

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 5 FEBRUARY 2010**Question from Mr N Jones, Hereford.**

- 1.1 *We are told that the Council's bi-monthly publication Herefordshire Matters is distributed to 80,000 households across the county. What is the gross annual cost of this operation: that is to say, a total which includes staff time, editorial and photography costs, design and production, printing and distribution, but which excludes any advertising revenues earned?*

Answer from Councillor JP French Cabinet Member Corporate and Customer Services and Human Resources.

- 1.1 Herefordshire Council is required to communicate information on services and how to access them to local residents, as well as information on decisions or programmes that may affect them, especially those who may be disadvantaged through poor health or poverty. The council budgets for £12,500 per edition of Herefordshire Matters and if six editions are published and distributed to over 80,000 households and locations in a year, the gross annual cost to the Council is £75,000. Distribution is the highest cost element. Content is contributed by staff in a wide range of service areas but advertising revenue of around £30,000 a year does offset the overall cost.

In successive readership surveys, evaluation shows that 73 per cent of residents receiving Herefordshire Matters read all or most of it, with 24 per cent reading a few articles.

The publication also scored high marks for content, with 95 per cent of respondents finding articles interesting, 93 per cent feeling that it covers important issues for them. The format has also been designed in consultation with disability groups, who are positive about the design, layout and print size.

Supplementary question

Will the Cabinet consider an open access publication policy for the public to read wider views?

Answer from Councillor JP French Cabinet Member Corporate and Customer Services and Human Resources.

The comments were noted and it was stated that the written answer provided was sufficient.

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Question from Mr P McKay, Leominster.

2.1 *May I please ask if the anticipated Council budget savings, resulting from the AMEY contract, would be expected to cover the cost of the below being put online:*

- *Combined Definitive Map and County Road Map (Road map may be viewed online at Garrick House).*
- *List of long term obstructions to be resolved.*
- *List of anomalies to be resolved.*
- *History of definitive map (as being presented by Amey to Herefordshire Local Access Forum on 3 February).*
- *History of county road map.*
- *List of the 90 miles (144km) of unsurfaced county roads as mentioned in the Right of Way Improvement Plan).*
- *Definitive map modification order procedure and application forms.*
- *Definitive map modification order research guidance notes.*
- *Definitive map modification order statement of priorities.*
- *Definitive map modification order schedule of applications (this is online but not up to regulation specification).*
- *County road map modification procedure and application forms.*
- *County road map modification research guidance notes.*
- *County road map modification schedule of applications*
- *Landowner dedication procedure, enabling agreed routes to be registered with less confrontation than may otherwise apply.*
- *Structures on paths, BS5709 2006 explained (as referenced by Defra to be found at www.pittecrofttrust.org.uk)*
- *Parish council procedure guidelines for removal obstructions and recording of routes under Highway Act 1980 section 130(6) procedures.*
- *Rights of way improvement plan 2007-2011.*
- *Unsurfaced county road improvement plan (for including in above ROWIP when updated in 2011).*
- *Herefordshire Local Access Forum table of advice.*

Answer from Councillor Brian Wilcox Cabinet Member Highways and Transportation

2.1 As has previously been explained to Mr McKay, the efficiency savings that have been achieved as a result of the Service Delivery Review of the Amey contracts are necessary to balance the Council's overall budgets and funds are not available to increase investment in Public Rights of Way services. However, following the transfer of Public Rights of Way services to Amey Herefordshire on 1 September 2009, work is underway to take forward and improve the service within currently available resources. Indeed, Amey's Public Rights of Way team has already begun a comprehensive review of the currently published web pages with a view to expanding and improving the information readily available to the public online. Some of the items listed are already published on the Council's website, such as the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and the Definitive Map Modification Order Statement of Priorities. The other items listed will all be considered as part of this review. Whether all the specific items will be included will be dependent on whether the item is of sufficient interest to the public, the accuracy and integrity of the data source and the technological and other resource implications of the development work needed to publish online. The Council will be monitoring this review to ensure that as much appropriate information as reasonably possible is made accessible in this way.

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Supplementary question

Would the information be made available to parish and town councils to enable them to check the highways records in the most cost effective method?

Answer from Councillor Brian Wilcox Cabinet Member Highways and Transportation

Assurance was provided that the information would be provided on-line for all to access. Information would also be available to the Open Access Forums and the Parish Councils.