

**MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 07 MARCH 2014**

**Question from Councillor NP Nenadich of Councillor GJ Powell, Cabinet Member Health and Wellbeing**

**Care Provision**

- 1 Can the Cabinet Member assure me that people who present with a chronic disability or degenerative illness, but never the less wish to make provision for their own care needs, will be supported by Herefordshire Council? This will encompass simple easy planning permissions for appropriate living accommodation and assistance in keeping them close to their natural networks and own support mechanisms and encourage people to take control of their lives where ever possible in any care setting.*

**Answer from Councillor GJ Powell, Cabinet Member Health and Wellbeing**

Answer to question 1

We are committed to enabling residents to live safe, healthy and independent lives, maintaining service provision to those with need within available resources. For some of our residents this will mean providing care either through personal budgets or, for our most vulnerable residents, directly commissioning that care. However we also know that many people are able and willing to arrange for their own care needs to be met and we want to do everything we can to encourage them and support them to do this.

In addition to ensuring people have access to the information and advice they need, our plans include engaging housing providers and developers to influence the diversity and delivery of new housing development in the county in a bid to create a more balanced housing market which helps people stay independent for longer within their own community. The Local Development Framework policies, specifically for rural housing, are more flexible than those within the Unitary Development Plan which should mean that future proposals for people with chronic illnesses and disabilities are more likely to be acceptable under normal planning policies than is currently the case, thereby simplifying the planning process.

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**Question from Councillor NP Nenadich of Councillor PD Price, Cabinet Member Infrastructure**

**Escalating Energy Bills**

- 2 Given that fuel poverty and escalating energy bills are of rising concern in the county, should we not require any new development to be built to the highest energy conservational standards as a matter of course,*

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*given that it is so much easier to build to these standards as opposed to upgrade to them?*

**Answer from Councillor PD Price, Cabinet Member Infrastructure**

Answer to question 2

I agree with Cllr Nenadich that we should be doing all we can to encourage energy efficient building to deliver environmental benefits and reduce costs for householders, and welcome the motion being debated by Council today.

Although the standards required under building regulations are set nationally, there are a number of other areas that we could look to develop including: the introduction of detailed design policies into the Hereford Area Action Plan (where the biggest strategic housing sites are located); the preparation of detailed design briefs for individual strategic sites and the introduction of a free-standing policy note on sustainable building standards (for engagement with the industry/stakeholders etc). Cllr Nenadich will I know appreciate that such development work will require officer resource and that, in the immediate future, this must be prioritised to supporting the progress of the Local Development Framework on which much of the county's future growth and development depends. However I will explore with officers how we can progress these developments and keep will keep members informed.

Cllr Nenadich may also wish to be aware that all new affordable housing developments locally are required to comply with a slightly higher sustainability standard than building regulations require; indeed most of our housing association partners delivering affordable housing for Herefordshire strive to deliver to an even higher standard. We also have examples where the council has provided additional funding to secure higher standards of energy efficiency, for instance by grant funding the installation of ground source heat pumps. As the housing market recovers our aim is to push affordable housing energy efficiency standards as high as possible.

Cllr Nenadich will also be aware that both the planning and building control process in the county have assisted in bringing forward some very innovative and sustainable proposals in years. Particularly high standards are currently being achieved in major flagship projects such as the Old Livestock Market retail development and the archives and records centre at Rotherwas. The latter is being constructed to Passivhaus standards.

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**Question from Councillor DC Taylor of Councillor AW Johnson, Leader of the Council****Parish Council Precepts 2014/15**

- 3 *Could I be advised which Parish Councils have increased their precept, which have decreased their precept and which have retained their precept at the same level as 2012/13 and the percentage increase/decrease for each.*

**Answer from Councillor AW Johnson, Leader of the Council**

Answer to question 3

The table below identifies those 75 local councils that have increased their precepts, those 60 that have remained static, and those 5 that have decreased their precept together with the level of change for each. It should be noted these figures are the gross amounts; the net precept figures, detailing how much of the precept has to be collected from Herefordshire taxpayers (the balance being made up from a government grant) are shown in the council tax report elsewhere on the agenda today,.

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.

**Gross amounts required by parishes for 2014-15 compared to 2013-14**

Parish Council	Gross Amount Required		Increase %
	2014-15 £	2013-14 £	
<b><u>Increase</u></b>			
Acton Beauchamp Group Parish Council	3,000	2,800	7.14%
Allensmore Parish Council	3,500	2,000	75.00%
Aston Ingham Parish Council	3,700	2,500	48.00%
Avenbury Parish Council	4,000	3,500	14.29%
Aymestrey Parish Council	3,660	2,876	27.26%
Bartestree & Lugwardine Group Parish Council	24,000	23,700	1.27%
Bishop's Frome Parish Council	23,000	22,000	4.55%
Bishopstone Group Parish Council	4,283	4,174	2.61%
Bodenham Parish Council	14,195	9,945	42.74%
Border Group Parish Council	7,750	7,500	3.33%
Breinton Parish Council	8,300	8,200	1.22%
Brilley Parish Council	6,500	4,750	36.84%
Bromyard & Winslow Town Council	186,955	171,000	9.33%
Burghill Parish Council	14,842	13,977	6.19%

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Clehonger Parish Council	13,100	12,000	9.17%
Colwall Parish Council	74,880	58,010	29.08%
Malvern Hills Conservators (Colwall Parish Council)	34,445	33,770	2.00%
Credenhill Parish Council	17,300	16,800	2.98%
Cusop Parish Council	8,500	7,500	13.33%
Dilwyn Parish Council	13,767	11,545	19.25%
Dinedor Parish Council	6,300	5,800	8.62%
Dormington & Mordiford Group Parish Council	14,925	12,945	15.30%
Dorstone Parish Council	3,200	2,600	23.08%
Eaton Bishop Parish Council	6,000	5,000	20.00%
Ewyas Harold Group Parish Council	20,000	16,590	20.55%
Hampton Bishop Parish Council	17,000	10,000	70.00%
Hatfield and District Group Parish Council	4,200	2,500	68.00%
Hereford City Council	815,715	724,960	12.52%
Holmer & Shelwick Parish Council	8,004	6,954	15.10%
Hope Mansell Parish Council	1,700	1,450	17.24%
Hope under Dinmore Group Parish Council	3,700	3,500	5.71%
How Caple, Sollershope & Yatton Group Parish Council	6,000	5,000	20.00%
Humber, Ford & Stoke Prior Group Parish Council	6,400	3,850	66.23%
Huntington Parish Council	700	650	7.69%
Kimbolton Parish Council	6,500	5,500	18.18%
Kingstone & Thrupton Group Parish Council	9,000	8,000	12.50%
Kington Rural and Lower Harpton Group Parish Council	4,800	4,000	20.00%
Kington Town Council	70,000	64,000	9.38%
Kinnersley and District Group Parish Council	3,500	3,200	9.38%
Lea Parish Council	10,350	9,850	5.08%
Ledbury Town Council	271,912	266,596	1.99%
Leintwardine Group Parish Council	16,000	15,000	6.67%
Leominster Town Council	290,228	241,098	20.38%
Llangarron Parish Council	5,500	5,000	10.00%
Luston Group Parish Council	13,000	10,000	30.00%
Lyonshall Parish Council	15,000	10,000	50.00%
Madley Parish Council	14,000	9,000	55.56%
Marstow Parish Council	7,000	5,500	27.27%
Mathon Parish Council	6,542	6,442	1.55%
Malvern Hills Conservators (Mathon)	4,590	4,500	2.00%
Monkland and Stretford Parish Council	4,100	3,500	17.14%
Much Birch Parish Council	6,390	6,000	6.50%
North Bromyard Group Parish Council	4,200	4,000	5.00%
Peterchurch Parish Council	14,560	13,560	7.37%
Peterstow Parish Council	3,700	3,500	5.71%
Pixley & District Parish Council	5,750	5,500	4.55%
Pyons Group Parish Council	7,400	6,195	19.45%
Richard's Castle (Herefordshire) Parish Council	3,650	3,150	15.87%
Ross on Wye Town Council	264,635	196,500	34.67%
Shobdon Parish Council	14,462	13,900	4.04%

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Stretton Grandison Group Parish Council	2,000	1,750	14.29%
Stretton Sugwas Parish Council	4,350	4,200	3.57%
Sutton Parish Council	19,250	18,870	2.01%
Tarrington Parish Council	11,500	10,000	15.00%
Thornbury Group Parish Council	3,400	3,300	3.03%
Titley and District Group Parish Council	4,418	4,336	1.89%
Walford Parish Council	16,500	16,000	3.13%
Weobley Parish Council	13,962	10,555	32.28%
Weston-under-Penyard Parish Council	10,000	7,000	42.86%
Whitbourne Parish Council	9,500	9,000	5.56%
Whitchurch & Ganarew Group Parish Council	25,000	15,000	66.67%
Withington Group Parish Council	16,000	15,000	6.67%
Woolhope Parish Council	5,500	5,150	6.80%
Yarkhill Parish Council	4,500	4,000	12.50%
Yarpole Group Parish Council	14,000	10,385	34.81%
<b><u>No change</u></b>			
Abbeydore & Bacton Group Parish Council	7,200	7,200	0.00%
Aconbury Parish Meeting	120	120	0.00%
Ashperton Parish Council	3,150	3,150	0.00%
Ballingham, Bolstone & Hentland Group Parish Council	4,000	4,000	0.00%
Belmont Rural Parish Council	50,000	50,000	0.00%
Birley with Upper Hill Parish Council	2,000	2,000	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%
Bredenbury & District Group Parish Council	5,360	5,360	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%
Cradley Parish Council	25,000	25,000	0.00%
Dinmore Parish Meeting	0	0	0.00%
Eardisland Parish Council	15,750	15,750	0.00%
Eardisley Group Parish Council	8,700	8,700	0.00%
Eastnor & Donnington Parish Council	3,600	3,600	0.00%
Fownhope Parish Council	20,000	20,000	0.00%
Foxley Group Parish Council	1,750	1,750	0.00%
Garway Parish Council	10,574	10,574	0.00%
Goodrich & Welsh Bicknor Group Parish Council	5,600	5,600	0.00%
Hampton Charles Parish Meeting	0	0	0.00%
Holme Lacy Parish Council	15,000	15,000	0.00%
Kentchurch Parish Council	6,500	6,500	0.00%
Kilpeck Group Parish Council	10,750	10,750	0.00%
Kings Caple Parish Council	6,680	6,680	0.00%
Kingsland Parish Council	10,000	10,000	0.00%
Linton Parish Council	6,000	6,000	0.00%

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Little Birch Parish Council	2,700	2,700	0.00%
Little Dewchurch Parish Council	7,500	7,500	0.00%
Llanwarne & District Group Parish Council	2,000	2,000	0.00%
Longtown Group Parish Council	5,530	5,530	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%
Moreton on Lugg Parish Council	14,000	14,000	0.00%
Much Dewchurch Parish Council	3,500	3,500	0.00%
Much Marcle Parish Council	4,919	4,919	0.00%
Ocle Pychard Parish Council	2,850	2,850	0.00%
Orcop Parish Council	7,000	7,000	0.00%
Orleton Parish Council	15,300	15,300	0.00%
Pembridge Parish Council	18,000	18,000	0.00%
Pencombe Group Parish Council	8,500	8,500	0.00%
Pipe and Lyde Parish Council	2,330	2,330	0.00%
Putley Parish Council	5,000	5,000	0.00%
Ross Rural Parish Council	3,000	3,000	0.00%
Sellack Parish Council	2,000	2,000	0.00%
St. Weonards Parish Council	3,630	3,630	0.00%
Stapleton Group Parish Council	5,000	5,000	0.00%
Staunton-on-Wye and District Group Parish Council	2,675	2,675	0.00%
Stoke Edith Parish Meeting (Chairman)	0	0	0.00%
Stoke Lacy Parish Council	5,000	5,000	0.00%
Upton Bishop Parish Council	8,864	8,864	0.00%
Vowchurch & District Group Parish Council	6,000	6,000	0.00%
Wellington Heath Parish Council	7,400	7,400	0.00%
Wellington Parish Council	21,500	21,500	0.00%
Welsh Newton & Llanrothal Group Parish Council	6,530	6,530	0.00%
Weston Beggard Parish Council	1,000	1,000	0.00%
Wyeside Group Parish Council	6,500	6,500	0.00%
<b><u>Decrease</u></b>			
Almeley Parish Council	7,250	7,500	-3.33%
Brockhampton Group Parish Council	7,000	8,000	-12.50%
Lower Bullingham Parish Council	17,736	18,817	-5.74%
Much Cowarne Group Parish Council	3,300	3,600	-8.33%
Wigmore Group Parish Council	14,500	15,000	-3.33%
	<b>3,126,743</b>	<b>2,788,087</b>	

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**MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 07 MARCH 2014**

**Question from Councillor DC Taylor of Councillor PD Price, Cabinet Member Infrastructure**

**Proposed Road Link Between A465 and the A49**

- 4 *The three Parish Councils in the Stoney Street Ward, with the exception of two members, support the need for the link road to be constructed. Could I be advised of the timetable for the build, as I wish to keep the Parish Councils' in my Ward up to date on the need to consult with the local residents and when the Council proposes to start the building of this road?*

**Answer from Councillor PD Price, Cabinet Member Infrastructure**

Answer to question 4

It is pleasing to note that the parish councils are supportive of this scheme which will bring relief to the traffic congestion affecting that part of the city. Consultation on a preferred route for the scheme is due to commence in June this year; our current programme is for construction to start late 2016 and be completed by the end of 2017.

**Supplementary Question**

The previous Cabinet Member for roads, Mr Hamilton, promised that he would hold a meeting with the local people to update them on what we are proposing. Will you be prepared to do likewise for their benefit?

**Response: Councillor Price, Cabinet Member Infrastructure**

I intend to have a meeting. I am awaiting further information from Balfour Beatty, which will be available towards the end of April or early May. I will then hold a meeting.

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**Question from Councillor RI Matthews of Councillor AW Johnson, Leader of the Council**

**Construction of a New Access Road**

- 5 It is my understanding that both of our local Conservative MPs, and a large number of top businessmen together with the board members of the local Enterprise Zone support the construction of a new access road from the main A438 Hereford/Ledbury Road at Tupsley into the Rotherwas Industrial Estate. All of these people are of the view that the industrial estate will not succeed and operate to its full capacity until such a road is in place.

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*Because of the overwhelming support for this road from such influential people, can you assure Members that their concerns will be addressed before the Local Development Framework is any further progressed? After all, it must be remembered that your administration is without any overall majority, and therefore I suggest that it would be undemocratic were you not to give this matter your every consideration.*

**Answer from Councillor PD Price, Cabinet Member Infrastructure**

Answer to question 5

I don't share Cllr Matthews' understanding. I am of course aware that there are a range of views on this matter, influenced by a number of factors, but would wish to focus on the evidence.

Extending the road network to the east of the city in advance of a relief road which can only be delivered through a western route, would not only displace traffic to more residential areas, it would not enable the housing growth this county needs.

I would also remind Cllr Matthews that the draft Core Strategy was approved by Council in July 2013 for submission; this included a relief road to the west and did not include a Rotherwas to Ledbury Road link. There is no authority to include it at this stage and further delay to debate the matter, in the absence of any new evidence to support the case for a link road in advance of a relief road, would have a significantly negative impact on the future economy of the county.

**Supplementary Question**

It would appear to me that any inspector considering our Core Strategy would be deeply concerned when he becomes aware of the views of our local MPs and others. Does the Leader agree with me that this could well be the case, and consequently result in a negative response to the Council's proposals?

**Response: Councillor Johnson, Leader of the Council**

The Leader acknowledged the reservations people had about where the road was proposed, but reiterated that residents wanted a bypass. Council priorities included future economic development, which a bypass was an important part of. Hard evidence showed the road should go west and MPs were now looking at this evidence. It was noted that any road built going east on a flood plain would not be able to have homes included with it. Additionally any expansion of Rotherwas could not be carried out without access improvements. The Leader emphasised the importance of not missing the opportunity, which would bring with it homes and jobs for the County. However this did not preclude any future road building which might subsequently be built going east.

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**MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 07 MARCH 2014**

**Question from Councillor JLV Kenyon of Councillor PD Price, Cabinet Member Infrastructure**

**Road Maintenance Annual Plan**

- 6 *Balfour Beatty has a budget from this council of an additional £15 million for the coming financial year to be spent on road maintenance and improvements. When will the relevant annual plan be available, what input will Councillors be able to have on it "bearing in mind the high priority all of our residents consider this to be"? As this is a "plan" will it be subject to change as a "live document"?*

**Answer from Councillor PD Price Cabinet Member Infrastructure**

Answer to question 6

Cllr Kenyon refers to additional funding of £15m of the £20m total; this is being prioritised to improve the maintenance and repair of 'C' and unclassified roads which have lagged behind the maintenance of our 'A' and 'B' roads; this improvement work will include essential drainage works to help reduce the impacts of future flooding.

The annual plan will be the subject of a cabinet member decision scheduled for 2 May, as recently listed on the rolling programme; members will have the opportunity to input to the development of the plan at the all member seminar arranged for 8 April to which I would encourage all members to attend.

It is inevitable that the detail within the plan will be subject to change, as we refine the options for delivery to ensure that we get the very best return for this investment, and enable response to unforeseen circumstances as necessary.

**Supplementary Question**

Will the executive appoint a Councillor solely responsible for the roads? The roads have been deteriorating for years, I believe the Cabinet Member needs a support Member to help.

**Response: Councillor Johnson, Leader of the Council**

The Leader stated that Councillor Price was in control of what was happening with regards to the roads. A plan was being formulated and would be made known to Members.