

Question from Councillor DC Taylor

Parish precepts

- 1 *Please can I be advised of the names and the number of Parish Councils that are increasing their precept for 2013/14 and also of those Parish Councils whereby the precept is to remain the same or is reducing in 2013/14.*

Answer from Councillor AW Johnson, Cabinet Member Financial Management

Answer to question 1

The table below identifies those 68 local councils that have increased their precepts, those 64 that have remained static, and those 8 that have decreased their precept together with the level of change for each.

It should be emphasised that through the use of local precepts local councils are able to help meet the needs of their communities, supporting much valued local facilities and services.

| Parish Council Meeting | Precept required 2013/14 | Last year's precept (2012/13) | Increase |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------------|----------|
| Increased Precept | | | |
| Abbeydore & Bacton Group Parish Council | £7,200 | £4,750 | 51.58% |
| Aconbury Parish Meeting | £120 | £100 | 20.00% |
| Allensmore Parish Council | £2,000 | £1,500 | 33.33% |
| Almeley Parish Council | £7,500 | £7,250 | 3.45% |
| Aston Ingham Parish Council | £2,500 | £2,200 | 13.64% |
| Aymestrey Parish Council | £2,876 | £2,739 | 5.00% |
| Bartestree & Lugwardine Group Parish Council | £23,700 | £23,000 | 3.04% |
| Belmont Rural Parish Council | £50,000 | £45,000 | 11.11% |
| Bishop's Frome Parish Council | £22,000 | £20,000 | 10.00% |
| Bodenham Parish Council | £9,945 | £9,780 | 1.69% |
| Bredenbury & District Group Parish Council | £5,360 | £4,250 | 26.12% |
| Breinton Parish Council | £8,200 | £7,020 | 16.81% |
| Brilley Parish Council | £4,750 | £4,000 | 18.75% |
| Bromyard & Winslow Town Council | £171,000 | £168,000 | 1.79% |
| Burghill Parish Council | £13,977 | £10,200 | 37.03% |
| Clehonger Parish Council | £12,000 | £11,000 | 9.09% |
| Colwall Parish Council | £58,010 | £56,873 | 2.00% |
| Malvern Hills Conservators (Colwall Parish Council) | £33,770 | £33,040 | 2.21% |
| Cradley Parish Council | £25,000 | £24,000 | 4.17% |
| Cusop Parish Council | £7,500 | £6,500 | 15.38% |
| Dinedor Parish Council | £5,800 | £5,600 | 3.57% |
| Dormington & Mordiford Group Parish Council | £12,945 | £10,945 | 18.27% |

| Parish Council Meeting | Precept required 2013/14 | Last year's precept (2012/13) | Increase |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------|----------|
| Dorstone Parish Council | £2,600 | £2,300 | 13.04% |
| Eardisley Group Parish Council | £8,700 | £7,700 | 12.99% |
| Eastnor & Donnington Parish Council | £3,600 | £3,500 | 2.86% |
| Fownhope Parish Council | £20,000 | £16,000 | 25.00% |
| Garway Parish Council | £10,574 | £4,724 | 123.84% |
| Holme Lacy Parish Council | £15,000 | £11,400 | 31.58% |
| Holmer & Shelwick Parish Council | £6,954 | £6,575 | 5.76% |
| Hope Mansell Parish Council | £1,450 | £1,000 | 45.00% |
| Hope under Dinmore Group Parish Council | £3,500 | £3,300 | 6.06% |
| Humber, Ford & Stoke Prior Group Parish Council | £3,850 | £3,500 | 10.00% |
| Kentchurch Parish Council | £6,500 | £5,400 | 20.37% |
| Kilpeck Group Parish Council | £10,750 | £7,750 | 38.71% |
| Kimbolton Parish Council | £5,500 | £5,000 | 10.00% |
| Kington Rural and Lower Harpton Group Parish Council | £4,000 | £2,200 | 81.82% |
| Kington Town Council | £64,000 | £60,900 | 5.09% |
| Kinnersley and District Group Parish Council | £3,200 | £3,000 | 6.67% |
| Lea Parish Council | £9,850 | £9,600 | 2.60% |
| Leominster Town Council | £241,098 | £229,011 | 5.28% |
| Llanwarne & District Group Parish Council | £2,000 | £1,400 | 42.86% |
| Lower Bullingham Parish Council | £18,817 | £10,639 | 76.87% |
| Luston Group Parish Council | £10,000 | £9,000 | 11.11% |
| Lyonshall Parish Council | £10,000 | £5,000 | 100.00% |
| Marstow Parish Council | £5,500 | £5,000 | 10.00% |
| Mathon Parish Council | £6,442 | £6,392 | 0.78% |
| Malvern Hills Conservators (Mathon) | £4,500 | £4,400 | 2.27% |
| Monkland and Stretford Parish Council | £3,500 | £2,900 | 20.69% |
| Moreton on Lugg Parish Council | £14,000 | £11,000 | 27.27% |
| Much Marcle Parish Council | £4,919 | £4,685 | 4.99% |
| Orcop Parish Council | £7,000 | £5,000 | 40.00% |
| Orleton Parish Council | £15,300 | £14,300 | 6.99% |
| Pencombe Group Parish Council | £8,500 | £6,500 | 30.77% |
| Pixley & District Parish Council | £5,500 | £5,000 | 10.00% |
| Putley Parish Council | £5,000 | £4,500 | 11.11% |
| Pyons Group Parish Council | £6,195 | £5,895 | 5.09% |
| Richard's Castle (Herefordshire) Parish Council | £3,150 | £3,000 | 5.00% |
| Sellack Parish Council | £2,000 | £1,750 | 14.29% |
| Shobdon Parish Council | £13,900 | £9,950 | 39.70% |
| St. Weonards Parish Council | £3,630 | £3,300 | 10.00% |
| Staunton-on-Wye and District Group Parish Council | £2,675 | £2,500 | 7.00% |

| Parish Council Meeting | Precept required 2013/14 | Last year's precept (2012/13) | Increase |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------|----------|
| Stretton Sugwas Parish Council | £4,200 | £3,500 | 20.00% |
| Sutton Parish Council | £18,870 | £18,500 | 2.00% |
| Titley and District Group Parish Council | £4,336 | £3,921 | 10.58% |
| Upton Bishop Parish Council | £8,864 | £8,364 | 5.98% |
| Weston-under-Penyard Parish Council | £7,000 | £6,300 | 11.11% |
| Whitchurch & Ganarew Group Parish Council | £15,000 | £9,000 | 66.67% |
| Wyeside Group Parish Council | £6,500 | £4,200 | 54.76% |
| Static Precept | | | |
| Acton Beauchamp Group Parish Council | £2,800 | £2,800 | 0.00% |
| Ashperton Parish Council | £3,150 | £3,150 | 0.00% |
| Avenbury Parish Council | £3,500 | £3,500 | 0.00% |
| Ballingham, Bolstone & Hentland Group Parish Council | £4,000 | £4,000 | 0.00% |
| Birley with Upper Hill Parish Council | £2,000 | £2,000 | 0.00% |
| Bishopstone Group Parish Council | £4,174 | £4,174 | 0.00% |
| Border Group Parish Council | £7,500 | £7,500 | 0.00% |
| Bosbury and Coddington Parish Council | £10,000 | £10,000 | 0.00% |
| Brampton Abbots & Foy Group Parish Council | £2,000 | £2,000 | 0.00% |
| Bridstow Parish Council | £5,225 | £5,225 | 0.00% |
| Brimfield and Little Hereford Group Parish Council | £9,500 | £9,500 | 0.00% |
| Brockhampton with Much Fawley Parish Council | £3,600 | £3,600 | 0.00% |
| Callow & Haywood Group Parish Council | £5,500 | £5,500 | 0.00% |
| Clifford Parish Council | £4,000 | £4,000 | 0.00% |
| Credenhill Parish Council | £16,800 | £16,800 | 0.00% |
| Dilwyn Parish Council | £11,545 | £11,545 | 0.00% |
| Dinmore Parish Meeting | £0 | £0 | 0.00% |
| Eardisland Parish Council | £15,750 | £15,750 | 0.00% |
| Eaton Bishop Parish Council | £5,000 | £5,000 | 0.00% |
| Foxley Group Parish Council | £1,750 | £1,750 | 0.00% |
| Goodrich & Welsh Bicknor Group Parish Council | £5,600 | £5,600 | 0.00% |
| Hampton Bishop Parish Council | £10,000 | £10,000 | 0.00% |
| Hampton Charles Parish Meeting | £0 | £0 | 0.00% |
| Hatfield and District Group Parish Council | £2,500 | £2,500 | 0.00% |
| How Caple, Sollershope & Yatton Group Parish Council | £5,000 | £5,000 | 0.00% |
| Huntington Parish Council | £650 | £650 | 0.00% |
| Kingsland Parish Council | £10,000 | £10,000 | 0.00% |
| Kingstone & Thruxton Group Parish Council | £8,000 | £8,000 | 0.00% |
| Ledbury Town Council | £266,596 | £266,596 | 0.00% |
| Leintwardine Group Parish Council | £15,000 | £15,000 | 0.00% |
| Linton Parish Council | £6,000 | £6,000 | 0.00% |

| Parish Council Meeting | Precept required 2013/14 | Last year's precept (2012/13) | Increase |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------------|----------|
| Little Birch Parish Council | £2,700 | £2,700 | 0.00% |
| Little Dewchurch Parish Council | £7,500 | £7,500 | 0.00% |
| Llangarron Parish Council | £5,000 | £5,000 | 0.00% |
| Longtown Group Parish Council | £5,530 | £5,530 | 0.00% |
| Madley Parish Council | £9,000 | £9,000 | 0.00% |
| Marden Parish Council | £17,500 | £17,500 | 0.00% |
| Middleton-on-the-Hill and Leysters Group Parish Council | £3,500 | £3,500 | 0.00% |
| Much Birch Parish Council | £6,000 | £6,000 | 0.00% |
| Much Cowarne Group Parish Council | £3,600 | £3,600 | 0.00% |
| Much Dewchurch Parish Council | £3,500 | £3,500 | 0.00% |
| North Bromyard Group Parish Council | £4,000 | £4,000 | 0.00% |
| Ocle Pychard Parish Council | £2,850 | £2,850 | 0.00% |
| Pembridge Parish Council | £18,000 | £18,000 | 0.00% |
| Peterchurch Parish Council | £13,560 | £13,560 | 0.00% |
| Peterstow Parish Council | £3,500 | £3,500 | 0.00% |
| Pipe and Lyde Parish Council | £2,330 | £2,330 | 0.00% |
| Ross Rural Parish Council | £3,000 | £3,000 | 0.00% |
| Stapleton Group Parish Council | £5,000 | £5,000 | 0.00% |
| Stoke Edith Parish Meeting (Chairman) | £0 | £0 | 0.00% |
| Stoke Lacy Parish Council | £5,000 | £5,000 | 0.00% |
| Tarrington Parish Council | £10,000 | £10,000 | 0.00% |
| Thornbury Group Parish Council | £3,300 | £3,300 | 0.00% |
| Walford Parish Council | £16,000 | £16,000 | 0.00% |
| Wellington Parish Council | £21,500 | £21,500 | 0.00% |
| Wellington Heath Parish Council | £7,400 | £7,400 | 0.00% |
| Welsh Newton & Llanrothal Group Parish Council | £6,530 | £6,530 | 0.00% |
| Weobley Parish Council | £10,555 | £10,555 | 0.00% |
| Weston Beggard Parish Council | £1,000 | £1,000 | 0.00% |
| Whitbourne Parish Council | £9,000 | £9,000 | 0.00% |
| Withington Group Parish Council | £15,000 | £15,000 | 0.00% |
| Woolhope Parish Council | £5,150 | £5,150 | 0.00% |
| Yarkhill Parish Council | £4,000 | £4,000 | 0.00% |
| Yarpole Group Parish Council | £10,385 | £10,385 | 0.00% |
| Reduced Precept | | | |
| Brockhampton Group Parish Council | £8,000 | £8,885 | -9.96% |
| Ewyas Harold Group Parish Council | £16,590 | £16,651 | -0.37% |
| Hereford City Council | £724,960 | £734,960 | -1.36% |
| Kings Capse Parish Council | £6,680 | £6,688 | -0.12% |
| Ross on Wye Town Council | £196,500 | £200,000 | -1.75% |
| Stretton Grandison Group Parish Council | £1,750 | £2,000 | -12.50% |

| Parish Council Meeting | Precept required 2013/14 | Last year's precept (2012/13) | Increase |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------------|----------|
| Vowchurch & District Group Parish Council | £6,000 | £6,200 | -3.23% |
| Wigmore Group Parish Council | £15,000 | £17,000 | -11.76% |

Question from Councillor DC Taylor

Financial Hit on Schools

- 2 *With the recent settlement from the Department for Education and the reduction in 2013/14 budget, can the Cabinet Member advise how this is going to impact on all the schools in the County and is the Cabinet Member aware of any redundancies needing to be made within the teaching staff at County schools?*

Answer from Councillor GJ Powell, Cabinet Member Education and Infrastructure

Answer to question 2

The schools funding picture is an increasingly complicated one as the educational landscape changes in line with national policies. It is worth noting that the Department for Education retain £33m from Herefordshire's 2013/14 Dedicated Schools Grant to support academy schools, which receive their funding direct through the Education Funding Agency.

For locally maintained schools, the overall schools budget in 2013/14 will stay at the same level on a per pupil basis before the addition of the pupil premium, although the actual level of each school's individual budget will vary according to pupil numbers on roll at the school. From 1 April 2013 the government has introduced a new national schools funding formula which, were it to have full immediate effect, may have significant impact on some individual schools. To protect schools from significant budget reductions, the government's Minimum Funding Guarantee is in place to ensure no school sees more than a 1.5% reduction in per pupil funding in 2013/14 budgets (excluding sixth form funding) compared to the 2012/13 school budget and before the pupil premium is added.

In addition to this change, and as in previous years, changes in pupil numbers will vary from school to school and since 88% of school funding is pupil related, schools that lose pupils will lose funding and will need to adjust their staffing appropriately. The council provides advice and support to locally maintained schools to help manage any necessary reduction in staff, which may include reductions through natural wastage, voluntary reductions in hours and redundancies are only as a last resort. This process is currently in hand with a very small number of school governing bodies and the final outcome is unlikely to be known until after Easter.

The council has no responsibility for, and does not collect data in relation to, staff reductions in academy schools.

Question from Councillor DC Taylor

Potholes

- 3 *Due to the funding problem to repair the potholes in the roads of Herefordshire, could the Cabinet Member please advise me of the cost to the Council of insurance claims to repair vehicles that have been damaged as a result of inability to repair the roads.*

Answer from Councillor G J Powell, Cabinet Member Education and Infrastructure:

Answer to question 3

For incidents reported and registered between 1st April 2012 and 10th January 2013, there were 146 claims for pothole damage. Of these, 3 claims have been settled, 40 claims have been repudiated and 103 claims registered and are still being investigated. The cost of the three claims settled was £6,693.91; this figure includes one claim with an element of payment for personal injury in addition to vehicle damage.

Question from Councillor R I Matthews

Hereford Enterprise Zone Company

- 4 *I understand that it is the Council's intention to set up a company to oversee the management of the Hereford Enterprise Zone.*

Can Members be assured that if such arrangements are put in place, that from Day One the minutes of the Board's meetings are made public, and that we look at the possibility of a small, cross-party group being formed, with an agreement in place that they be briefed by the full board on a regular basis?

Answer from Councillor RJ Phillips, Cabinet Member Enterprise and Culture

Answer to question 4

From the first meeting of the newly formed Enterprise Zone Company minutes of Board meetings (subject to any commercially confidential elements) will be made publically available on the Enterprise Zone website.

It is vitally important that all Councillors are aware of progress being made on this project that will have a beneficial impact across the county; as I have done to date, I will continue to keep all 58 members briefed on progress through the usual member briefing channels.

I would also wish members to be aware that the Enterprise Zone has established an Enterprise Zone Stakeholder Group to assist transparency and local engagement in the project. Chaired by the local Ward Member this group brings together businesses from within Rotherwas, the local Parish Councils, and other interested parties in a forum which encourages feedback on proposals and shares information for further dissemination.

Supplementary Question

Will Cllr. R Phillips agree to meet with Group Leaders to further discuss the possibility of forming a small cross-party working group to be briefed by the Board on a regular basis?

Cabinet Member Written Response

"I will ensure all elected members of the council are updated as I have outlined but any Group Leaders or any members wanting more detail can contact me."

Question from Councillor FM Norman

Consultation on Herefordshire Local Plan

5 *If the Council's consultation process on the Core Strategy is to have credibility, it must engage with, and be seen to engage with, all parts of the community, including those who are hard to reach.*

How should people without access to, or understanding of, the Internet respond to the consultation in hard-copy questionnaire or freeform letter format – when an informed response requires access to the policy documents - which are only supplied singly to parish councils and information points; and may also require access to the supporting evidence base which is only accessible online?

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

Answer to question 5

In addition to the Hereford, market towns and rural members' workshops, we held member briefing sessions on 28 February and 1 March 2013. Members were provided with information packs at these events; any members who did not attend an event will have received the information packs separately. These were designed to assist members in fulfilling their community leadership role in relation to the Local Plan in their wards, both generally and during the consultation period in particular. In addition to this we have taken on board suggestions e.g. to let members have copies of a presentation, and copies of questionnaires for distribution if they request them where there is a specific need.

As you will be aware, drop in sessions have been arranged for parish councils one of which took place on 6 March and a further one is scheduled for 20 March 2013; ward members were able to attend these events should they so choose.

As well as being available electronically, paper copies of the draft Core Strategy have been sent to all parish clerks; in addition the documents re available at all Customer Contact Centres, Libraries and Community Libraries.

Paper copies of the draft Core Strategy have already been sent to members of the general public who have requested it; the extensive evidence base is available on-line, which is the most accessible and cost efficient way of making information widely available, however hard copies can be provided on request.

Supplementary Question

I am concerned that this didn't really address the concern that every individual is able to access this report in order to make an informed response. Will the Council run full-day drop in sessions, including after hours, in each of the localities, where members of the public can view the relevant documentation, as well as summaries, and discuss the issues with officers and Members? Can they get assistance in filling in the questionnaires?

Cabinet Member Written Response

I am happy that the system is robust enough whether using the internet or not. In getting to this point we have held over 100 public events, with over 4,000 attendees. In addition to this earlier consultations have led to thousands of responses being received and are now in a different phase as this is the final stage of preparing the core strategy. We have listened carefully to what has been said about previous consultations including the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and I invited them to comment on the process and took on board its views in full. They were satisfied with the process that we proposed and have now implemented.

All Members have had a briefing pack and the opportunity to attend drop in sessions to learn more where they were able to ask any questions. I believe that we all, as local Members and community leaders have a duty to engage with the public on such important issues. We have created the opportunity for any member to be supplied with any further information they may need. A great deal of information has already been published and any specific questions asked by members have been answered by the team by phone, email and so on. We have also been quick to respond to feedback from Councillors at the sessions held so far e.g by supplying full copies of the presentation for members to use in their wards and supplying paper copies of questionnaires as needed.

Question from SJ Robertson

Consultation on Herefordshire Local Plan

- 6 *With reference to the Core Strategy Consultation, I understand that there will be no officer support at Public Meetings throughout the 6 week period. At the Cabinet Meeting on Wednesday, 27th February 2013, the Cabinet Member agreed that the process was complicated, particularly with regard to the Community Infrastructure Levy, and that resources would be made available to the general public to help them understand the consultation process. Therefore,*
- (a) *Who made the decision not to allow officers to attend Public Meetings, particularly as there have been changes to the Core Strategy since the Revised Preferred Option was published in 2011?*
 - (b) *Burghill, Holmer and Lyde parishes have been targeted for housing, a northern relief road and park and ride which will have a significant impact on the people residing in the parishes. Why have the residents, therefore, been denied their democratic right to have access to professional Officers at Public Meetings?*
 - (c) *Are you happy that the Core Strategy will not be judged unsound as the wishes of local communities for officer representation at Public Meetings have been ignored?*

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

Answer to question 6

- (a) Following discussions with managers I have agreed that council staff will not be accepting invitations to attend public meetings or other similar events organised during the consultation exercise on the draft Core Strategy. Instead, staff will devote their time to the events directly organised by the council throughout the county. This approach reflects the mature phase that the Local Plan has now reached and that we are inviting specific comments on a draft proposal rather than developing a range of options as has previously been the case.
- (b) I refer to the answer I have given to Member question number 5.
- (c) Yes. I am satisfied that the Core Strategy will not be judged unsound and that the ability of local communities to engage with the consultation process is not prejudiced.

Supplementary Question

*I am concerned that this is the last stage and my Ward is affected heavily. Do you not feel that it is unfair and unjust to expect members to answer questions at public meetings on technical questions without an officer being present (as has always been the case in the past) and not being privy to the background workings?
I would implore you on behalf of the people of Burghill Holmer and Lyde to reconsider your decision for officer attendance at public meetings?*

Cabinet Member Written Response

I attended over fifty percent of the meetings held during the last consultation personally. Many of the things we are talking about are the same as last time, housing numbers are the same, the road infrastructure is the same. I genuinely believe that the process that has been established is a reasonable one in this circumstances. I have reviewed this decision and my thinking a number of times and have nothing further to add.

Insofar as the suggestion that officers are needed to help respond to technical questions, there is no one person who could respond to them all given that the draft core strategy is so wide ranging. The draft core strategy has been put together by a wide range of people who all have expertise in different areas. We have therefore offered to answer any questions in writing. This will ensure that people get the best response.

Question from SJ Robertson**Sale of Lion Farm**

- 7 *Lion Farm, one of the Council's smallholdings, has recently been sold. I understand the barn conversions which the Council obtained planning consent for have not*

been sold as Property Services omitted to ensure that the Purchaser's Solicitors were made aware of a right of access.

- (a) How did this error occur and is the Council financially liable on the grounds of negligence?*
- (b) If so, for how much?*

Answer from Councillor PD Price, Cabinet Member Corporate Services

Answer to question 7

It would appear that a technical error has occurred in the contractual process and not as a result of any omission or negligence by the council; as a consequence the council carries no financial liability.

Negotiations are ongoing to remedy the situation and whilst these continue it would be inappropriate to comment further.

Question from JLV Kenyon

Cabinet Members skills

- 8 Given that we are nearly two years into a four year cycle I would like to know what skill sets and experience each Cabinet Member and Cabinet Support Member has in the roles they are carrying out so as a Council we can have confidence that those duties they are responsible for are carried out to their full potential.*

Answer from Councillor J G Jarvis Leader of the Council

Answer to question 8

As I am sure Cllr Kenyon will be aware from his two years as a ward member and through his membership of the Health & Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee, there isn't a 'person specification' for these roles. Members must draw on their experience and must continually develop their knowledge and skills to enable them to be effective whether in representing their constituents, or fulfilling any of a wide range of member roles within the council, from one we all hold as Corporate Parent to our looked after children through to membership of various committees or as an executive member. A skills audit is undertaken early in each administration to help inform the matching process.

We are extremely fortunate in being able to benefit from the contribution made by all members of the Cabinet Team who collectively bring a range of backgrounds, skills and experience that encompass the private sector, self-employment, the public sector as well as a wealth of voluntary activity. Underlying all this is the essential element of an absolute commitment to the future of this county and the people within it.

Whilst I cannot detail here the personal histories of each of my Cabinet Team, we are publishing on the 'Your Councillor' pages of the council website details of our own

attendance record at training and development events, and I would encourage all members to get involved in these sessions.

Supplementary Question

Where is the skills audit that was undertaken early in this administration? Is there a 'jobs for the boys' culture and I would ask the leader to look outside his own Party if he is really serious about sorting out the ever-worsening problems in our county.

Cabinet Member Written Response

The audit is done at the start of every administration and is part of the Council archive. I find exactly what experience is held. I currently have the most perfectly fitted Cabinet to the role as possible.

Question from EPJ Harvey

Consultation on Local Plan Core Strategy

9 *At Cabinet on 27th Feb Cllr Hamilton stated that he was genuinely listening to people's comments and concerns throughout the Core Strategy consultation, and fully expected that the draft Local Plan would change as a result. At that same meeting Mr Ashcroft said he was confident that the final version of the plan to be published in August/September of this year would be broadly the same as the draft being consulted upon now.*

I ask the following question in four parts:

- 9.1 *Who is correct?*
- 9.2. *What advice has this council received from the Planning Inspectorate concerning how much a Local Plan Core Strategy may change between final consultation and publication without risking the charge that the consultation is invalid or that the plan is unsound?*
- 9.3 *How does the council propose: to record the changes made as a result of this round of consultation; and, to assess their significance in the light of Planning Inspectorate advice?*
- 9.4 *What would be the impact on the Council's ability to secure developer funding for affordable homes and infrastructure, through S106 and/or the Community Infrastructure Levy, of a delay in progressing the Core Strategy - should this be found to be unsound at Examination in Public?*

Answer from Councillor R B Hamilton Cabinet Member

Answer to question 9

- 9.1 The comments are not contradictory. The draft Core Strategy is now well-advanced and reflects the outcomes of several rounds of consultation and wider debate since 2007. The draft that is now available for consultation is under-pinned by a very significant raft of information and evidence that has been informed by feedback

from a wide range of stakeholders. Nonetheless the ambition and approach is very much to be responsive to comments that either add value to the Plan or propose more appropriate policies that are supported by the necessary evidence.

- 9.2 The council has neither received nor sought advice from the Inspectorate on this point as appropriate guidance is already available in published documents, and has been followed. There is nothing unusual about this at this stage in the process.
- 9.3 Any changes proposed to the draft Core Strategy, resulting from consultation responses and/or new evidence will be published and reported to Cabinet when the plan is next considered. Should significant changes to the strategy be proposed at that time a judgement will be required to determine whether further consultation on the changes is necessary.

In addition to this Cllr Harvey will be aware that during my visit to the General Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 11 February 2013 when I assisted the committee with its work on the draft Core Strategy, I offered to return following the close of the consultation, once the results had been analysed and we had formed views regarding how these would influence the proposals to be put to the Cabinet and Council in July. I wish to again make it plain that all responses to the ongoing consultation will be welcomed and will help to shape the final proposals. Let us be under no illusion that we live in the real world and that it may not be possible to agree with all submissions; however, any suggestion that comments are a waste of time are not worthy of further comment.

- 9.4 The ability of the council to pool Section 106 agreement monies for wider projects ends on 31 March 2014. From this point onwards Section 106 agreements will relate only to site specific matters.

As Members will be aware the council has been pressing ahead with parallel work on the preparation of a Community Infrastructure Levy charging levy. Whilst that levy cannot be adopted until a Core Strategy has been adopted, I do not anticipate the Core Strategy being found unsound.

Supplementary Question

I thank the Cabinet Member for his response and all the officers and staff involved in bringing this consultation to that public at this stage. I am pleased to hear that change, even significant change, is not ruled out at this stage in the strategy development.

I certainly do not consider comments made at this stage to be a waste of time and will be encouraging all residents to engage vigorously with this consultation. Will he support Councillors with a hard copy evidence base, policy documentation and officer advice where Councillors wish to run all day drop in sessions for residents in their role as community leaders?

Cabinet Member Written Response

Any additional information that can be supplied will be, we will do whatever we can to support Members.

Question from EPJ Harvey**Neighbourhood Planning**

10 *IOC welcomes the Cabinet's eagerness to 'shift the balance of power' in terms of the driving force for future development in this county away from Herefordshire Council and towards local communities, through the significant role now proposed to be fulfilled by Neighbourhood Plans in the delivery of the Local Plan. We also welcome the increased share of 25% of monies generated through Community Infrastructure Levy which will remain with the parishes that have adopted Neighbourhood Plans which support development.*

Please will the cabinet Member clarify the following with regard to the role of Neighbourhood Plans:

10.1 *Will communities already targeted to receive strategic housing sites in the core strategy need only to endorse these proposals in their Neighbourhood Plans; or must they propose additional housing on top before they qualify for retention of 25% of their CIL?*

10.2 *Will any level of support for development in a Neighbourhood Plan for an area without a strategic housing site qualify that parish to retain 25% of the CIL?*

10.3 *How will the 5,300 houses proposed in the plan to be sited in the rural areas be apportioned against communities – both those committing to a Neighbourhood Plans and those not.*

10.4 *Since the core strategy identifies this as the means by which the county shall to continue to deliver housing in the event that its preferred approach, of large strategic housing sites, fails to deliver housing fast enough to meet the build trajectory predicted in the plan? How it is proposed to use the Neighbourhood Planning process to agree what fraction of the 30,000 additional sites, identified across the county in the SHLAA as developable and deliverable, that are located within each particular community, should be deemed to be part of the strategic rural housing allocation (the 5,300) and which be new and additional?*

Answer from Councillor R B Hamilton Cabinet Member

Answer to question 10

10.1 I am pleased that my colleague Cllr Harvey recognises and welcomes our support and determination to implement government policy to “shift the balance of power” from Herefordshire Council to local communities including through, among other things, neighbourhood planning where Herefordshire has already received national recognition for its proactive approach to this.

The 25% Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) levy will apply in respect of any development where there is an adopted Neighbourhood Development Plan. This will include strategic and non-strategic sites within the Core Strategy and Neighbourhood Development Plan, together with any windfall development.

10.2 Yes.

- 10.3 Housing development within the rural areas will be delivered through a combination of existing commitments, windfall development and sites enabled through Neighbourhood Development Plans. The levels of growth within Neighbourhood Development Plans will be determined via local evidence, specific environmental characteristics, local needs and minded to the targets for proportionate growth within the Core Strategy. 122 villages have been identified within Policy RA1 to be the main focus for proportionate housing growth within the rural area.
- 10.4 Neighbourhood Development Plans will need to be based on evidence and the capacity highlighted with Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) will form part of that evidence. Local communities will also be encouraged, together with the assistance of the Neighbourhood Planning team, to undertake site assessments and selection in order to allocate land within their plan.

Supplementary Question

Since the Cabinet Member's response seems to indicate that the first 5,300 houses built anywhere in the rural areas will be taken to be delivering the strategic rural housing target and that this kind of organic serendipitous development represents the natural development behaviour of Herefordshire. Will the Cabinet Member say how far into the delivery of this 20 year plan he will leave it before judging that the housing trajectory is not being met, and re-directing the developers to the more than thirty thousand sites across the County identified in the SHLAA that are supposed to be developable and deliverable?

Cabinet Member Written Response

There is no simple answer to that question as there are lots of changes that would be likely to occur during the period in question. This is not to be taken as written in tablets of stone and will be reviewed as appropriate
