

CALL-IN OF CABINET DECISION ON ROTHERWAS ARCHAEOLOGY: OPTIONS FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE RIBBON AND COMPLETION OF THE ROTHERWAS ACCESS ROAD

Report By: Director of Corporate and Customer Services

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To consider the Cabinet decision on the preservation of the Rotherwas Ribbon and completion of the Rotherwas Access Road which has been called in by three Members of the Committee: Councillors M.D. Lloyd-Hayes, AT Oliver, and MAF Hubbard.

Reason For Call-In

2. In accordance with Standing Order 7.3.1 and the Scrutiny Committee Rules set out at Appendix 2 of the Constitution, the Cabinet's decision on 6th September, 2007 on this issue has been called in for consideration by this Committee.
3. The stated reasons for the call-in are:
 - The Report and Cabinet decision do not give sufficient consideration to the implications that arise if English Heritage decide to Schedule the Site early next year.
 - The Report and Cabinet decision fail to give sufficient consideration to the timescale by which the extent of the find could be established. This would allow more precise consideration of the practicality and cost of diverting the Road to the North or South.
 - The Cabinet Member for Environment has taken it upon himself to evaluate the potential cultural, scientific, educational and Visitor potential of the Archaeology. If the Community Services Scrutiny Committee do not call it in it will fall to the Environment Scrutiny Committee to probe the extremely limited and only anecdotally supported considerations of this crucial area of concern.
 - The Report and Cabinet decision give no consideration to the possibility of funding from national and international bodies that would enable various options to be exercised without disproportionate cost to the County.
 - The Environment Scrutiny Committee is meant to scrutinise PROCESS as well as POLICY. There is a great deal of public concern (and concern by Members) about the whole way this matter has been handled. Both Councillor Matthews and Councillor Edwards addressed this point eloquently at the Cabinet meeting.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Michael Hainge, Director of Environment on 01432 260041

The failure to produce the Peer Review of procedures in time (commented on by Cllr Phillips) is only the latest example in a long history of concerns.

- A large part of the public of Herefordshire will find it incredible if such a major decision does not receive attention from Environment Scrutiny Committee which is meant to safeguard them from unsatisfactory and inadequate decisions.
4. The draft decision notice (Ref No: 2007.CAB.070KEY), together with the report to Cabinet on 6 September are appended to the report.
 5. It is for the Committee to decide whether it wishes to accept the decision of Cabinet or to refer the decision back to Cabinet for further consideration and if so what recommendations to Cabinet it wishes to make.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None