

## **MINUTES of the meeting of Council held at Council Chamber - Brockington on Friday 18 July 2014 at 10.00 am**

**Present:** Councillor LO Barnett (Chairman)  
Councillor J Stone (Vice Chairman)

**Councillors:** PA Andrews, AM Atkinson, JM Bartlett, CM Bartrum, PL Bettington, AJM Blackshaw, WLS Bowen, H Bramer, AN Bridges, ACR Chappell, EMK Chave, MJK Cooper, PGH Cutter, BA Durkin, PJ Edwards, DW Greenow, KS Guthrie, J Hardwick, EPJ Harvey, MAF Hubbard, JA Hyde, TM James, AW Johnson, Brig P Jones CBE, JLV Kenyon, JF Knipe, JG Lester, MD Lloyd-Hayes, RI Matthews, RL Mayo, SM Michael, JW Millar, PM Morgan, NP Nenadich, C Nicholls, FM Norman, J Norris, CA North, RJ Phillips, GJ Powell, AJW Powers, R Preece, PD Price, SJ Robertson, P Rone, A Seldon, P Sinclair-Knipe, GR Swinford, DC Taylor, GA Vaughan-Powell, TL Widdows and DB Wilcox

### **10. PRAYERS**

The Very Reverend Michael Tavinor led the Council in prayers.

He informed the Authority that the Right Reverend Richard Frith had been appointed as the new Bishop of Hereford and sent his greetings to the Authority. The Bishop would be seeking to meet civic leaders at the earliest opportunity.

#### **Welcome to New Councillors**

The Chairman welcomed newly elected Councillors JM Bartlett and TL Widdows.

### **11. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor CNH Attwood, JW Hope MBE, JG Jarvis and PJ McCaull.

### **12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **13. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the deletion of the final sentence of the paragraph headed Terms of Reference – Audit and Governance Committee on page 15 of the agenda papers: “However, all Members had had the opportunity to comment if they wished.”

### **14. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Council noted the Chairman's announcements as printed in the agenda papers.

The Chairman added her congratulations to the Right Reverend Richard Frith following his appointment as the 105th Bishop of Hereford.

## **Petition**

The Chairman also reported the receipt of a petition from Councillor H Bramer regarding reducing the speed limit at Gorsley Goff's Primary School. The Cabinet Member – Transport and Roads received the petition.

### **15. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

A copy of the public questions and written answers is attached to the Minutes at Appendix 1.

### **16. NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDERS**

Council considered the one Notice of Motion that had been received:

#### **Notice of Motion – Draft Local Plan Core Strategy**

Councillor Powers proposed the motion. He commented that all Councillors wanted the Council to adopt a sound core strategy. The motion therefore proposed that if the Inspector deemed that major amendments were necessary it was important that Council considered these amendments. This would also allow for appropriate further public consultation. The Inspector and Officers should be able to determine the difference between major and minor amendments.

Councillor Swinford spoke in support of the motion, expressing concern about the soundness of the Core Strategy. He highlighted the proposed housing development in Bromyard which he said had no employment land designated to accompany it, contrary to policy.

The Cabinet Member - Infrastructure indicated support for the motion. He commented that the responses to the pre-submission consultation had not identified the need for any major amendments. The responses were being consolidated for submission to the Inspector. If the Inspector identified a need for major amendment this would need to be considered at a meeting of Council.

Councillor Powers commented that in his view the decision of Council in July 2013 had not made it explicit that any major amendments would need to be considered by Council. The Notice of Motion provided that clarity.

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the Notice of Motion be agreed:**

**“In the event that officers deem it necessary to make any *major* amendments to the Pre-Submission Publication Core Strategy to ensure ‘soundness’ prior to its submission to the Inspector, this Council reviews and approves the final version of the Core Strategy. This will also allow for appropriate further public consultation on any *major* amendments.”**

### **17. ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON COUNCIL COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE BODIES**

Council considered the allocation of seats to political groups.

Appendices 1 and 2 to the report showing the political composition of the Council, a proportionate allocation of seats, and an allocation of seats on outside bodies were circulated at the meeting.

The Cabinet Member – Corporate Services presented the report and proposed a slight alteration to the allocation of seats set out at table 2 of appendix 1.

**RESOLVED:**

- That**
- (a) the allocation of seats on ordinary committees to political groups be made as indicated in appendix 2 to these Minutes;**
  - (b) the seats on other bodies to which the allocation of seats to groups falls to be made by Council be as indicated in appendix 2 to these Minutes; and**
  - (c) the suspension of the rules of proportionality, in respect of the Regulatory Sub-Committee, the River Lugg Internal Drainage Board and the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee, be approved.**

**18. COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-17**

Council was invited to adopt the Herefordshire Community Safety Strategic Plan 2014-17.

The Cabinet Member – Corporate Services presented the report.

In discussion the following principal points were made:

- It was suggested that the relationship between the Environmental Health function and the Public Health function required further work.
- The General Overview and Scrutiny Committee had received a presentation from a representative of the Probation Service who had expressed disquiet about reforms to that Service. The Committee had asked for these to be forwarded to the Ministry of Justice. It was noted that no response had as yet been received. The Cabinet Member commented that the Community Safety Partnership had recently received a much more positive view on the reforms than had been presented to that Committee.
- It was requested that preventative measures were increased to address the number of serious accidents on the County's roads. The Cabinet Member commented that the Partnership was to discuss this matter at its next meeting.

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the Herefordshire Community Safety Strategy 2014-2017 be adopted.**

**19. TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN 2013/14**

Council was invited to approve the Treasury Management outturn for 2013/14 and associated prudential indicators.

The Leader of the Council presented the report.

In discussion the following principal points were made:

- The Head of Technical Accounting clarified the Council's approach to borrowing in the light of indications that there may be changes in the Bank of England base rate. She confirmed that the authority sought professional advice on its borrowing strategy. The present advice was that the Council should continue with its current strategy.

- With reference to page 62 of the agenda papers (paragraph e) it was asked if Council owned land blocks such as smallholdings which could be opened up by strategic infrastructure projects were part of the receipts which are reported as protected fixed asset sales of £20m in both 2015/16 and 2016/17. It was further questioned whether the estimated receipts included the sale of smallholding land to facilitate road construction.

The Head of Technical Accounting commented that the sums did include an estimate of receipts from surplus assets and that the estimated sums were based on today's valuations.

The Leader agreed to provide a written answer to all Members setting out the detailed position.

- In response to criticism of the transparency of the process for disposing of assets the Leader stated that decisions on the disposal of assets would be taken by Cabinet. He would brief Group Leaders on any sensitive proposals such as those relating to smallholdings in advance of any decisions being taken.

**RESOLVED: That the final Treasury Management out-turn for 2013/14 and associated prudential indicators be approved.**

## 20. LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader presented his report on the activities of Cabinet since the meeting of Council in March 2014 and an overview of key activity in 2013/14.

The Leader highlighted the following matters:

- A recent Ofsted inspection had confirmed there had been progress in delivering the children's safeguarding improvement plan, with adoption services rated as good. He thanked all those staff involved for their work.
- There had been a rise in the DfE funding of Herefordshire's pupil premium for 2014/15, although it was to be noted that the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) per pupil in Herefordshire remained 5% below the average for education authorities.
- The development of the old livestock market had been a success and in relation to the effect on High Town, whilst it was still early in the life of the development to draw conclusions, he had not received any complaints.
- He highlighted progress in increasing access to broadband across the county and thanked the team involved in the project.
- The Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) through the strategic economic plan it had submitted to Government had secured some £43m to support economic growth in the County. The bid had been for £47m. He believed it was the best per capita allocation in the Country. The significance of the allocation could not be overstated. He congratulated the Council and LEP teams involved in developing the bid including Councillor RJ Phillips who supported this aspect of the Leader's portfolio.

The following principal points were made during discussion of the report (*references in brackets are to the relevant page (and paragraph number) of the published agenda papers*):

- (p67 (20)) – The current operation of the Council's two scrutiny committees was questioned. The Leader commented that he had held discussions with the new

Chairmen of the two Committees. The scrutiny committees continued to have a full role to discharge and this would include discussions on policy. -

- (p67 (13)) – In response to a question about a recruitment exercise by the LEP the Leader emphasised the importance of the LEP's role and for it to have the resources required to support its work. Councillor RJ Phillips emphasised the need to ensure appropriate staff were in post to account for the money allocated by Government and deliver the projects to which it had been allocated. He noted that economic development teams within the LEP area were working with the LEP to avoid duplication of effort.
- A Member questioned the link between the road and transport schemes and job creation outlined in paragraph 13 of the report, including an A49/A456 link road, to which it was proposed to allocate funding secured via the LEP. He also questioned the degree to which the funding was provisional. The Leader stated that the proposed infrastructure was necessary to release the potential of the Enterprise Zone. The funding was provisional in the sense that it would be made available as the Council met various Government requirements, and submitted its detailed plans, as was normal practice.

Councillor Phillips commented that the funding had been allocated on the basis of the strategic economic plan submitted by the LEP. If a future Council were to seek to change that plan re-negotiations would have to take place.

The Chairman suggested that the Member discussed the matter further with the Leader and Councillor Phillips.

- (p65 (11/12)) – It was asked whether the Council's new delivery partner, Balfour Beatty Living Places (BBLP), had the capacity to deliver the work programme expected of it. The Cabinet Member – Transport and Roads commented that he believed this was the case. He acknowledged BBLP had drawn on staff and contractors from outside the County to meet the grass cutting demand. Sub-contractors within the County had been fully committed.
- A request was made that consideration should be given to the requirement to repair certain potholes within 24 hours, suggesting that this should be changed to 3 days to allow a better planned maintenance programme.
- A question was asked about ICT support for Members. The importance of having a resilient and secure system was noted. It was intended to implement new and improved arrangements for Members after May 2015.
- (P64 (5)) – In response to a comment on the importance of maintaining the focus on delivering the Children's safeguarding improvement plan, the Cabinet Member – Young People and Children's Wellbeing indicated that he was content for the Health Overview and Social Care Scrutiny Committee to support that process as it saw fit.
- (P65 (12)) Further information was requested on how local councils, community groups and individuals were working together. The Cabinet Member - Corporate Services agreed to provide a written answer.
- (P 64 (9)) The local ward member sounded a note of caution over the impact of the development of the old livestock market on High Town. He suggested there was no strategy for supporting the historic core of the City and in support of this view referred to a number of issues within the historic core that required resolution. The Leader commented that the administration considered the development of the City as a whole. He would respond in writing to the points of detail that had been raised.
- (P66 (14)) In response to comment about the importance of supporting the Market Towns including ensuring broadband provision, the Leader stated that the significance of the Market Towns was recognised in the planning for the County's future. The commercial roll-out of broadband was complete in Hereford, Leominster

and Ledbury. The Leominster Enterprise Park was privately owned but the Council, working with BT, had ensured provision of broadband for some businesses and work was ongoing. The broadband project was progressing well.

**RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

## **21. ANNUAL REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES**

Council was invited to note the following annual reports: Audit and Governance Committee, General Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Health and Wellbeing Board, Planning Committee and Regulatory Committee.

The Chairman of the Planning Committee commented on the Committee's demanding workload and thanked Members and officers for their work.

**RESOLVED: That the annual reports from committees be noted.**

## **22. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE HEREFORD & WORCESTER FIRE AUTHORITY**

Councillor Brig. P Jones presented the annual report of the Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority.

Several Members expressed concern about the implications of proposals within the Fire Authority's draft Community Risk Management Plan to reduce fire cover in Herefordshire. It was suggested that the possible reduction in Herefordshire was also disproportionate compared with the proposals for fire cover in Worcestershire.

The Chief Fire Officer commented that the Community Risk Management Plan was required to balance risk against the available resources. A number of further options were to be submitted to members of the Fire Authority for consideration.

It was also highlighted that if a merger with Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service were to proceed it would be essential to ensure that Herefordshire secured proper representation on any managing body.

**RESOLVED: That the annual report of the Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority be received.**

## **23. FORMAL QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS TO THE CABINET MEMBERS AND CHAIRMEN UNDER STANDING ORDERS**

A copy of the Member questions and written answers, together with the supplementary questions and answers asked at the meeting is attached to the Minutes at Appendix 3.

### **Departure of Staff**

Council noted that two long-serving members of the Governance Services team were leaving and thanked them for their direct support to Councillors.

The Chairman acknowledged the Council's gratitude to all staff.

## PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 18 July 2014

### Question from Mr P McKay, Leominster

Question 1

#### Registering Unrecorded Rights of Way

*Natural England's Commissioned Report NECR035 titled 'Stepping Forward' regarding the proposed cut-off date of 2026 for registering unrecorded rights of way says paragraph 6.22 that "In accordance with their existing statutory duties, surveying authorities will themselves need to assess the potential for loss of useful or potentially useful pre-1949 rights to the cut-off provision, and take action to prevent this", so may I request your confirmation that you propose to undertake such an assessment along with resultant action plan, the date by which this could be expected to be made available for inspection, and whether or not this duty is included within your Development Plan - Core Strategy ?*

#### Answer from Councillor H Bramer Cabinet Member Contracts & Assets

Answer to question 1

Whilst resources are limited I can confirm that all statutory duties in relation to this issue will be complied with.

The council has published a Rights of Way Improvement Plan which is the appropriate document to set out the council's approach to meeting this duty, rather than the Core Strategy.

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### Question from Mr M Sandaver, Herefordshire

Question 2

#### Weekly Bin Collections

*Why are the council failing to provide weekly bin collections if they have served us well for decades, why on earth would leaving smelly rubbish in coloured plastic bins suddenly be a good idea?*

#### Answer from Councillor H Bramer Cabinet Member Contracts & Assets

Answer to question 2

The council, in line with its corporate plan priorities, is focussing its reducing resources on keeping children and young people safe and giving them a great start in life, enabling residents to live safe, healthy and independent lives and investing in projects to improve roads, create jobs and build more homes. To focus the council's limited resources on our priorities all services were reviewed to identify savings and wherever possible to improve performance.

## **PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 18 July 2014**

In line with two thirds of councils across the country we have taken the decision to move to alternate weekly collections because, as well as delivering financial savings of some £500,000 a year, the following benefits are expected:

- The number of collection vehicles could be reduced.
- 75,000 fewer miles would be travelled by collection vehicles every year. This is the same as three times around the earth at the equator.
- Significant carbon savings could be made.
- Black sacks are prone to vermin attack causing litter hence the move to bins would reduce this environmental problem.
- Only general rubbish contained in the bins would be collected which would reduce the amount of trade waste illegally collected from black sacks.
- Overall general rubbish tonnages would reduce.
- Recycling performance would improve.
- Waste disposal tonnage and hence costs of disposal would reduce.
- The service would be in the cheapest 10% of the country's collection services.



**Table 1: Political composition of the Council**

|                           | <b>Numbers in Group</b> |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Conservative              | 27                      |
| Herefordshire Independent | 13                      |
| Green                     | 2                       |
| It's Our County!          | 12                      |
| Liberal Democrat          | 3                       |
| Ungrouped                 | 1                       |
| <i>Total</i>              | <i>58</i>               |

**Table 2: Proportionate Allocation of seats**

| <b>Committee</b>                                       | <b>Seats</b> | <b>Liberal Democrat</b> | <b>Herefordshire Independent</b> | <b>Conservative</b> | <b>Green</b> | <b>It's Our County!</b> | <b>Ungrouped</b> |
|--|--------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|--------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Audit and Governance Committee                         | 10           | -                       | 3                                | 5                   | -            | 2                       | -                |
| Employment Panel                                       | 6            | -                       | 1                                | 3                   | -            | 1                       | 1                |
| General Overview and Scrutiny Committee                | 14           | 1                       | 3                                | 7                   | -            | 3                       | -                |
| Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee | 14           | 1                       | 3                                | 6                   | 1            | 3                       | -                |
| Planning Committee                                     | 20           | 1                       | 5                                | 9                   | 1            | 4                       | -                |
| Regulatory Committee                                   | 10           | 1                       | 2                                | 4                   | 1            | 2                       | -                |
| <i>Total Seats</i>                                     | <i>74</i>    | <i>4</i>                | <i>17</i>                        | <i>34</i>           | <i>3</i>     | <i>15</i>               | <i>1</i>         |

**Table 3: Allocation of seats on outside bodies**

| <b>Body</b>                                       | <b>Seats</b> | <b>Liberal Democrat</b> | <b>Herefordshire Independent</b> | <b>Conservative</b> | <b>Green</b> | <b>It's Our County!</b> | <b>Ungrouped</b> |
|---|--------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|--------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Fire & Rescue Authority                           | 6            | -                       | 2                                | 3                   | -            | 1                       | -                |
| Standing Advisory Council For Religious Education | 3            | -                       | 1                                | 1                   | -            | 1                       | -                |

## MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 18 JULY 2014

### Question from Councillor NP Nenadich

#### Home Visits

- 1 *Given that we as a Council have pledged to protect / assist the "most" vulnerable is it possible to consider home visits being increased from 15 minutes to 30 at this time? This interaction for so many may well constitute their only human contact and allow greater personal assistance.*

### Answer from Councillor GJ Powell, Cabinet Member Health & Wellbeing

Answer to question 1

Currently the provision of 15 minute home care calls accounts for only 1% of total delivery within Herefordshire. We are working to remove these shorter duration calls completely. Where these calls are for medication prompts we will be working with individuals to use appropriate assistive technology. Actual care visits should be of an appropriate length to deliver a meaningful level of contact, care and support.

There are some vulnerable people in our community who have very little personal interaction and we are working with our voluntary and community sector to increase the number of groups and individuals in communities who look out for their neighbours. A 15 minute visit from a friend or neighbour can make the difference between social inclusion and rural isolation.

#### Supplementary Question

How are we developing initiatives to protect the most vulnerable?

### Answer from Councillor GJ Powell, Cabinet Member Health & Wellbeing

We are having a housing seminar with private developers and Registered Social Landlords that will look at housing development in particular for elderly residents. The Cabinet Member- Infrastructure and I are working on a range of health and social care initiatives with Wye Valley Trust the 2gether Trust and the Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group to discuss initiatives. We will also continue to work with communities and volunteers.

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### Question from Councillor DB Wilcox

#### River Island Building – High Town

- 2.1 *The fire-damaged buildings adjoining Ann Summers in High Town continues to give cause for concern. Despite four years having elapsed since the fire, this eyesore continues to be a blot on the city centre*

## MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 18 JULY 2014

*landscape. I am aware that discussions have taken place with insurers, owners and developers and various hopes and aspirations have been expressed. However despite all these, little has been achieved and I would ask if the Cabinet Member will actively consider taking appropriate action to bring this matter to a conclusion in the near future.*

*In particular, I would seek answers to the following points:*

- (a) As the scaffolding and boarding continue to project into part of a designated highway, is there a proper permit currently in force allowing the continuing obstruction of the highway in this manner and if so when does this permit expire?*
  - (b) Can the Council either terminate such a permit and/or refuse to issue another one unless the Council can be satisfied that suitable works are to be carried out over a restricted period?*
- 2.2 Please advise as to what statutory notices can be served or other enforcement action taken under planning, highway or other legislation to require the restoration of the building and removal of the scaffolding and boarding.*
- 2.3 Depending on the answers given to the above can the cabinet member confirm what action he proposes to instigate to bring this matter to a suitable conclusion at the earliest opportunity?*

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

Answer to question 2

This is a long-standing and protracted matter. The scaffolding around the front of the building (which has the appropriate license in place) is safeguarding the façade of the building from collapse. This is to be retained as part of the approved rebuilding scheme. Whilst the council does have powers to remove obstructions from the highway, we could not unreasonably withhold a licence for scaffolding required for this purpose.

Officers have recently inspected the building and are satisfied that the building is secure and that the historic elements to be retained are protected from wind and water.

The key to the rebuilding of the property rests with its letting on the commercial market. Officers and I are doing all that we can to encourage the owners to bring this matter to a speedy conclusion. In doing so we are working with businesses and other property owners in High Town. However should these discussions not prove fruitful options for more formal enforcement action will be considered in the autumn.

## MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 18 JULY 2014

### Supplementary Question

What statutory powers are available to the council to take enforcement, or other action, as I asked at paragraph 2.2 above?

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

There are statutory enforcement powers available to us but these could be very expensive to use. We have discussed the situation with the owners and their agent. They have confirmed that they want to return the property to its previous use. The Council would prefer to reach a mutual agreement rather than take enforcement action. I will inform Councillor Wilcox in the early Autumn of how negotiations have gone.

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### Question from Councillor P McCaull

#### Wind Turbine at The Earl Mortimer College, Leominster

3 *Recent press coverage has raised concerns regarding the return on investment made by the Welsh Assembly and Rushcliffe Borough Council when installing wind turbines, and noting that the supply company has gone into liquidation. I understand that the turbine fitted at The Earl Mortimer College in Leominster is the identical model as the Welsh Assembly one and therefore ask:*

- a) *Was it supplied by the same company as the Welsh Assembly and no longer in existence which means there is no-one to maintain it? (Company – Quiet Revolution)*
- b) *What was the total cost of supply, fix and any maintenance so far?*
- c) *How much electricity is it producing per month, in money as a return?*
- d) *How many years is it going to take to get back that money even if no more money has to be spent from now on?*
- e) *Or is this another case of misspending rates and tax payers money?*

### Answer from Councillor H Bramer Cabinet Member Contracts & Assets

Answer to question 3

Given the level of detail requested I have asked officers to liaise with the school before providing a written response.

## MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 18 JULY 2014

### Written Answer

- 3 a Yes it was supplied by 'Quiet Revolution'. In terms of maintenance there are a number of suppliers able to undertake such work
- 3.b The capital cost of the installation was £157,000. After a twelve month period the school chose to cease its operation on commercial grounds. Thereafter all revenue expenditure has been a matter for Earl Mortimer College to resource through its delegated funding from central government. The council has no service level agreement with the school who manage operational aspects of the site through a third party supplier.
- 3.c None – see 3 b above.
- 3 d Given the answer to 3 c above, there is no likelihood of any return on the scheme. However there was no payback expected to Herefordshire Council which did not fund the scheme.
- 3.e The scheme was funded via central government grant. There was no borrowing associated with the scheme.

### Question from Councillor J Knipe

#### Hereford United Football Ground

4. *We are reading a great deal in the press about the re-negotiation of leases on the Edgar Street football ground. I would like to know whether a due diligence report was prepared on behalf of Herefordshire Council to establish the financial credibility of Hereford United prior to the leases being amended in the last year. If a report has been prepared could it be released to avoid unnecessary speculation?*

### Answer from Councillor H Bramer Cabinet Member Contracts & Assets

Answer to question 4

I understand that the future of football in Hereford is generating a high level of speculation in some quarters. The council has been aware of the situation the football club has been facing for some time and has been doing what it can to support the retention of league football in the county whilst protecting public assets.

The council carried out the appropriate level of due diligence when restructuring the Hereford United Football Club leases, as it would do with any existing long term tenant who is not a new entity; no separate report was prepared at that time. The conditions have not been met to enable the leases to be extended beyond 2044.

## MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 18 JULY 2014

### Supplementary Question

What does the Cabinet Member consider to be “an appropriate level of due diligence”, to which he refers in his answer?

### Answer from Councillor H Bramer Cabinet Member Contracts & Assets

In renegotiating the leases we were in discussion with a Club with which, although in some financial difficulty, we had been dealing for a considerable time. The Council and those representing the Club wanted to allow football to continue to be played at Edgar Street. The level of due diligence undertaken with someone known to us as opposed to someone unknown to us would be completely different. We are trying to provide for football to continue to be played at Edgar Street and hope that that may still be the case.

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### Question from Councillor RI Matthews

#### Ragwort in verges

5. *Can the Cabinet Member please inform Members as to what action is being taken to deal with the serious problem of Ragwort which has been observed growing in abundance on roadside verges throughout the County, including in the immediate vicinity of the new Cattle Market? I understand from Government literature that this weed contains toxins which can have “debilitating or fatal consequences if eaten by horses and other grazing animals”.*

*I feel that this matter has not been treated with the urgency it merits, and as a result Members are receiving complaints from concerned parties.*

Answer to question 5

Balfour Beatty deals with this issue on behalf of the council. Treatment includes a seasonal spraying programme to aid control of ragwort in the county. Further details on how to recognise and report Ragwort are available on the council's website; members are also able to highlight particular problem areas to their locality steward. The specific concern regarding the area in the vicinity of the new livestock market has been passed to Balfour Beatty.

### Supplementary Question

Will the Cabinet Member also act to control Japanese Knotweed?

## MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 18 JULY 2014

### Answer from Councillor P Rone Cabinet Member Transport & Roads

I will check what action needs to be taken.

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### Question from Councillor RI Matthews

#### Franklin House

6 *I understand that the people working to provide a University of Hereford have been given an option to purchase Franklin House from the Council for a fee of £880,000.*

*Can you confirm that this is so, and at the same time inform Members as to where the Customer Services will be situated if this sale should go ahead?*

### Answer from Councillor H Bramer Cabinet Member Contracts & Assets

Answer to question 6

This is not so. Following the motion passed by Council asking the executive to identify the most appropriate way in which the council can assist in securing the future of higher education in the county I have authorised officers to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the New University of Herefordshire and commence negotiations for options on a number of sites, one of which is Franklin House. A link to the report informing that decision is below.

<http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=2714>

Following Cabinet's consideration last September of options for the future model of customer services, which included options for the future base for customer services in the city, a further report on the council's accommodation strategy is scheduled for consideration in the autumn.

#### Supplementary Question

Can you assure Members that the best possible price will be sought when disposing of Council assets?

### Answer from Councillor H Bramer Cabinet Member Contracts & Assets

We have a duty to obtain the best possible price at the time a disposal takes place.

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## MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 18 JULY 2014

### Question from Councillor MD Lloyd-Hayes

#### Children's Safeguarding

- 7 *In light of the importance of the Government and this Council's attempts to protect children from physical, sexual, mental and emotional abuse, would it not be prudent to insist that Members of this Council, who are all Corporate Parents attend Children's Wellbeing seminars/training in order to engage and carry out their statutory duty effectively?*

### Answer from Councillor J Millar Cabinet Member Young People and Children's Wellbeing

Answer to question 7

I agree that every member of this council should attend training and briefing sessions on this important issue, which was highlighted by the Health & Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee's task & finish review. I share Cllr Lloyd-Hayes' concern and will take the matter up with Group Leaders with a view to introducing some mandatory corporate parenting and safeguarding training from 2015, and ensuring that such opportunities are accessible to all members.

#### Supplementary Question

Could consideration be given to reducing the allowances of Members who do not carry out their corporate parenting role effectively?

### Answer from Councillor J Millar Cabinet Member Young People and Children's Wellbeing

That is not within my remit. I will suggest that it is raised with Group Leaders.

