

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 7 MARCH 2014

Question from Mr P McKay, Leominster

Question 1

Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Having been informed that our Local Street Gazetteer was being published online I thought I had completed my questions, expecting to see public rights of way, cycleways, rural access roads in their distinctive purple colour, along with all other roads, enabling checks to be made on gaps and omissions in the network as required by Parliament in good time prior to the 2026 cut-off date, but I find that not to be the case. Knowing where to look all this information is already online, but not viewable in a friendly way, nor at same time as our public rights of way. The Rights of Way Improvement Plan identifies our rural access roads as supplementing the byway network, policy 3.3.5 with policy 3.3.6 saying saying that users request that the information be made available, yet whilst officers I speak to advise that they have no reason not to make this information available they do not seem to know just whom ought be asked to address this issue, and indeed why not show us our cycleways as well as our footpaths and bridleways.

So may I ask if a highway layer showing our cycleways, rural access roads in their distinctive purple colour along with all our other roads could be added to the “Explore Herefordshire Map” web page, so that if tick that box and the tick the right of way box we could see all our registered highways at the same time, and when this could be expected ?

Answer from Councillor H Bramer Cabinet Member Contracts & Assets

Answer to question 1

The council is working towards putting the local street gazetteer on the council’s website using the explore Herefordshire map platform. This will be a staged process. Public rights of way information is already available on the platform and the road network will be added within the next four weeks. We hope that members of the public will be able to interrogate the information effectively and will welcome feedback as information is added.

Question from Mrs Churchward, Herefordshire

Question 2

Annual Monitoring Reports

Members all surely know there have been concerns about the Annual Monitoring Reports and their timeliness.

I asked a question about this last July, and was assured by Cllr Hamilton, that the hard and software had been upgraded, thus data collection would be more efficient.

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It would appear the upgrade has failed as there has been no movement on this issue and the most recent Monitoring Report is STILL dated Year End March 2011 now making it nearly 3 years behind.

What EXACT date can we expect a fully up-to-date Monitoring Report?

Answer from Councillor PD Price, Cabinet Member Infrastructure

Answer to question 2

Annual monitoring reports are generally published 12 months 'in arrears' but Mrs Churchward is quite correct; the information currently on line requires updating. The annual monitoring report to be produced at the end of March will cover the period April 2012 to end March 2013.

Question from Mrs Morawiecka, Breinton, Herefordshire

Question 3

Nutrient Management Plan for the River Wye SAC

There was a commitment by Natural England and the Environment Agency to produce a Nutrient Management Plan for the River Wye SAC to be provided by September 2013, latest, to enable the Core Strategy to go forward for public examination. Would the Cabinet Member responsible for the Core Strategy please provide an explanation for the absence of this plan and indicate the level of investment required to accommodate the planned housing growth for Hereford and Leominster without damaging the River Wye SAC?

Answer from Councillor PD Price, Cabinet Member Infrastructure

Answer to question 3

Detailed work is nearing completion on the production of the nutrient management plan by the Environment Agency and Natural England. The document will be included in the package of information to accompany the deposited Local Development Framework in May 2014.

Question from Mr D Morawiecki, Breinton, Herefordshire

Question 4

Loss of Appeals

What has been allowed in the 2013/14 and 2014/15 Herefordshire Council budgets for costs arising from the loss of appeals due to Herefordshire Council not having a 5 year housing land supply?

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Answer from Councillor PD Price, Cabinet Member Infrastructure

Answer to question 4

No specific funding has been allowed in budgets in 2013/14 or 2014/15 for the award of any costs arising from planning appeals.

Question from Mrs Wegg-Prosser, Breinton, Herefordshire

Question 5

Council's Core Strategy

For the Council's Core Strategy to go forward to Public Examination, it is required to have a number of supporting documents, such as a 5-year Housing Land Supply, a Local Transport Plan with at least 5 years to run, a Nutrient Management Plan, an Economic Viability Assessment, and an Infrastructure Delivery Plan. I should be grateful if the Cabinet member responsible for the Core Strategy could state when each of these documents will be ready and made publicly available?

Answer from Councillor PD Price Cabinet Member Infrastructure

Answer to question 5

The planning minister has made it very clear that the two key planks of the planning system are the adoption of an up to date local plan and the provision of a five year housing land supply. By definition the former supplies and underpins the latter. As such it is not unusual for a local plan to be submitted for examination where that local planning authority does not have a five year housing land supply at that time.

Inspectors examine submitted local plans against the soundness principles. Part of the examination of all local plans is based on their ability or otherwise to accommodate appropriate housing projections and targets for its area. Subject to the appropriate granting of planning permissions thereafter the housing allocations brought forward in a local plan will then directly contribute towards the achievement of a 5 year housing land supply.

Local authorities are required to produce a Local Transport Plan (LTP), but have the flexibility to determine the duration of that plan and to review and amend elements within it at such timescales as they determine best meet local need. The current LTP, adopted in March 2013, covers the period to April 2015; a timetable for the process for review and refresh of this plan to cover the period beyond April 2015 will be published shortly.

The other documents referred to will be included in the package of information to accompany the deposited Local Development Framework in May 2014.

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Question from Mrs Protherough, Clehonger, Herefordshire

Question 6

Selling of Bath Street Site

With an urgent need for sustainable housing developments in the City Centre, why does this Council feel that it can achieve best value for the local taxpayer by selling the Bath Street site to the Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority, rather than as a prime residential development site, which could include sensitive redevelopment of a building of historical significance in the City?

Answer from Councillor H Bramer Cabinet Member Contracts & Assets

Answer to question 6

A decision on this matter is scheduled for later in March. The council has to consider how best to use its assets in the public interest; the options for achieving best value will inform any disposal decision to be made.

The Local Development Framework, scheduled for public examination later this year, identifies a number of strategic sites which together would provide sufficient capacity to meet projected housing need in the city. As with any site, the future use will be determined through the usual planning process, as would the impact of any development on the character and appearance of the conservation area; the building itself is not listed.