

**Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held at The Conference Room, Herefordshire Council Offices, Plough Lane, Hereford, HR4 0LE on Thursday 28 April 2022 at 2.30 pm**

**Cabinet Members Physically Present and voting:** Councillor David Hitchiner, Leader of the Council (Chairperson)  
Councillors Ellie Chowns, Pauline Crockett and Ange Tyler

**Cabinet Members in remote attendance** Councillors Gemma Davies, John Harrington and Diana Toynbee  
*Cabinet members attending the meeting remotely, e.g. through video conferencing facilities, may not vote on any decisions taken.*

Group leaders / representatives in attendance Councillors Jonathan Lester, Bob Matthews, Toni Fagan and William Wilding

Scrutiny chairpersons in attendance Councillors Jonathan Lester and Phillip Howells

Officers in attendance: Chief Executive, Director of resources and assurance, Director of Public Health, Interim head of legal services, Corporate Director - Economy and Environment and Head of environment, climate emergency and waste services

**105. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllr Liz Harvey.

**106. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**107. MINUTES**

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

**108. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Pages 5 - 8)**

Questions received and responses given are attached as appendix 1 to the minutes.

**109. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS (Pages 9 - 10)**

Questions received and responses given are attached as appendix 2 to the minutes.

**110. CITIZENS CLIMATE ASSEMBLY NEXT STEPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The cabinet member environment and economy introduced the report and highlighted the key points. The proposals in the report originated from a range of sources, including the recommendations made by the climate assembly, the existing climate and nature related work at the council and the Nature Strategy. The cabinet member thanked members of the climate assembly and officers for their time and effort in pulling together the information.

Cabinet members discussed the recommendations and proposed projects. Key points were noted as:

- The recent increases in the cost of energy had focussed attention on energy efficiency;
- The projects would have social value and support community wellbeing as well as deliver benefits for the environment;
- Some of the climate assembly recommendations were very ambitious, such as the shift of public transport off fossil fuels, and the council recognised that it might not be able to meet the suggested deadlines but would look at ways to make the transition;
- Skills development was an important element to ensure the local workforce could support future projects;
- The process of the assembly had been useful and interesting and was a demonstration of the council listening and engaging with the community;
- The stop-start nature of government funding was a challenge in delivering projects of this nature;
- The council would continue to lobby central government to take the long term decisions required to address the climate and nature emergency.

The next steps were noted. Officers would produce full business cases for the projects identified as top priorities and in doing so flag those that could not be taken forward. If high priority projects were not able to progress, officers would consult with relevant cabinet members and lower priority projects would be considered in their place. Implementation would take 2 – 4 years.

Group leaders provided the views and queries of their groups. It was noted that:

- The home efficiency grant would be in addition to the work already being done by Keep Herefordshire Warm and there was a dedicated communications resource for climate work to help promote activities and initiatives;
- The amounts suggested against each project were indicative and would be refined through the full business cases;
- The council's focus with regard to tree planting would be on co-ordinating activity, for example working with land owners to identify land that could be planted;
- Strong project and contract management was needed, all projects would be managed by the project management office and the outcomes measured through mechanisms such as the delivery strategy and carbon management plan;
- It was important to respond to the consultation on the local plan to identify the types of development that should be brought forward;
- The council was engaging with local businesses in its response to the climate emergency, including encouraging businesses to make changes that would save on their bottom line while also reducing their environmental impact;
- The funding allocated to support these projects came from additional monies from the government but more support and leadership was needed;
- The council would continue to link up with national and international climate strategy initiatives such as cycle to work week.

The leader of the council summarised the discussion. He highlighted that the whole Council had supported the declaration of a climate emergency and the setting up of the citizens' assembly. The actions proposed would have long term impacts and returns may take decades to show. Value for money in this context would have been demonstrated over a very long period of time.

**It was resolved that cabinet:**

- a) **Approve the development of business cases as required for the priority projects listed in Appendix 2;**
- b) **Delegate authority to Corporate Director, Economy and Environment, subject to consultation with relevant Cabinet Members and the s151 officer to:**
  - a. **approve viable projects within an overall budget of £1.33million;**

- b. bring forward business cases for the lower priority projects in appendix 2 should the priority projects prove unviable; and**
- c) Delegate authority to Corporate Director, Economy and Environment, for all operational decisions to deliver the projects following approval of the business cases.**

The meeting ended at 3.47 pm

**Chairperson**



**PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO CABINET – 28 APRIL 2022****Question 1**

**From: Ms S Watkins, Hereford**  
**To: cabinet member, infrastructure and transport**

Although some progress has been made and the Beryl bikes are extremely popular, what will be done to make cycling safer in the city? I live on Kings Acre Road and this route into Hereford is not safe for cyclists. I have experienced many near misses. If I cycle from my house (near Blue Diamond) to the city centre, none of those roads are cycle friendly, culminating in the large roundabout by Tesco. The cycle track from Stretton Sugwas towards the city is fantastic and well used - we need more of these type of cycle tracks to encourage more cycling and less car use.

**Response**

Thank you very much for your positive comments about the Beryl scheme and I am glad we were able to extend the service after a competitive tender and also that we will soon see more electric bikes, which have been extremely popular, coming into the bays. We are also in the early stages of looking at providing some cargo bikes so people can do their shopping on a Beryl. Beryl tells us, in no short measure due to the support provided by Pedicargo, that their Hereford scheme, although smaller than some, is one of the most successful and well used and are full of praise for the residents of Herefordshire who have taken the scheme to their heart.

Regards current cycle path/route provision, you are right, we simply do not have enough good quality cycle routes in and around the City. And what previous administrations, through different schemes, have provided in the past has not been good enough, particularly in relation to the practice of installing non-segregated cycle lanes, using the shared pavement approach instead and also accepting schemes that gave up when it came to designing safe pathways through junctions. The political focus in the past has been on very large road projects and serious efforts to make Hereford a safe and efficient cycling and walking City has not been pursued with the same vigour (although I must also give credit to the previous Conservative administration for overseeing the introduction of the Beryl scheme).

This Council is strongly committed to improving and extending all active travel options and through the development of our ambitious new Hereford City Masterplan we are looking to improve and design new schemes that make it much easier and safer to travel by bike, foot or bus.

Here our ambition is to sensibly and expediently design as many segregated – and crucially, connected - routes as possible and to also highlight and improve the ‘safe routes’ that currently exist and go through some of our quieter side streets and roads. We are also looking at slow speed/20mph zones in parts or the whole of the City to enable a safer more friendly road environment where roads must be shared by cyclists and motorists. As always, this is about balance, we need those that use cars through choice or need to still be able to do so but rebalance some of that space and treat cyclists and pedestrians with parity.

This will require a mind-set change in motorists and complementary measures will be introduced to aid that change. Hereford will - in the short to medium term – have a new

safe properly connected network for cycling separate from cars and segregated from pedestrians. This will include the key transport corridors such as the A438 Kings Acre Road and the junctions which we know present real problems for cyclist and pedestrians such as the Whitecross roundabout. The new route designs will be following the latest government guidance set out in Local Transport Note 1:20 and outlined in the government's Gear Change Strategy.

This is supported by the latest research which shows that improved walking and cycling options with reduced traffic creates more attractive, healthier and safer spaces for people and families to shop and spend their leisure time.

In addition to developing new dedicated cycle routes we also offer a range of free support including our adult cycle training sessions, Bikeability and road safety training, school travel plan support, Park and Choose sites and business advice through our Travel for Work Network.

## **Question 2**

**From: Dr N Geeson**

**To: cabinet member, environment and economy**

First, many congratulations on this list of so many excellent Recommendations and a great Action Plan from the Citizens Climate Assembly. With regard to Protecting and Enhancing Nature we see there will be a focus on collecting evidence more widely. There may be local knowledge from local residents about wildlife, waterways, flood risk, soil properties, etc. that could add to this evidence. Could there be a specific mechanism to help collect local knowledge so that it can be shared and used easily?

## **Response**

Thank you for your positive comments on the action plan which was developed by bringing together the excellent work from the Citizens Assembly, a review of national best practice, existing activity, the countywide climate & nature action plan and officer recommendations.

Working in partnership is absolutely essential to addressing the climate and ecological emergency and I completely agree that we need to bring together all of our collective knowledge. The mechanism for this will be through the development of the new Nature Recovery Strategy and Nature Recovery Mapping which will bring together, update and

improve all the available datasets available in the county. This will be developed in partnership and will include a consultation process to collate this.

In addition I would also encourage residents to submit any local wildlife data to the Herefordshire Biological Records Centre which collects and collates data about species, designated sites and habitats for the county.

### **Supplementary question**

I thank the Cabinet Member for Environment and Economy very much for her positive answer. I would like to know how we can be informed about the new Nature Recovery Strategy and Nature Recovery Mapping as these develop further.

### **Response**

The cabinet member explained that guidance from the government was still coming through so it was not possible at this time to say what public engagement would take place or when but it was essential that local people were involved. She gave an assurance that public engagement would take place and that she would follow up on this with officers and make a further statement in due course.



**COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS TO CABINET – 28 APRIL 2022****Question 1****From: Cllr Shaw, Bromyard Bringsty ward****To: cabinet member, commissioning, procurement and assets**

Does the Cabinet member responsible agree with the Environment Minister Jo Churchill when she says:

“When it comes to fly-tipping, enough is enough. These appalling incidents cost us £392 million a year and it is time to put a stop to them.

I want to make sure that recycling and the correct disposal of rubbish is free, accessible and easy for householders. No one should be tempted to fly tip or turn to waste criminals and rogue operators.”

Is the Cabinet member pleased that households will no longer have to pay to get rid of DIY waste under plans set out by government to change the rules that currently allows some Local Authorities to charge for DIY waste from households. Under the proposals, household DIYers would not be charged to get rid of waste including plasterboards, bricks and bath units.

**Response**

I strongly agree that enough is enough and that we need to put a stop to fly-tipping which is an irresponsible and illegal activity that costs the taxpayer and causes significant environmental harm.

Here our trading standards team are working closely with the Police Crime Commissioners on a new project to further reduce fly-tipping in the county.

The disposal of any waste costs money and there is a long held principle that the polluter should pay for this. As you may be aware we have a new savings target about the policy choice regarding the cost of disposing non-household waste such as soil, rubble and DIY waste and whether this should be met from general council tax or a specific charge so that the producer pays. To be clear, the consultation outlines the criteria where DIY waste will be acceptable and includes it not being more than 300 litres, so no more than an average car boot load and not delivered to an HRC more frequently than once per week. Currently we do not have these restrictions in place but fly tipping is still an occurrence, indicating that those carrying out the fly-tipping do so because the waste has resulted from a commercial activity for which the HRCs cannot be used to dispose of this waste.

One thing we are very clear about is that the cost of disposal is not an excuse for law breaking and damaging the environment. I'm unclear on your question somewhat as it

infers to me that there is a suggestion that we should provide a free service subsidised by the council tax payer because people might break the law?

### **Supplementary question**

I thank the Cabinet member for her answer.

Page 10 of Appendix A of the Medium Term Financial Strategy as published in February details £345,000 of income in 2024/25 from introducing charges for household DIY waste at Herefordshire's household waste centres.

At the time that this was announced members including myself were concerned that this would lead to more fly-tipping and suggested that enforcement would need additional resources if our country side was not to be blighted. Arguably Herefordshire residents are already paying to dispose of their household waste, the introduction of such charges for home projects would suggest that this administration intends that they should pay twice.

Will the cabinet member explain how they now intend to meet the £345,000 annual black hole in the MTFS as the authority is now likely to be prevented by legislation from making these charges?

### **Response**

The cabinet member explained that the response to the original questions made clear this was a proposal being worked up and that it was not yet certain that this legislation would be approved. A detailed written response would be provided.

*The following response was provided after the meeting.*

Whilst the current government consultation proposes that local authorities do not charge for DIY waste, it is important to note that this is still under consultation, has not been confirmed and that numerous local authorities already make a charge for this.

We will closely monitor the outcome of the consultation whilst we further develop this proposal, and if this is not possible then alternative saving proposals for 2024/25 will be considered.