson and William Wilding

In attendance: Councillors

Officers:

34. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Graham Andrews.

35. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Roger Phillips declared an other interest as the vice chairman of the national joint council (NJC) for local government services.

36. MINUTES

The Chairman outlined two changes to the accuracy of the minutes of the previous meeting as outlined below:

Minute 32, bullet point 2 the wording 'the risk was currently being assessed' to be replaced with the wording 'the correspondence provided assurance that that it was unlikely that the £850k would be called upon'.

Minute 32, bullet point 15 (the last bullet point) the wording 'his election material explained that he did not support road schemes' to be replaced with the wording ' a number of members of the administration had been elected on the basis that they did not support the planned road schemes'.

RESOLVED: That, subject to the changes outlined above, the minutes of the meeting 11 October 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

37. CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Council noted the Chairman's announcements as printed in the agenda papers.

The Chairman introduced his announcements and informed Council of a suggestion to rename the cycle bridge at the outfall works and the path from Rotherwas to the bridge Canary Bridge and Canary Way respectively.

The chief executive introduced his announcements and provided an update from Public Health England regarding coronavirus.

It was requested that a briefing note was provided by the end of the day to provide an update on the phosphate levels in the river Lugg catchment.

38. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Pages 17 - 24)

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

39. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL (Pages 25 - 32)

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

40. CORPORATE PLAN - THE COUNTY PLAN 2020/24

Council considered a report by the Leader which set out the proposed corporate plan. The Leader moved the report and proposed the corporate plan, now to be referred to as the county plan 2020/2024, for approval. The Leader outlined the priorities contained in the plan, consisting of environment, community and economy and explained that the plan set the direction of the council for the next four years.

The deputy leader seconded the report and outlined the consultation that had taken place in the development of the Plan and the importance of highlighting the work undertaken with partners and the involvement of young people.

In discussion the following principal points were raised:

- It was important that connectivity for small, rural communities was acknowledged. It was hoped that villages without services and infrastructure would not be required to accept housing targets in the review of the core strategy;
- The Talk Community initiative was raised and good practice around adults' social care.
- A comment was made that the delivery of the priorities and objectives in the Plan was key, not merely their presentation.
- The Plan should contain details of depressed wages locally and relatively expensive housing and travel costs. Average earnings were below levels in the local region.
- It was felt that there should be greater reference to key partners in the Plan.
- Some members felt that they could not support the Plan without the western bypass to drive growth. The loss of funding resulting from the discontinuation of the scheme would impact on growth and undermine the delivery of the priorities in the Plan.
- The Plan represented a shift of emphasis that placed residents and the community at the heart of decisions that affected them.

- The western bypass would not relieve the congestion caused by the local residents travelling in the City which accounted for 85% of journeys.
- Local businesses should be supported by the Plan to drive jobs and growth.
- The promotion of tourism was important.
- The Plan ensured that the environment and response to the climate emergency were at the heart of the council's work.

The County Plan 2020/2024 was put to the vote and carried by a simple majority.

RESOLVED: That the County Plan 2020/2024, as set out in appendix A to the report, is approved.

41. 2020/21 COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME

Council considered a report by the Leader to agree the council tax reduction scheme for 2020/21.

The Leader moved the report and proposed the current council tax reduction scheme for approval. The scheme proposed for approval had been originally adopted in 2015 and it was considered the scheme continued to provide an appropriate level of reduction.

The cabinet member finance and corporate services seconded the report and explained that the retention of the current scheme was supported by responses to the budget consultation. The scheme provided support to vulnerable residents and those suffering hardship. In effect the scheme resulted in a reduction in council tax to the council of £10.9 million. Over 80% of council tax billed to claimants of the reduction scheme was collected; a rate which had remained consistent across the period of the current reduction scheme.

The principal points below were raised during the debate:

- The provision of relief of up to three months to local residents forced to leave their homes following flooding was raised and what further relief could be provided after three months.
- There was concern at those local residents who did not meet the threshold to claim the reduction but who were just about managing.
- The number of claimants for a reduction highlighted the high number of people in the county on low incomes.

A named vote was held to agree the council tax reduction scheme set out in the report. The scheme was approved unanimously.

FOR (52): Councillors Paul Andrews, Polly Andrews, Bartlett, Bartrum, Bolderson, Boulter, Bowen, Bowes, Chowns, Crockett, Davies, Durkin, Fagan, Foxton, Gandy, Guthrie, Hardwick, Harrington, Harvey, Hewitt, Hey, Hitchiner, Howells, Hunt, l'Anson, James, Jinman, Johnson, Graham Jones, Mike Jones, Kenyon, Lester, Marsh, Matthews, Millmore, Milln, Norman, Phillips, Price, Rone, Seldon, Shaw, Stark, Stone, Summers, Swinglehurst, Symonds, Tillett, Toynbee, Tyler, Watson and Wilding.

Against (0)

Abstentions (0)

RESOLVED: that the council tax reduction scheme for 2020/21, attached at appendix 1, is approved with the same parameters as the existing scheme.

42. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2020/21 ONWARDS AND CAPITAL STRATEGY

Council considered a report by the Leader to approve the capital investment budget and capital strategy 2020/21 onwards.

The cabinet member finance and corporate services moved the report and proposed the recommendations. She explained that the capital programme of the previous administration had been largely retained with additions including: school improvement; the Talk Community initiative; care home facilities; employment facilities; and infrastructure investment. Environmental improvements were also proposed through the programme including waste reduction initiatives. The majority of investment proposed through the capital programme was from grant funding with a small amount from borrowing.

The Leader seconded the report and explained that the capital plan reflected the county plan and proposed investment across market towns and rural areas.

In discussion the following points were raised in the debate concerning the Cabinet's capital budget:

- The impact of the loss of grant funding from the Local Enterprise Partnership was raised and where new grant funding would be identified in its place. Support was expressed for a capital strategy that proposed a bypass but it was noted that funding for such an initiative had been withdrawn.
- A shortfall in social and affordable housing was raised and the need for investment in this area.
- The importance of a review of the processes around the capital programme and risk management of capital schemes was raised.
- Support was expressed for the investment in schools and superhubs.
- Welcome was expressed for climate specific projects in the capital programme including electric buses. The programme proposed integrated action on environment and economy and the future carbon management strategy would set out how the capital programme could contribute to initiatives to reduce carbon emissions.
- Support was expressed for projects to construct care homes.
- There was requirement for investment in the road network, in particular drainage issues.

Amendment 1 – Proposed by Councillor Bob Matthews, seconded by Councillor Bernard Hunt. To allocate £2.2m of the capital receipts monies to rural verges management and any remaining funding from New Homes Bonus, not used for phosphate issue or climate change, will also be allocated. The funding will be used to commence work to provide adequate passing bays on the county's minor road network to help prevent the destruction of the grass verges alongside these B and C class Highways which contain a wide range of valuable and rare flora and fauna, and would be a means of protecting the rural environment generally.

Councillor Bob Matthews proposed the amendment and explained that recent public surveys had established that highway improvements were a priority for the public. The amendment proposed the use of capital receipts from the smallholdings sale to improve minor roads. Passing places along minor roads formed naturally over time; the amendment would formalise these passing places which would help protect rural roads and reduce the incidence of potholes.

Councillor Bernard Hunt seconded the amendment and explained that the amendment represented additional investment for rural roads which were in need of improvement.

In discussion the following points were raised in the debate concerning amendment 1:

- It was explained that the creation of passing places would help to protect verges on rural roads which could be considered by Balfour Beatty Living Places (BBLP) during the forthcoming year.
- There was concern that the amendment would re-commit funding that would be allocated to address phosphate levels in the Lugg catchment.
- It was noted that the proposal had not undergone scrutiny; it was suggested that the consideration of amendments at scrutiny prior to the budget meeting could be considered by the governance working group.
- It was commented that this was the type of work or road improvement which could be undertaken by parish councils through lengthsman schemes or by raising parish precepts.
- Verges often encroached on rural roads restricting width; clearance work was necessary to address this problem.
- Clarity was sought from the section 151 officer concerning the capital receipts identified in support of the proposal in the amendment. There was concern that the use of capital receipts for the proposal in the amendment would undermine the use of such investment to secure a return. *The section 151 officer explained that the funding identified in the amendment came, in part, from unallocated capital receipts.*
- There was some concern that the proposal in the amendment could be considered revenue spending.

Councillor Liz Harvey, as proposer of the original motion, responded to the amendment and explained that the amendment was not supported as there was confusion regarding changes to the amendment and the source of the funding, between capital receipts and the New Homes Bonus. Capital reserves existed but were for use in times of emergency or to be allocated to priorities following detailed proposals and consultation. Engagement with the cabinet member for infrastructure and transport was encouraged to investigate if the proposal in the amendment could be brought forward.

The budget amendment was put to the recorded vote and was lost by a simple majority.

FOR (7): Councillors Boulter, Foxton, Hunt, Graham Jones, Mike Jones, Matthews and Price.

Against (41): Councillors Paul Andrews, Polly Andrews, Bartlett, Bartrum, Bolderson, Bowes, Chowns, Crockett, Davies, Durkin, Fagan, Gandy, Guthrie, Hardwick, Harrington, Harvey, Hewitt, Hey, Hitchiner, Howells, l'Anson, Jinman, Johnson, Kenyon, Lester, Marsh, Millmore, Milln, Norman, Phillips, Rone, Seldon, Shaw, Stone, Summers, Swinglehurst, Tillett, Toynbee, Tyler, Watson and Wilding

Abstentions (4): Councillors Bowen, James, Stark and Symonds.

Amendment 2 – Proposed by Councillor Paul Symonds, seconded by Councillor Chris Bartrum.

a) That a new ring fenced capital allocation be included in the capital programme to provide an additional £1m per year to be invested through the Public Realm annual plan for market towns public realm improvement in 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 and that this be funded from capital receipts.

b) That additional capital funding of £300,000 be allocated to the client team budget for the Public Realm contract to provide 2 additional inspectors during 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23, increasing supervision and checking of capital works carried out by BBLP and to enable a review during 2020/21 of the benefit in

transferring the Locality Steward service from BBLP to Herefordshire Council, Hoople or another contractor. This funding to be provided from capital receipts.

Councillor Paul Symonds proposed the amendment and explained that amendment (a) concerned how investment in the public realm of the market towns was allocated through the capital programme. The amendment had no impact on council tax and was drawn from a pot of unallocated monies. Amendment (b) concerned the effectiveness of the investment in the public realm and would complement and help drive the proposed review of the BBLP contract and monitoring arrangements. It was confirmed that the two proposals were intended as separate amendments.

Councillor Chris Bartrum seconded the amendment and explained the reduction in funding for local authorities from central government. In order to make improvements to the public realm in market towns alternative funding needed to be identified to support projects such as the resurfacing of roads that were disintegrating. Local residents supported such proposals which would improve the safety of road users.

In discussion the following points were raised in the debate concerning amendment 2:

- There was concern that the proposed amendment (a) allocated money from reserves to a small number of towns in the county. There was a possibility that this could be divisive between the City of Hereford and the market towns.
- Roads were assessed for resurfacing and improvement work based on a risk/safety matrix. The assessment was a robust process to prioritise roads from across the county and undertake improvements on the basis of public safety. Separate allocations for market towns in amendment (a) would not complement this process.
- It was queried whether the addition of inspectors to supervise and check works in amendment (b) was a duplication of the work undertaken by locality stewards.
- There was concern that amendment (a) proposed taking money out of the capital budget to pay for recurring costs which represented revenue expenditure.
- The county plan contained a proposal to work with the market towns and parish councils.
- Amendment (a) was intended to support infrastructure across the market towns and was consistent with the priorities of local residents to make improvements to the maintenance of roads and public spaces. The proposal was supported by local residents and the town council in Ross-on Wye.
- It was understood that processes existed to address long standing problems with highways that were not prioritised for safety repairs. The Cabinet should consider the best way to address such issues.
- Some members supported the enhanced supervision of works undertaken by BBLP as proposed in amendment (b).
- There was concern that the use of capital receipts to support the proposals in the budget amendments reduced their value. It was stated that the capital receipts from the sale of the smallholdings were intended to raise revenue.
- Clarification was sought regarding the period of time proposed in amendment (a). *The section 151 officer confirmed that the amendment sought a change to the capital programme over the next three years.*
- Lobbying of central government should be co-ordinated across the political groups to request funding to provide a safe road network.
- The proposal in amendment (b) would be looked at during the review of the BBLP contract.
- It was explained that the proposals in the budget amendment had been presented to scrutiny.

Councillor Liz Harvey, as proposer of the original motion, responded to the amendment and explained that the amendment to the capital programme was not supported; such proposals would require work before inclusion in the capital programme. It was important to ensure the prioritisation process for repairs and works was fair across the county. The new county plan included a priority to re-balance investment in market towns. Leominster had secured grant funding with matched capital money and other market towns were encouraged to apply for similar funding. Market towns had worked with BBLP to identify priorities for inclusion in the infrastructure plan. The review proposed by the cabinet member procurement and assets relating to contract and project management was the right way to address concerns with oversight of the BBLP contract.

Budget amendment **(a)** and **(b)** was put to the recorded vote and was lost by a simple majority.

(a)

For (22): Councillors Polly Andrews, Bartrum, Bolderson, Durkin, Gandy, Guthrie, Hunt, l'Anson, James, Johnson, Mike Jones, Lester, Matthews, Millmore, Price, Rone, Shaw, Stark, Stone, Swinglehurst, Symonds and Tillett.

Against (27): Councillors Paul Andrews, Bartlett, Boulter, Bowes, Chowns, Crockett, Davies, Fagan, Hardwick, Harrington, Harvey, Hewitt, Hey, Hitchiner, Jinman, Graham Jones, Kenyon, Marsh, Milln, Norman, Phillips, Seldon, Summers, Toynbee, Tyler, Watson and Wilding.

Abstain (2): Councillors Bowen and Howells

(b)

For (13): Councillors Polly Andrews, Bartrum, Howells, Hunt, James, Graham Jones, Matthews, Phillips, Price, Stark, Summers, Symonds and Tillett.

Against (36): Councillors Paul Andrews, Bartlett, Bolderson, Boulter, Bowes, Chowns, Crockett, Davies, Durkin, Fagan, Gandy, Guthrie, Hardwick, Harrington, Harvey, Hewitt, Hey, Hitchiner, l'Anson, Jinman, Johnson, Mike Jones, Kenyon, Lester, Marsh, Millmore, Milln, Norman, Rone, Seldon, Stone, Swinglehurst, Toynbee, Tyler, Watson and Wilding.

Abstain (2): Councillors Bowen and Shaw

Amendment 3 – Proposed by Councillor Nigel Shaw and seconded by Councillor Carole Gandy – This amendment reduces the capital allocated to the Hereford Transport Plan (HTP) from £3.6m to £1.6m and provides the released £2m to be used to repair and maintain our U and C roads.

Councillor Nigel Shaw proposed the amendment and explained that the use of the road safety matrix alone resulted in some minor roads never receiving investment or repairs. The proposal involved the adjustment of the HTP to allow more roads to be repaired and drainage issues addressed.

Councillor Carole Gandy seconded the amendment and explained that there was some disappointment that the capital programme proposed investment in road infrastructure close to Hereford and roads in rural areas had been marginalised. The deterioration of rural roads affected tourism, particularly associated with the cycle routes through the county. The parish drainage scheme contained unspent funding and new projects needed to be brought forward.

In discussion the following points were raised in the debate concerning amendment 3:

- Reduced funding had affected the minor road network and although £2million was not a large sum of money it would help with maintenance and repair.
- It was commented that the amendment proposed that money was removed from a budget for the HTP project that was currently under review. There was concern that the amendment pre-empted the outcome of the review. If the outcome resulted in money becoming available its reallocation could be considered. There was concern that the amendment raised legal problems concerned with the pre-determination of the outcomes of the review. *The monitoring officer explained that there were no concerns regarding pre-determination; Council was a separate decision-making body to Cabinet. Cabinet would be responsible for determining how the outcomes of the review would be put into effect.*
- It was acknowledged that the road network was in a bad condition which had resulted from reduced funding from government. There was a need to lobby local MPs and central government for the provision of greater funding in the local road network.
- Repair and maintenance of the road network was a priority for local communities. The amendment sought to provide more money to address the poor condition of the highways.
- There was concern that the amendment proposed the use of capital funding on recurring revenue costs and that the amount proposed would be of little effect.
- The amendment would help provide for those roads that were not considered a priority on the road safety matrix but were in a poor condition.
- The condition of the minor road network impacted upon rural tourism and local businesses.
- The lack of investment since 2014/15 in the minor road network was attributed to the priorities and decision-making of the previous administration.
- There was concern that the amendment had not been considered at scrutiny or Cabinet before presentation to full Council.
- The loss of funding from the LEP would impact upon the council's ability to access funding in the future.

Councillor Liz Harvey, as proposer of the original motion, responded to the amendment and explained that it was not supported as there was concern that money would be removed from the HAP budget before the conclusion of the review. The review would take account of alternative transport options which the government was now prioritising for grant funding. The entire £28million had not necessarily been lost but the new administration were not in a position, upon assumption of office, to award a contract for the work contained in the south wye transport package.

The amendment was put to the recorded vote and was carried by a simple majority.

For (26): Councillors Polly Andrews, Bartrum, Bolderson, Bowen, Durkin, Gandy, Guthrie, Howells, Hunt, I'Anson, James, Johnson, Graham Jones, Mike Jones, Lester, Matthews, Millmore, Phillips, Price, Rone, Shaw, Stark, Stone, Swinglehurst, Symonds and Tillett.

Against (25): Councillors Paul Andrews, Bartlett, Boulter, Bowes, Chowns, Crockett, Davies, Fagan, Hardwick, Harrington, Harvey, Hewitt, Hey, Hitchiner, Jinman, Kenyon, Marsh, Milln, Norman, Seldon, Summers, Toynbee, Tyler, Watson and Wilding.

Abstain (0)

RESOLVED: That:

This amendment reduces the capital allocated to the Hereford Transport Plan from £3.6m to £1.6m and provides the released £2m to be used to repair and maintain our U and C roads.

The bulk of the Hereford Transport Plan capital funding was predicated on the need to purchase early properties that might be blighted by the route of the Hereford Bypass. With the scheme now under review and any funding application for the scheme, should it go ahead, further delayed, it makes no sense to keep this capital allocation at the current level. The Conservative Group would ask others to consider the plight of the U and C roads in our most rural communities. In the unlikely event that additional capital above the £1.6m is suddenly needed for the HTP, then the general reserve and the financial resilience reserve (standing at £13.6m) are available.

Although A and B roads in Herefordshire are the fastest roads and carry the most vehicles, the C and U roads are the capillaries that feed these roads and, in the more remote places, the arteries for local transport too. Since the one off spending of £20m in 2014/5 there has been minimal investment in the U and C road infrastructure and drainage and the results are visible for all to see.

This additional £2m will not fix all of the issues, but is seen as a responsible step by this Council to address the concerns of the rural third of this county's population.

The capital programme 2020/21 onwards and capital strategy, as amended by amendment 3 above was put to the recorded vote and carried by a simple majority.

FOR (49): Councillors Paul Andrews, Polly Andrews, Bartlett, Bartrum, Bolderson, Boulter, Bowen, Bowes, Chowns, Crockett, Davies, Durkin, Fagan, Gandy, Guthrie, Hardwick, Harrington, Harvey, Hewitt, Hey, Hitchiner, Howells, Hunt, l'Anson, James, Jinman, Johnson, Graham Jones, Mike Jones, Kenyon, Lester, Marsh, Matthews, Millmore, Milln, Norman, Phillips, Price, Rone, Seldon, Shaw, Stone, Summers, Swinglehurst, Tillett, Toynbee, Tyler, Watson and Wilding.

Against (0)

Abstentions (2): Councillors Stark and Symonds

RESOLVED: That:

(a) the proposed capital programme for 2020/21 attached at appendix 3, as amended by amendment 3 above, be approved; and

(b) the capital strategy document at appendix 4 be approved.

There was an adjournment at 1.50 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 2.25 p.m.

43. SETTING THE 2020/21 BUDGET AND UPDATING THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Council considered a report from the Leader to set the 2020/21 budget and update the medium term financial strategy and treasury management strategy.

The cabinet member finance and corporate services introduced and moved the budget and explained that the administration had inherited a sound financial position and it was possible to set a balanced budget. The council tax precept increase was at a lower rate than it had been in the previous two years and the budget supported the priorities

contained in the new county plan. The budget contained support for local business and education, including NMiTE, and incorporated plans to address challenges including the rising cost of services. The budget contained investment in social care for children and adults and the Talk Community initiative. The budget had been shaped by the public with extensive consultation and had been presented to each of the scrutiny committees twice.

The Leader seconded the budget and explained that the precept increase was prudent to enlarge the council tax base but it was regrettable that it was at a rate higher than inflation. There was a pressure on the budget from the increasing cost of looked after children. Headroom existed in the budget to support projects such as the superhubs and to address the climate emergency. The new homes bonus was being utilised to address the phosphate levels and support house building.

Councillor Jonathan Lester expressed support for the provision in the budget for key services and in particular the investment in legal and children's services to enhance safeguarding. He expressed concern at the precept level. The strong financial position of the council undermined the proposal for a precept above the level of inflation.

Councillor John Hardwick explained that there had been full and thorough consultation on the budget. The proposals in the budget demonstrated the effective working arrangements that had been established by the alliance and reflected the priorities expressed by the electorate.

Councillor Alan Seldon explained that the budget was the culmination of significant work by the executive and reflected the manifesto commitments of It's Our County. The proposals in the budget responded to the climate emergency and contained modern day thinking to address issues such as congestion in Hereford.

Councillor Polly Andrews explained that the comments of her political group would be outlined during the debate.

Councillor Ellie Chowns explained that the budget was set in the context of: a lack of central government funding; the pressure on adult social care services caused by the demography of Herefordshire; and the increased need of children's services caused by a lack of funding. Long term investment in services was proposed in the budget and the council tax precept was how the public collectively funded local services to protect vulnerable residents.

Councillor Bernard Hunt explained that in considering the proposed precept increase the demands on the resources of the council needed to be considered.

In discussion the following principal points were raised on the Cabinet's budget:

- The lobbying of central government was raised and the need to work with government to gain commitments and access funding.
- The level of reserves was raised and the potential utilisation of reserves to remedy road defects.
- The level of reserves was inherited from the previous administration of the council.
- There was sympathy with local residents with respect to the precept increase but it was necessary to avoid a reduction in the level of services. The council tax reduction scheme would help those vulnerable local residents to manage the precept increase. If the council tax reduction scheme required a change to provide assistance to a wider range of local residents this could be considered.
- The level of the precept was high and Herefordshire residents had been required to pay increased precepts over a number of years. Some residents would struggle to pay the precept even with the council tax reduction scheme in place.

Amendment 1 – Proposed by Councillor Nigel Shaw and seconded by Councillor Jonathan Lester - The proposed increase in council tax is reduced by 1% to 2.9%. The annual cost of this will be approximately £1m, the new homes bonus allocated in the government settlement of £2m will fund the reduction for the next two years.

Councillor Shaw proposed the budget amendment and explained that the proposed reduction in the precept did not reduce services. The shortfall created by the reduction would be met from the new homes bonus. There was concern at the effect the tax increase would have upon local residents and the amendment was intended to reduce the burden on council taxpayers. The money allocated to the phosphate issue could be allocated from an alternative source.

In discussion the following principal points were raised on amendment 1:

- It was important that there was a budget to ensure that resources were in place to address the phosphate issue.
- The previous administration had consistently increased the council tax precept.
- Some members felt that any amendment which withdrew the money allocated to the phosphate issue could not be supported. It was recognised that the phosphate issue was significant and urgent.
- It was noted that even with the support provided by the council tax reduction scheme some local residents would struggle to pay the precept increase. Some members felt that the amendment offered the opportunity to reduce the financial burden of the precept on those local residents least able to afford it without affecting the overall budget.
- The allocation of funding to address the phosphate issue had only occurred at the end of January.
- A change to the council tax reduction scheme could be considered to change the thresholds.
- There was disappointment that the 3.9% increase was the only model considered in the budget.
- There was concern that the reduced precept would reduce the funding available to adult social care.

Councillor Lester seconded the amendment and explained that the proposal increased the precept but not to the level in the Cabinet's budget. The 3.9% placed an excessive burden on council taxpayers to provide for services; the amendment did not alter the budget or withdraw money from services but reduced the burden on the tax payer.

Councillor Harvey, as the mover of the original motion, responded to the amendment and explained that it was not supported as the allocation of the new homes bonus to the phosphate issue sought to address an existential threat which put development in the county at risk and increased the potential for predatory development if housing targets were not met. The amendment could not be supported as it was essential that work was undertaken with partners to address the issue which the allocation from the new homes bonus supported.

The amendment was put to the recorded vote and was lost by a simple majority.

For (18): Councillors Polly Andrews, Bartrum, Bolderson, Durkin, Gandy, Guthrie, , l'Anson, Johnson, Graham Jones, Lester, Millmore, Phillips, Rone, Shaw, Stark, Stone, Symonds and Tillett.

Against (29): Councillors Paul Andrews, Bartlett, Boulter, Bowes, Chowns, Crockett, Davies, Fagan, Foxton, Hardwick, Harrington, Harvey, Hewitt, Hey, Hitchiner, Hunt,

Jinman, Mike Jones, Kenyon, Marsh, Milln, Norman, Price, Seldon, Summers, Toynbee, Tyler, Watson and Wilding.

Abstain (3): Bowen, Howells and Swinglehurst.

Councillor Shaw withdrew his second proposed budget amendment.

The budget and updated medium term financial strategy and treasury management strategy was put to the recorded vote and was approved by a simple majority.

For (31): Councillors Paul Andrews, Bartlett, Boulter, Bowen, Bowes, Chowns, Crockett, Davies, Fagan, Foxton, Hardwick, Harrington, Harvey, Hewitt, Hey, Hitchiner, Hunt, Jinman, Graham Jones, Mike Jones, Kenyon, Marsh, Milln, Norman, Price, Seldon, Summers, Toynbee, Tyler, Watson and Wilding.

Against (9): Councillors Bolderson, Durkin, Guthrie, Johnson, Lester, Millmore, Rone, Shaw and Tillett.

Abstain (10): Councillors Polly Andrews, Bartrum, Gandy, Howells, l'Anson, Phillips, Stark, Stone, Symonds and Tillett.

RESOLVED:

That:

(a) Council approves;

- a. the council tax base of 69,756.19 Band D equivalents in 2020/21**
- b. an increase in core council tax in 2020/21 of 1.9%**
- c. an additional precept in respect of adult social care costs of 2% applied to council tax in 2020/21 resulting in a total council tax increase of 3.9%; increasing the band D charge from £1,514.70 to £1,573.77 for Herefordshire Council in 2020/21;**
- d. the balanced 2020/21 revenue budget proposal totalling £157.1m, subject to any amendments approved at the meeting, specifically the net spending limits for each directorate as at appendix 3**
- e. delegates to the section 151 officer the power to make necessary changes to the budget arising from any variations in central government funding allocations via general reserves;**
- f. the medium term financial strategy (MTFS) 2020-24 at appendix 1 be approved; and**
- g. the treasury management strategy at appendix 4.**

As an amendment was made by Council to the capital programme the Leader was asked whether he, on behalf of the Cabinet, accepted the amendment.

The Leader requested an adjournment to consult with his Cabinet.

The meeting adjourned at 3.48 p.m. and reconvened at 4.01 p.m.

The Leader indicated on behalf of the Cabinet that he accepted the amendment to the budget.

44. PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2020

Council considered a report by the chairperson of the employment panel to approve the pay policy statement for 2020.

The report and recommendation was moved by the Leader (as chairperson of the employment panel) and seconded by the cabinet member for finance and corporate services.

During the discussion it was requested that in future the report should include detail of the gender pay gap at the council.

The pay policy statement was put to the vote and approved unanimously.

RESOLVED: That:

(a) the pay policy statement at appendix A is approved

45. PROCEDURE FOR QUESTIONS AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEES AND CABINET

Council considered a report by the solicitor to the council regarding the procedure for public and member questions at scrutiny committees and Cabinet. The correction supplement was noted.

Councillor Shaw proposed and Councillor Bolderson seconded the recommendation in the report.

Amendment – Proposed by Councillor Bob Matthews and seconded by Councillor Bernard Hunt – That the constitution at section 4.4.11 (part c) in the cabinet rules – is amended to include group leaders being able to ask questions of the relevant cabinet member(s) at cabinet meetings.

Councillor Hunt proposed the amendment and explained that it was democratic and essential that group leaders were able to ask questions of cabinet members at meetings of the cabinet.

In the debate concerning the amendment it was acknowledged that if it was approved it could lead to a lot of questions being raised at cabinet however it was considered that it would be more democratic and accountable.

Councillor Jim Kenyon seconded the amendment and explained that good chairmanship would ensure democracy and transparency.

Councillor Shaw replied to the debate on the amendment and explained that he had sympathy with the amendment but such proposals should be considered at the audit and governance committee before determination at full Council.

The amendment was put to the vote and was carried by a simple majority.

RESOLVED:

That the constitution at section 4.4.11 (part c) in the cabinet rules – is amended to include group leaders being able to ask questions of the relevant cabinet member(s) at cabinet meetings.

The substantive motion, as amended above was put to the vote and carried by a simple majority.

RESOLVED: That:

- (a) the council approve the process for public and member questions at scrutiny and the deadline for cabinet questions with implementation with effect from the council meeting on 14 February 2020, including the amendment agreed above; and**
- (b) authority be delegated to the solicitor to the council to make technical amendments (grammatical, formatting, and consistency) necessary to finalise the revised constitution.**

46. COUNCILLORS' ALLOWANCE SCHEME AND LINK TO THE NATIONAL JOINT COUNCIL (NJC) INDEX

Council considered a report by the solicitor to the council concerning the index linking of the increase to councillors' allowances to the National Joint Council rates.

The monitoring officer introduced the report and explained that following a request from the Chairman a dispensation had been provided to all members to be present and vote on the report.

The recommendation in the report was proposed by the Leader and seconded by Councillor Nigel Shaw.

The recommendation in the report was put to the vote and approved by a simple majority.

RESOLVED: That:

- (a) The National Joint Council (NJC) pay award applying to the basic allowance and the special responsibility allowances received by councillors in 2020 and 2021 be approved.**

47. ADDITIONAL ITEM - URGENT NOTICE OF MOTION

Council considered an urgent motion regarding the appeal against the rejection of the Ledbury viaduct planning application by the planning committee.

In moving the motion Councillor Liz Harvey made the following points:

- The motion was intended to provide an opportunity for members of the planning committee and local ward members to express a view on the appeal of the Ledbury viaduct planning application and the monitoring officer's decision as to whether the council would contest the appeal.
- The planning committee had rejected the application, in part because it felt that a single access for the proposed site was inadequate. The developer had been asked to consider a second access under the viaduct but such a proposal had not been included in the report submitted to the planning committee in December.
- In reaching its decision the planning committee had taken the views of the local community into account.
- An appeal would be taking place and legal advice provided to the council from counsel stated that the appeal should not be contested. The legal advice considered that there were insufficient grounds to defend the decision of the

planning committee and by not contesting the appeal the potential financial risk to the council would be reduced.

- The legal advice of counsel undermined the decision of the planning committee. The motion was intended to collate the thoughts of members to assist the monitoring officer to decide whether to defend the appeal.

Councillor Tony Johnson seconded the motion.

The following principal points were raised during the debate:

- Developments of the size proposed at Ledbury viaduct generally had more than one access.
- Ledbury Town Council would make representations at the inquiry that considered the appeal.
- There was substantial evidence concerning the application that needed to be considered at inquiry including contradictory highways assessments.
- The local community of Ledbury opposed development on the site where there was only a single access.
- To contest the appeal could result in significant costs against the council.
- Without the development of the viaduct site the council's three and five year housing land supply targets were threatened.
- The prospect of success in the appeal was queried. *The monitoring officer explained that counsel advice indicated that there was not a good chance of success.*
- If the decision of the planning committee was consistent with planning policy the appeal should be defended.
- It was noted that if the council defended the appeal it might become liable for the legal costs of the appellant.
- It was confirmed that there was strong feeling against the application among the members of the planning committee however the single access had been considered adequate by officers.
- It was acknowledged that the monitoring officer would need to assess the legal advice received in deciding whether to defend the appeal.

In closing the debate Councillor Harvey explained that it was a point of principle to defend the decision of the planning committee. To not defend the decision would run counter to localism and democracy.

The motion was put to the vote and carried by a simple majority of the Council.

RESOLVED: That this Council:

notes that the solicitor to the council is considering making an urgent decision regarding whether or not the Council is to actively defend the appeal commenced by Bloor Homes against the Planning Committee's refusal of Bloor's planning application at the strategic housing site adjacent to the viaduct in Ledbury;

recognises this sensitive decision is the responsibility of the solicitor to the council to make; and

requests that the solicitor to the council gives very careful consideration to the views expressed by its Planning Committee on 11 December 2019, and in this urgent debate, in arriving at her decision.

Appendix 1 - Questions from members of the public

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 1	Mr Roger, Hereford	To raise more Council revenue with regard to Council Tax based on resident's house value bandings is it now time to re-value everyone's' property to update the real value of residences in today's house market?	Cabinet member finance and corporate services
Response: Every property in England is in one of eight council tax bands, depending on value. These were last set in 1993 and are based on valuations from 1991. What band a house falls into is determined by inspectors from the government's Valuation Office Agency (VOA). To date, central government has ruled out any recalculation of the English council tax bands.			
PQ 2	Ms Ward, Tarrington	Since the last administration scrapped the annual publication of the generic bus timetable, it has made life difficult for people who plan changes of bus when travelling in the county. There are so many different bus companies to change between. The consequence is that fewer people are inclined to use the bus services. Does the proposed budget for 2020-21 include funding to reinstate, print and sell the bus timetable booklet, at cost, to help and encourage people to use buses and to improve communication between public transport?	Cabinet member infrastructure and transport
Response: With an increasing move towards providing information digitally, there are no immediate plans to reintroduce printed copies of bus timetables for general sale. All timetable information is provided online including journey planning facilities. In addition, the council continues to provide a countywide bus routes map which provides visibility of the entire bus network such that residents can see what services they might use should they wish to travel by bus. This is available free of charge from the Hereford Library and Hereford Tourist Information Centre. Bus timetables and journey planners are extensively available online including at www.Traveline.info . Information on buses is also available on the council's website www.Herefordshire.Gov.uk , this includes details of how to access real time live bus arrival and departure information. Online journey planners have an advantage over hard copy timetables in that they allow passengers to easily plan journeys that involve multiple buses, multiple operators, or different modes of travel such as bus and train. That all said and done I know some users will struggle with online access and where an individual cannot access information this way officers will provide hard copy service timetables for any residents on demand – libraries or Council offices being places these may be requested from.			
PQ 3	Ms Simpson, Hereford	Would the councillors let us know please what provision exists in the budget for 2020/21 in relation to the introduction in the immediate future of electric buses to replace non-electric ones, including buses which could	Cabinet member

		operate as part of a 'Park & Ride' scheme for Hereford, since that scheme would greatly improve air quality in the city by reducing the number of vehicles to and from the city centre?	infrastructure and transport
Response: <p>The draft capital programme 2020/21 includes details of capital cost to replace the Hereford and wider county bus fleets with electric buses. Funding for this will need to be secured from external grants such as the recently announced 'all electric bus town' scheme announced by government. The total cost of replacing the fleet is estimated at £35M which would provide around 80 new electric buses.</p> <p>This Council is determined to develop a co-ordinated and focussed bus strategy, good public transport is an essential in providing choice for people to move around the County and City and will help tackle congestion. Park and rides will be considered as part of that strategy.</p>			
PQ 4	Mrs Wegg Prosser, Breinton	The Council has launched an innovative and user friendly Travel Survey, as part of its Transport Review. Regarding the City Centre Transport Package, would the Cabinet member responsible for Infrastructure agree to make provision in the budget to arrange for a new assessment of the proposals for the rail station transport hub and public realm improvements to include analysis of responses to this Travel Survey, thus becoming more contemporary, and delivering better value for money?	Cabinet member infrastructure and transport
Response: <p>The draft capital programme already includes funding for the development of the transport hub and public realm schemes and this will take into account stakeholder and user feedback. I am due to take a decision shortly to enable consultation with key stakeholders about the proposals and a public consultation will follow when people will be able to tell us their priorities for both the hub and public realm improvements and this will include consideration of the feedback people are currently giving in the current travel survey.</p>			
PQ 5	Dr Geeson, Hereford	The Capital Programme shows that the Hereford City Centre transport package (that includes the City Link Road), has about £7million left to spend on the new station transport hub. With the City Link Road costing a lot more than originally expected, has sufficient budget been left after the road construction to complete such an important transport interchange for the people of Hereford and the wider County, along with the pedestrian/cycle improvements along Commercial Rd?	Cabinet member infrastructure and transport
Response: <p>The total approved budget for the HCCTP project was £40.651m. Of this the budget for the City Link Road (CLR) was £34.160m and the remaining £6.491m was allocated for transport hub and public realm improvements. Spend to date on the CLR has not exceeded the budget of £34.160m and the budget allocated for the transport hub and public realm scheme is available to deliver the planned improvements.</p>			
PQ 6	Ms O'Neill, Richards Castle	Is there any provision in the proposed budget to stimulate large-scale tree planting across the county, including the use of the council's own estate for the planting of trees, as a way of helping meet the commitments in the Council's climate change declaration of March 2019?	Cabinet member environment,

			economy and skills
<p>Response:</p> <p>Whilst there is not a dedicated budget for tree planting in this year's budget, we are however exploring a number of different options for local carbon offsetting which will form an important part of delivering carbon neutrality. We are actively discussing a substantial increase in the county's tree cover with environmental partners who would also be in a position to play an active role.</p> <p>For example, as part of a recent funding application to the Department for Transport we have included the proposal for a local tree planting and carbon offsetting scheme so that we can locally offset the carbon emissions from this project. Our approach to this project will form a case study in the pursuit of carbon neutral highway maintenance.</p> <p>In addition, the Council continues to make effective use of the planning system where we have been successfully requiring the additional planting of new trees and hedge rows on new developments across the county.</p> <p>We will also continue to work in partnership with organisations such as the Herefordshire Wildlife Trust, so that we can not only promote additional tree planting, but to also help to make sure that the right type of trees are planting in the right places so that we can also enhance and protect local the wildlife</p>			
PQ 7	Mrs Morris, Hereford	Nottingham Council introduced a workplace parking levy to help fund public transport improvements. With many private car parks located within the centre of Hereford, what likely income could be generated by such a policy in the City?	Cabinet member finance and corporate services
<p>Response:</p> <p>I understand that the Nottingham workplace parking levy has generated £61M since introduced in 2012, this equates to approximately £8.7M income per annum. Nottingham is a large city with an urban population of 768,000 and is part of the larger east midlands conurbation. As a smaller city, the likely income from such a charge in Hereford would be significantly less. However, the transport review for Hereford will be considering a wide range of alternative options including demand management measures, such as this, to help inform the future transport strategy for the city. I have asked that the review includes an assessment of the potential costs, benefits and income which could be generated from such scheme in Hereford which would relate to the number of parking spaces affected and the level of charge.</p> <p>Clearly, the introduction of any such scheme would need to be coordinated with the implementation of a range of alternative travel options for people who work in the city centre, as has been the case in Nottingham.</p>			
PQ 8	Mr Geeson, Hereford	My question relates to agenda item 9 the Capital programme and in particular the Hereford Transport Package/Active Travel Measures within the programme. Making the railway bridge on the Roman Road two lane is long overdue and I welcome the fact that this will now be considered. As part of improving connectivity through the Hereford Transport Package and making walking and cycling more attractive and safer options for short journeys through Active Travel Measures; can	Cabinet member infrastructure and transport

		the Cabinet member confirm that consideration will also be given to improving other railway bridges such as those on College Road, Old School Lane and the Northern end of Barrs Court Road?.	
Response: I can confirm that I have authorised the delivery of active travel schemes in Hereford alongside the transport review which commenced further to my decision last month. You may recall we consulted on a range of possible active travel schemes last year (January – March) and we presented key routes in Hereford city where improvements could be delivered for pedestrians and cyclists. These early proposals recognised that improvements to these bridges would enable better walking and cycling provision along these roads into the city. Further detailed design, which will take into account feedback received through our current Transport review, is planned as I am committed to delivering improvements such as these whilst the wider transport review takes place.			
Supplementary Question: In 2010 consulting engineers Mouchel produced a report for Advantage West Midlands on Delivering a Sustainable Transport System (DaSTS). This considered Hereford's role as a designated Growth Point for future economic development. It aimed to tackle immediate problems and shape the transport system to meet future growth. The study considered low-cost, specific and innovative sustainable transport interventions. There are 17 pages of tables for Hereford alone. Every possibility is ranked for ease of implementation, many are rated green. Will the Cabinet member draw this exhaustive list to the attention of those working on the Hereford Transport Package, suggest it is updated and consider the possibilities for inclusion in future capital programmes?			
Cabinet Member Response: Consideration of the information will be included in the current Transport review.			
PQ 9	N Fletcher, Hereford	Cycling is the most efficient and sustainable method of urban travel whatever the time of day, Hereford is a wonderful compact city, but the cycle network is meagre and disjointed. I note that the capital programme contains a scheme for super cycle highways, please expand on what plans you have to extend the network and promote this form of travel?	Cabinet member infrastructure and transport
Response: I agree with the questioner that cycling is an ideal mode of transport for Hereford. The super cycle highways project is ambitious and will take time but it aims to deliver a comprehensive network of active travel routes across the city, market towns and key long distance rural links between them. The project will bring together and extend the active travel components of current transport projects to form a county wide coherent network of active travel schemes. This will not only continue the development of the existing cycle routes already identified in transport packages, but it also includes other schemes identified in both our emerging Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan and Sustainable Modes of Travel to School strategy. I am also pleased to confirm that the Council was also successful in securing £500,000 from the Department for Transport's 'Access Fund' competition. This will support the continuation of our successful Choose How You Move campaign which includes a wide range of walking and cycling projects such as Beryl Bikes, Business Travel grants and our active travel in school project. We also expect shortly to hear confirmation of a significant capital award via Highways England for cycle routes along the central corridor of Hereford City.			

PQ 10	Ms Sharp, Hereford	The work on the South Wye Transport Package and Hereford Transport package has been previously treated as just an extension of Balfour Beatty's existing Public Realm contract without ever going out to tender. In view of the poor quality, but expensive transport schemes and a lack of any Full Business Case for the SWTP by March 2019, will the current administration confirm that in accordance with the Council's own Constitution, future capital transport projects will go out to tender to ensure value for money for the local taxpayer?	Cabinet member Commissioning procurement and assets
Response: <p>Thank you for your question on this important area of my portfolio that has received much public interest. The engagement of BBLP to provide the professional and technical resource to deliver the SWTP and HTP projects was done through the use of the public realm contract as these design and technical services are within the scope of that contract. The public realm contract was itself procured following an open competitive tender OJEU procurement in 2013. The delivery of the Southern Link Road construction works was not intended through the BBLP contract and an OJEU procurement was selected at that time. A full review of the Council's procurement and project management of transport projects has been undertaken whereby a clear structure and process is documented. The route to market for all future capital projects will be in accordance with the Council's Constitution and appropriate procurement options will be selected and approved at the appropriate stage of each project.</p> <p>Ensuring that we can demonstrate value for money and effective, documented and accountable procurement processes is key to the administration as are our external auditors, Grant Thornton.</p>			
PQ 11	Ms Dean, Bishops Frome	I note that the county plan 2020-2024 contains an objective to 'Identify climate change action in all aspects of council operation'. What provision has been made to inform the public of the truth of the dire climatic and environmental position that we are in and of the strategies that you propose to adopt to meet this looming disaster.	Cabinet member environment, economy and skills
Response: <p>Building on our public declaration of a Climate Emergency in March last year, the council has undertaken significant action to address climate change in all aspects of our operations. This will be set out in our own new carbon management plan, which will be published in March, as well as our plan to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030.</p> <p>We are also working closely with a number of partners and stakeholders to develop a new countywide carbon reduction strategy. This emerging strategy will build on the excellent progress, local action and growing momentum across the county. This collaborative approach seeks to bring together residents, groups, businesses and organisations as we jointly work to meet the current and future challenges, and opportunities, on our journey to become net carbon neutral by 2030.</p> <p>We will be gearing up both our web presence and our communications to make more information on our county carbon reduction initiatives easy to access and I am pleased to welcome Cllr Ellie Chowns as the new cabinet support member who will be supporting me in this area and will be actively working to further raise the profile of this important issue.</p>			

PQ 12	Mr Hardy, Hereford	In view of the widely perceived problem of traffic congestion in the city and the belief in some quarters that this would be significantly relieved by the construction of a bypass some time in the future, what alternative measures for congestion relief does the proposed budget provide for that could be completed within the next three years?"	Cabinet member infrastructure and transport
Response: I am keen to understand Hereford City's congestion issues as quickly as possible and it is right there is risk that road schemes will take considerable time to be built and may/may not then provide a reduction in congestion. It is essential therefore to have more than one plan and to have some plans that can be implemented and assessed more quickly. The budget includes funding for transport improvements to be delivered whilst a review of the two major road schemes is progressed over coming months. This review gives us the opportunity to consider options for Hereford's congestion relief including the possibility of an eastern link road and river crossing, removal of traffic lights on key routes, emergency response arrangements to remove breakdowns on the A49, an electric bus fleet for the urban bus network and improvements that provide safer routes to school. While the review is under way, I want to continue to deliver improvements for cyclists and pedestrians across the city to encourage people who currently use the car for short distance trips which contributes to congestion to travel by more sustainable modes.			
Supplementary Question: Will the council apply for the £50 million grant to implement electric buses across the county?			
Cabinet Member Response: The council will apply and the introduction of electric buses was a priority.			
PQ 13	Mr Sherwood, Hereford	Pursuant to its 2019 commitment to take measures locally in response to the Climate Emergency, and in view of the all-important UN international conference on Climate this November in Glasgow (COP26), will Herefordshire Council commit appropriate officer time and financial resources in the budget for next year, so as to promptly support emergent voluntary-sector plans aimed at establishing a public-access Centre for Climate Action in Hereford city centre, with the intention of increasing a) public understanding of the expected impacts of climate change on Herefordshire and elsewhere, b) awareness of all the possibilities for action by local individuals and organisations to mitigate and to adapt, and c) support for local activities and actions related to the Climate Emergency?	Cabinet member environment, economy and skills
Response: I welcome the commitment of the voluntary sector to this agenda and whilst I am not aware of the specific proposal to develop a centre for climate action in Hereford City, I am very interested to hear more. As such I have requested that our newly appointed Head of Environment, Climate Emergency and Waste liaises with you directly to see how best we can support this initiative. I can confirm that Herefordshire Council has allocated substantial officer time and financial resource as part of our commitment to tackle the Climate Emergency. We will be publishing our new Carbon Management Plan in March, which will set out our approach to reducing the Council's carbon footprint and our commitment to achieve net carbon neutrality by 2030.			

In addition, as part of our commitment to achieve countywide carbon neutrality, we are also working closely with a range of partners to develop a new countywide carbon reduction strategy. I would also like to welcome the opening of the Queenswood sustainable futures centre next month which is an initiative by New Leaf and I wish this every success.

PQ 14	Mrs Protherough, Clehonger	In the context of the current Pause and Review of Transport Policy how do the budget proposals ensure that the Council is giving consideration to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the 2018 report "The Inclusive Transport Strategy: achieving equal access for disabled people to ensure that the needs of people with a wide range of disabilities have adequate choice of safe, accessible and independent means of getting around Hereford.	Cabinet member infrastructure and transport
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Response:

The transport review will enable a wide range of transport options to be considered and assessed. I can assure you that this assessment will consider the needs of all those travelling into and around Hereford to ensure equal access for disabled people getting around in Hereford. New electric bus fleets will address accessibility issues that we have with older vehicles which are still in operation by some providers, when new service contracts are awarded.

Supplementary Question:

Has the council a designated Access Officer tasked with ensuring an inclusive approach to planning the physical environment, including transport, and will proactive consultation be undertaken with organisations of and for disabled people in the course of the review?

Cabinet Member response:

There is not a designated officer at the council but a member of staff was tasked with extending inclusive access. It was confirmed that there would be proactive engagement with those organisations referred to in the question.

PQ 15	Ms Setterfield, Hereford	The Corporate Plan states on page 20 "Our schools enable our young people to achieve and excel intellectually, physically and socially, and prepare them to do well once they move on to college, training or work. What is this council doing to promote more sustainable practices in schools?	Cabinet member environment, economy and skills
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Response:

Schools are required to follow the National Curriculum which allows for some flexibility in what is taught. As a result all schools help their pupils understand and engage in activities which are designed to build a deeper understanding of sustainable activities in a variety of ways. Academies have wider freedoms to choose the content of their curriculum. Recent guidance from both The Department for Education and Ofsted require a deeper and richer curriculum model than was the case in previous years. Many schools undertake such activity in science or other lessons and report high levels of interest by pupils and staff. There is however no prescribed content beyond good intent. Resources to develop this are emerging around the world and we are aware of the

national initiative produced in New Zealand where the government there has produced more detailed published content. We are seeking to access some of this to encourage schools to engage.

In addition to internal taught elements, our schools undertake a wide variety of activity beyond lessons. This includes eco clubs, forest school initiatives, green travel plans to get to school, awards and badges for engaging in sustainable activity. This is widespread and well developed and is well reported by Ofsted.

In order to support schools to become more sustainable, and to help deliver our commitment to become carbon neutral by 2030, we are currently supporting the development of new Zero Carbon Schools conference planned for July. As part of this we are also developing a new sustainability and carbon reduction resource pack to support our schools as they seek to improve their environmental performance and to reduce their carbon footprint.

In addition, the Council also offers free Bikeability training to all schools and has recently secured additional funding to continue supporting Hereford schools with our active travel in school programme in partnership with Sustrans.

It remains the case however that there is always the opportunity to do more. Schools are in general receptive to this. We are also looking again at the transition from school to work, for all groups of students with a view to ensuring all school leavers have access to high quality training, employment or education. In the local context we are happy to work closely with our HE and FE colleges, both of whom offer courses and training specifically to address concerns about sustainable futures. This, together with the work already being encouraged in our schools forms a strong basis for future development. We are also seeking ways of ensuring our capital projects, including new school premises, have a strong sustainability strand.

Appendix 2 - Questions from members of the council

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
MQ 1	Councillor Roger Phillips, Arrow	Cllr Sebastian Bowen and myself have been working with officers from the Council, Balfour Beatty and West Mercia police for a considerable time on improving the safety of the Lawton`s cross junction between the A4110 and C1035 (the previous A44). Working in consultation with our Parish councils and communities we have identified a roundabout solution giving way priority to the left on all approaches. Can the Cabinet member reassure us and our communities that this remains a priority for the administration and in the emerging capital programme for 2020/21?	Cabinet member infrastructure and transport
<p>Response:</p> <p>The design of the scheme to improve safety at Lawton`s Cross junction remains a priority for delivery. We are concluding the detailed design and costing of the scheme which will be complete in the 2019/20 programme, delivery is included in the annual plan for early 2020/21.</p> <p>There is a section of hedge to be removed to improve visibility, this has been commissioned and will be carried out early in 2020 to avoid the impact to nesting birds and infringement of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.</p> <p>Balfour Beatty Living Places are currently awaiting the return of the tenders for the scheme, there will be the tender evaluation and mobilisation, it is anticipated the scheme will commence on site April / May 2020.</p> <p>The scheme traffic management plan and construction programme will be developed with the successful contractor, this will be communicated with the local members, parish councils and communities once agreed.</p>			
<p>Supplementary Question:</p> <p>Will the Cabinet Member join with local members to monitor the length and cost of the scheme?</p>			
<p>Cabinet Member response:</p> <p>Yes – the member could be assured this would happen.</p>			

MQ 2	Councillor Shaw, Bromyard Bringsty	In reply to my question at GSC on Jan 20 th the cabinet member responsible for the phosphate emergency in the Lugg suggested that the new homes bonus would, if necessary, be able to assist in bringing forward “appropriate measures”. I note that neither revenue nor capital proposals to address this issue have yet been specifically included in the budget. Councils in Hampshire, Wiltshire and Portsmouth have already designed and implemented measures following the warning letter from Natural England and are able to continue with their economic development. Given that this emergency is now seriously endangering the viability of local construction companies and their workforces and is stymying growth of all kind across North Herefordshire can this Council now stop dragging their feet and give firm dates for when this issue will be addressed and the ban lifted?	Cabinet member infrastructure and transport
<p>Response:</p> <p>The Nutrient Management Board met on 29 January, chaired by Cllr Swinglehurst, to whom I am exceptionally grateful to for all the hard work and expertise she is bringing to our efforts to address this issue as quickly as possible. This Board considered the report given by its Technical Advisory Group and agreed to a number of its proposals as to how phosphate levels in the Lugg catchment could either be reduced or offset. The budget proposals to be considered by Council today include funding to enable suitable proposals to be delivered– see para 13 p281 and again at para 1a on p359 of the meeting agenda pack.</p> <p>Subject to the budget proposals being approved today, I can assure you that the officers are and will continue to be working with the utmost speed and continue to work closely with partner agencies to overcome this moratorium as soon as possible. I can also assure you that the Herefordshire Construction Industry Lobby Group are being kept fully informed throughout the process, as I am conscious of the impact that this moratorium is having on local companies. This underlying issue of pollution is a historic issue and we are doing more to tackle that now and address the core causes than has ever been done before.</p>			
<p>Supplementary Question:</p> <p>Responsibility for the phosphate issue needed to be clarified with partner agencies including Welsh Water and the Environmental Agency. If the issue caused the council’s housing land supply to decrease to below three years what would the cabinet member say to parish councils and citizens when all neighbourhood development plans and our core strategy were rendered out of date, effectively voided, which could lead to predatory development in the south of the county?</p>			
<p>Cabinet Member response:</p>			

<p>The performance of the previous administration to address problems recorded by the nutrient management plan were questioned. The environmental agency (EA) was the responsible body. A group had been established to oversee the issue and correspondence had been sent to the EA recently to request detail of a timeline for the resolution of the issue. Integrated wetlands were being implemented and a briefing note would be shared with all members shortly.</p>			
MQ 3	Councillor Matthews, Credenhill	<p>Recently I chaired a public meeting at Marden regarding the possibility of the general use of 5G technology within the county. The Council Leader, Cabinet member commissioning, procurement and assets attended and a number of elected members. Evidence-based issues were raised about the impact of 5G usage on public health, because many leading scientists have expressed safety doubts. The Cabinet Member undertook to look into the matters raised, and report back; this was later confirmed by the leader.</p> <p>As of today, no response has been received, so can the Cabinet Member inform us of the outcome of her investigations, confirming the view of this administration with regard to the use of 5G within the county particularly in light of the ambition in the corporate plan to 'Strengthen communities to ensure that everyone lives well and safely together'.</p>	Cabinet member commissioning procurement and assets
<p>Response:</p> <p>Thank you for question on this matter and your continued efforts to ensure that this remains a priority for the administration.</p> <p>I apologise for the delay in providing back a report regarding this matter. As you are aware there is a wealth of evidence and information, including working with colleagues across the country, that we have to go through before coming to a point where a report is ready. In the meantime I am working with other members of the administration to look at other technological solutions that do not require 5g.</p> <p>I attach the latest briefing from public health for your information:</p> <p>Public Health England's (PHE's) Centre for Radiation, Chemical and Environmental Hazards (CRCE) takes the lead on public health matters associated with radiofrequency electromagnetic fields, or radio waves, used in telecommunications, including 5G. They have issued guidance which is based on published evidence.</p>			

Mobile telecommunications technology has developed through several generations and there are now many 2G, 4G base stations installed throughout the environment providing services to users of mobile phones and other devices. Over the decades since the networks were first introduced there has been a general trend towards increasing numbers of smaller transmitters that individually provide services to smaller geographical areas and which have reducing radiated powers.

Against this background, many measurements have been made and these continue to show that exposures of the general public to radio waves are well within the international health-related guideline levels that are used in the UK. These guidelines are from the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) and underpin health protection policies at UK and European levels.

In relation to the implementation of 5G user devices and networks, this technology is at an early stage and reflects the latest evolution in mobile communications technology. Current technical standards that draw on the ICNIRP guidelines will apply to the products that are developed and the UK network operators are already committed to complying with the ICNIRP guidelines. With the increase in the volume of information being transferred, more spectrum is being made available and the highest frequencies being discussed for future use by 5G are around ten times higher than those used by current network technologies, up to a few tens of GHz. Their use is not new, and they have been used for point-to-point microwave links and some other types of transmitters that have been present in the environment for many years. ICNIRP guidelines apply up to 300 GHz, well beyond the maximum (few tens of GHz) frequencies under discussion for 5G.

Exposure to radio waves is not new and health-related research has been conducted on this topic over several decades. In particular, a large amount of new scientific evidence has emerged over the past few years through dedicated national and international research programmes that have addressed concerns about rapidly proliferating wireless technologies.

The main focus of recent research studies has been on exposure to the types of radio signals used by current communications technologies and at the frequencies they use, up to a few GHz. Fewer studies have been carried out at higher frequencies but the biophysical mechanisms that govern the interaction between radio waves and body tissues are well understood at higher frequencies and are the basis of the present ICNIRP restrictions. The main change in using higher frequencies is that there is less penetration of radio waves into body tissues and absorption of the radio energy, and any consequent heating, becomes more confined to the body surface. It is possible that there may be a small increase in overall exposure to radio waves when 5G is added to an existing network or in a new area; however, the overall exposure is expected to remain low relative to guidelines and as such there should be no consequences for public health.

A summary of PHE advice on radio waves can be accessed in the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/electromagnetic-fields#radio-waves>

PHE advice on Base Stations including 5G can be found at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phone-base-stations-radio-waves-and-health>

PHE is committed to monitoring the evidence applicable to this and other radio technologies, and to revising its advice, should that be necessary.

Public Health will post reliable sources of information for the public on the council website.

Supplementary Question:

It was asked that the council continue to closely monitor the issue.

Cabinet Member response:

This was agreed.

MQ 4	Councillor Symonds, Ross East	In light of the fact that Balfour Beatty set and monitor their own performance measures within their Public Realm contract for Herefordshire, what assurance is the Cabinet Member able to offer residents that the BBLP contract represents good value for money?	Cabinet member commissioning procurement and assets
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Response:

Thank you for your question Cllr Symonds, it raises some really important points that the administration are currently dealing with. Achieving value for money in our contracts is essential not only for us to keep control of our budget but more importantly, reassuring the residents of Herefordshire that we are getting the very best for every penny that they pay into the council.

For clarification, BBLP do not set and monitor their own performance measures. Performance measures in the form of Operational and Strategic performance indicators are set by the Council to achieve our required outcomes. Performance against these is then monitored by the Council's own Public Realm contract management team on a monthly basis. The Cabinet member for Infrastructure and Transport and myself attend fortnightly meetings with the BBLP management and the council's contract team and we have just started attending the performance meetings.

In addition, the contract is "open book" which means that expenditure can be reviewed and scrutinised throughout the supply chain. All applications for payment are scrutinised in detail by the Contract Management team to assure value and correct spend against outputs. The team undertake regular service reviews to ensure that services being delivered are effective, equitable, economic and efficient.

As part of our initiatives to ensure that we are able to demonstrate Value for Money, we shall be reviewing our approach to the management of all contracts and specifically the BBLP contract. We shall ensure that scrutiny has an important part in that process.

Supplementary Question:

It was requested that the cabinet member commit to a timeline to commence the BBLP review.

Cabinet member response:

Six months would be a reasonable timeline to commence the review and a start date in September was seen as reasonable.

MQ 5	Councillor Milln, Central	Might I ask that ahead of expiry in May 2021 of any NJC-related award in respect of members allowances that an IRP (Independent Review Panel) examine also the system of expenses in view of the fact some are assumed to be covered by the allowance and some are separately claimable, a system which may be viewed as unfair to members with large rural wards and which does nothing to promote greener travel in line with our climate emergency declaration.	Leader
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Response:

An independent remuneration panel will be convened following a decision by Council in October 2020 on the future governance model. As part of the IRP's consideration, they will be asked to look at the basic allowance which all councillors receive and the special responsibility allowances. As part of the work on the basic allowance, the panel will be asked to consider what the basic allowance does and does not cover.

Council in May 2021 will need to take into account the views of the IRP and make a decision on the councillor allowance scheme to be adopted as from May 2021.

Supplementary Question:

How might the members' allowance scheme be amended to encourage members to make the shift to sustainable forms of transport and set the example?

Response (*monitoring officer*):

The Independent Remuneration Panel would consider feedback from members and conduct focus groups to consider the members' allowance scheme when it was next convened.

