

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

**PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: ENVIRONMENT AND STRATEGIC  
HOUSING**

**CABINET**

**25TH OCTOBER, 2007**

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## **Wards Affected**

All wards

## **Purpose**

For Cabinet to consider the recommendations made by the Environment Scrutiny Committee in relation to the call in of the Key Decision on the preservation of the Rotherwas Ribbon and completion of the Rotherwas Access Road.

## **Key Decision**

This is a Key Decision because it is likely to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in Herefordshire in an area comprising one or more wards.

It was not included in the Forward Plan however inclusion in the agenda gives the required notice in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) Regulations 2000.

## **Recommendation**

**THAT the recommendations of the Environment Scrutiny Committee considering the options for the preservation of the Ribbon and completion of the Rotherwas Access Road be considered for adoption.**

## **Reasons**

Following the call-in of the decision made by Cabinet at its meeting on 6th September 2007 the Environment Scrutiny Committee made the following recommendations:

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the decision taken by Cabinet on 6th September 2007 with regard to proceeding with option F for the completion of the Rotherwas Access Road be endorsed;
- 2) While endorsing this decision the Committee notes that there might have been instances when information flow within the Council fell short of that normally expected. Cabinet is recommended to set in place work to address this for the future during the pre-election period and immediately following elections.
- 3) the County Archaeologist be congratulated on the universally acknowledged

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

standards and quality of his work on the ribbon thus far. We sincerely hope he will be able to lead further researches either side of the present find in due course.

- 4) We urge Cabinet to continue to seek funding for further research into the ribbon including a tourism scoping report when appropriate.

## Considerations

1. In accordance with Standing Order 7.3.1 and the Scrutiny Committee Rules set out at Appendix 2 of the Constitution, Cabinet's decision on 6th September 2007 was called in by three Councillor (Councillors: MD Lloyd-Hayes, AT Oliver and MAF Hubbard) for consideration by the Environment Scrutiny Committee.
2. The Environment Scrutiny Committee met on 24th September 2007 to consider the call-in.
3. The grounds for the call-in were as follows:
  - 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. 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. Copies of correspondence received by the Committee have been issued to Members of Cabinet.

## Financial Implications

There are no further financial implications other than those outlined in the Cabinet report of 6th September, 2007.

## **Risk Management**

The risk management is set out in the Cabinet report of 6th September, 2007. Accordingly there is no separate consideration of risk management in this report.

## **Alternative Options**

Cabinet could choose not to adopt any of the Scrutiny Committee's recommendations.

## **Consultees**

Environment Scrutiny Committee 24th September, 2007.

## **Appendices**

Not applicable.

## **Background Papers**

- None identified.