

MEMBER QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 28 September 2012

Question from Councillor GA Powell of Councillor JG Jarvis, Leader of the Council

Cattle Market

- 1 I have been charged by shop owners and their staff in Hereford city to put the following question to council.

As the former Cattle Market site in Hereford has now been unoccupied for some considerable time, would the cabinet consider allowing the public to park on part of the site providing much needed car parking capacity in Hereford city centre until its development is ready to commence bearing in mind that part of Garrick House car park is under repair?

Answer from Councillor JG Jarvis, Leader of the Council

Answer to question 1

Thank you for bringing this question forward on behalf of shop owners and their staff. There is no evidence of a lack of car parking capacity in Hereford city. However, we will bear this request in mind. I intend to provide a verbal update to this question at the Council meeting.

Question from Councillor GA Powell of Councillor GJ Powell, Cabinet Member Education and Infrastructure

Traffic Lights at ASDA

- 2 *On the weekend of 15 September the traffic lights at ASDA in South Wye failed, this enabled the traffic to flow freely, and everyone took their turn. I ask Herefordshire Council and the Highways Agency to turn these lights off for a trial period of three months with the hope that they will remain permanently turned off after this time.*

Answer from Councillor GJ Powell, Cabinet Member Education and Infrastructure

Answer to question 2

I am aware of this incident and have received several reports as a result of which I will make representations to the Highways Agency, as the responsible body for this matter.

I would also like to point out that the traffic lights do aid pedestrians and other vulnerable road users who often lose out as traffic dominates. In addition there is the access to side roads and the ASDA store which needs to be taken into account as well.

Supplementary Question

Would the Cabinet Member ensure that pedestrian concerns are taken forward as a matter of urgency.

Cabinet Member Response

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Yes, this had been noted in the written response. There was also a need to be aware of traffic movement in the side roads for pedestrians.

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Question from Councillor PJ Edwards of Councillor GJ Powell, Cabinet Member Education and Infrastructure

Sustainable Travel Funding

- 3 *Please advise why Ward Councillors were not formally informed of the Broad Street Sustainable Travel funded scheme being delayed / cancelled as reported in the Hereford Journal & will consideration now be given to making the River Wye Tow Path more safe & user friendly to encourage more environmental forms of travel in and out of the City?*

Answer from Councillor GJ Powell, Cabinet Member Education and Infrastructure

Answer to question 3

The Central ward Member was made aware of our proposals; a decision on the best use of this funding to support sustainable travel has yet to be taken and I will of course liaise with the relevant ward members in reaching that decision.

Supplementary Question

I was seeking to ensure better communications between Cabinet Members and the whole Council. I understand the Broad Street Plans are on hold.

Cabinet Member Response

Regarding the spend to date, when the consultation was carried out the results of those in favour and those opposed were even. What has been done is to simply defer the scheme. What has been spent on administration is approximately £200k. The work is still valid and when the scheme is revisited the work that has been done to date will be used.

MEMBER QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 28 September 2012**Question from Councillor DW Greenow of Councillor PM Morgan, Cabinet Member Health and Wellbeing****Animal Health & Welfare**

- 4 Since the foot and mouth outbreak in the country animal health has vastly improved in the livestock industry thanks to more stringent policing by the animal health department.

We have in Hereford a dedicated group who have built up a valuable store of information across the County of Herefordshire and this is used to maintain the high standards that we currently have in this Country which enables a strong export market for our livestock. Our livestock market in Hereford is thriving and expanding and the standards are very high. This is due to the efforts of our auctioneers but also the animal health staff who keep an astute eye on the welfare of all animals in the market thus ensuring buyers of the high quality of the livestock.

It is rumoured that this department is to be shut down and the work taken over by officers from Worcestershire and Warwickshire Councils. If this were to be true I am concerned that Herefordshire will lose valuable knowledge and experience.

Can you confirm that this will not happen and that we will retain this extremely valuable service thus maintaining our high standards which I believe is significantly higher than most counties?

Answer from Councillor PM Morgan, Cabinet Member Health and Wellbeing

Answer to question 4

It is good to know that the excellent work undertaken by Herefordshire Council's Animal Health & Welfare (AH & W) team which are part of its Environmental Health & Trading Standards Service (EH&TS) is recognised and appreciated by market users and constituents of Herefordshire and beyond. It is also excellent news that the livestock market goes from strength to strength.

I am happy to state that any rumours currently circulating about the immediate future of the AH & W team are unfounded.

Council will be aware however, that all services will be subject of an on-going review through the Rising To The Challenge (RTTC) process. EH&TS including AH & W are part of this process and are currently involved in the wider service review entitled Housing, Economic and Regulatory Services (HERS.) Part of that process is to examine each and every activity we currently perform and to determine whether it should stop, continue unaltered or change in order to ensure that the Council's key priorities and outcomes will be delivered. This work will be complete in the Spring.

MEMBER QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 28 September 2012**Question from Councillor WLS Bowen of Councillor RB Hamilton, Cabinet Member Environment, Housing and Planning****Affordable Housing**

- 5 *How many planning applications for houses and flats are live but not built?*
- *What can be done to encourage the building of these houses and flats?*
 - Bullet point disallowed – Constitution 4.1.15.4 c: the answer to the question will be substantially the same as the previous answer. See public question 3.
 - *How many applicants for affordable housing on the Home Point register have defined and definite links to Herefordshire?*

Answer from Councillor RB Hamilton, Cabinet Member Environment, Housing and Planning

Answer to question 5

As of April 2011 (the latest published Annual Monitoring Study) there were outstanding planning permissions for 2057 dwellings (1671 were not started and 386 were under construction).

- Once planning permission is granted the planning system can do little to ensure the permission is commenced. However should the developer so request further advice can be given with respect to the possible revision/amendment to the detail and form of any approved scheme. Having said that, I understand the issues and will have a look at what, if anything, could be done to improve the situation. I will be very pleased to hear any ideas or suggestions that the Councillor or other Members may wish to make.
- The Council's current policy in the Unitary Development Plan and Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Guidance in respect of the provision of affordable and market housing is unchanged. The Core Strategy will include planning policies which will require that an appropriate proportion of affordable dwellings are provided, based upon evidence of housing need and economic viability.
- Of the total of 4,893 applicants registered with Home Point at the end of September, 4511 had defined and definite links to Herefordshire.

Supplementary Question

Is the Cabinet Member aware that if changes are made this could make affordable housing in Herefordshire null and void.

Cabinet Member Response

Yes the Cabinet Member was aware and will need to take this into account for any future plans.

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Question from Councillor WLS Bowen of Councillor PD Price, Cabinet Member Corporate Services

Finance – Hoople Ltd and The Council

6 *Can we be assured that the Council and Hoople Ltd have actually made genuine savings rather than made costly investments, which appear to save the Council money but in reality may have cost us dear?*

- *Can the various transactions be clearly defined and explained?*

Answer from Councillor PD Price, Cabinet Member Corporate Services

Answer to question 6

The Council has assured the savings from the arrangement with Hoople Ltd and built these into the agreed budget over the last two years.

In 2011/12 the savings reduced from the contract totalled £467k, whilst in 2012/13 a further saving of £413k were delivered (fully compliant with the approved business case).

In addition savings have also been delivered to our health partners - £152k in 2011-12 and £16k in 2012-13.

To deliver the recurrent savings one off staff redundancy costs of £82,633 were incurred by the Council.

The savings form part of the base budget and can be identified in the service level agreements being delivered by Hoople Ltd.

MEMBER QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 28 September 2012**Question from Councillor MAF Hubbard of Councillor RB Hamilton, Cabinet Member Environment, Housing and Planning****Flooding**

- 7 On Monday 24 September, the Merton Meadow car park was flooded. This, despite spending several million of public money on a flood alleviation scheme in mitigation. Please would the Cabinet Member explain:
- *Why the flooding occurred so soon after the flood alleviation scheme has been completed?*
 - *What are the implications for gaining Environment Agency permission for the housing that is planned for the site?*
 - *How will this affect future insurability of any housing that is developed on this site?*

Answer from Councillor RB Hamilton, Cabinet Member Environment, Housing and Planning

Answer to question 7

I would begin by pointing out that the Yazor Brook Flood Alleviation Scheme has operated four times successfully since its completion and that the scheme was designed to prevent the Yazor Brook from overflowing.

Although the flood alleviation scheme at Credenhill operated as planned during Sunday and Monday of this week some flooding did occur in Merton Meadow car park during this time. This does not represent a failure of the flood alleviation scheme – as it operated as envisaged during this flood event and prevented more severe flooding to houses and businesses west of Edgar Street and in the ESG area in Hereford.

The Yazor Brook Flood Alleviation Scheme at Credenhill has enabled Hereford Futures to bring forward plans for the delivery of an Urban Village housing and other development in the vicinity of Merton Meadow. It has always been known that any scheme on the Merton Meadow will need to include flood storage capacity. This means that detailed plans arising from any planning application will need to ensure that appropriate on site flood mitigation measures are in place to ensure that any new properties are flood free. This would be a factor that insurance companies would no doubt take into account when assessing risk and Hereford Futures has been in discussions with the insurance industry over several years in order to plan for this.

Work continues through Hereford Futures to develop the detailed proposals for development in the area in consultation with Welsh Water and the Environment Agency.

The Council will consider this issue carefully as the development comes forward and through the planning application process.