

Public questions to Council – 18 December 2015

Question from Mr P McKay, Leominster

Question 1

Highways records

A briefing note raised for general overview and scrutiny committee advised that access is to be improved to our highway records but at local access forum council's Balfour Beatty representative had little information other than that some statutory records would shortly be online. The Deregulation Act 2015 provisions can be expected to come into effect early next year with volunteers researching gaps and anomalies in the records, helping to bring them up to standard, so may I ask if :

1. Viewing the records over historic base maps could be made viewable at record office, this known to be available to Herefordshire Council officers but not online?
2. If viewing the Exponare public rights of way data with its written statement path termination information could be reinstated, this presumably still available, and useful information if researching gaps and anomalies?
3. If the list of anomalies and blue triangle location markers could be made viewable, again useful information if researching gaps and anomalies?
4. If definitive map modification order application's and road protocol applications could be shown on a map layer in addition to being listing in the register, this making them clearer to be seen by all?

Answer from Cllr P Rone, cabinet member transport and roads

I am pleased to report that the statutory records (definitive map, list of streets, streetworks register and local street gazetteer) are now available online at <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/beta/highways-maps>

Regarding your specific points:

1. I agree that making this information available online would be helpful and I have asked officers to investigate whether this is possible, subject to complying with the appropriate licencing restrictions
2. I can confirm that, subject to resolving any technical issues, officers will seek to make this available online
3. The data relating to anomalies is a working document open to misinterpretation and therefore not appropriate to publish this online. However, researchers may make an appointment with the Balfour Beatty Living Places public rights of way team to view the available data at the Thorn Offices in Hereford.
4. I agree that including this information as a map layer would aid clarity. Achieving this requires further digitisation work to be carried out.

Whilst we will continue to work to make as much information as possible available online it is important to note that there are resource implications to achieving this and, given the resource constraints and overall priorities for the service, I regret it is not possible to give any timescales for achieving this.

Supplementary Question

Now that the Street Works Register has been published, could you confirm that you have work in hand to self-register our highways that you are aware of for which you are not the street authority, which could be expected to include through routes in regular public use and cul-de-sac's leading to public places and to public paths mentioned on the written statements as road to which path connects, in conformance with your responsibility under s.4(5) of the 2007 Regulations, and if not what do you need to do this ?

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Answer from Cllr P Rone, cabinet member transport and roads

There is no specific project or planned work-stream to record additional highways of which the authority is aware but for which it is not the street authority. Should members of the public identify such routes they may submit an application, either for a Definitive Map Modification Order or one under the Council's Highways Records protocol, supported by suitable and sufficient evidence. All properly made applications will be prioritised and actioned accordingly. The "responsibility" set out in 4(5) of The Street Works (Registers, Notices, Directions and Designations) (England) Regulations 2007 comes into play in this regard once the Council becomes aware of such highways. The Council has established its Highways Records Protocol specifically to ensure that there is a suitable mechanism in place to enable people to make the Council aware. In short, to meet the responsibility, the Council needs members of the public to submit appropriately researched and evidenced applications.

Question from Mrs E Morawiecka, Breinton

Question 2

Southern link road

The Southern link road waste report is blank for the management of waste from the construction of this road. As waste spoil has been a significant problem with the Rotherwas Enterprise Zone, ESG development, the flood alleviation works, Asda, etc. would the cabinet member please explain what cost allowance has been made for the waste associated with this major infrastructure project and how this has been calculated, including types of waste, volumes of each waste and location of the appropriate waste handling sites?

Answer from Cllr P Price, cabinet member infrastructure

An appropriate allowance of around £900k for waste management has been made within the scheme cost estimate based on the level of scheme design with appropriate contingency allowance. The detailed calculations will be developed as the scheme progresses.

Question from Mrs V Wegg-Prosser, Breinton

Question 3

Hereford 2020

Hereford High Town, Hereford Butter Market, Hereford parking charges, Hereford Southern link road, and Hereford Skylon Park enterprise zone all seem to have been rolled into one masterplan, 'Hereford 2020', with its own website, and video insert 'blogs'. Could the cabinet member responsible for 'Hereford 2020' please explain what, at a time of cuts to public services making Hereford a less attractive place in which to live, is the justification for the allocation of £2.5 million to streetscape improvements in High Town, and describe the remit, terms of reference, budget and funding sources for 'Hereford 2020'.

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Answer from Cllr G Powell, cabinet member economy and corporate services

Question 3

Herefordshire is already a great place to live, to visit and to do business. Growing the local economy through investment in infrastructure will create new jobs and enable the building of new homes; key elements in the future prosperity of our county.

I believe that our historic cathedral city deserves a city centre of which we can be proud and the High Town refurbishment scheme is just one part of a package of initiatives, which will enable us to deliver that objective.

The High Town refurbishment scheme will support the economic growth of Hereford city centre by providing a more spacious and pleasurable environment. The scheme aims to achieve what the Old Market shopping centre and Widemarsh Street schemes have done and encourage even more visitors and shoppers to visit the city. Investment in high quality public realm schemes can make a major contribution to increasing footfall thereby supporting the economic growth of cities. The funding for the High Town refurbishment scheme will be taken from the Department for Transport annual grant and explains why the project is phased over an extended period of time.

“Hereford 2020” is a brand rather than a project in its own right. Hereford 2020 is an umbrella under which a number of projects can be collated and will change and evolve over time.

The web pages, developed in house, <http://www.hereford2020.com/> aim to bring together information about the major improvements planned in the city over the next five years. This website is a low cost way to provide a clear vision for the growth of the city and provide information about schemes such as the High Town refurbishment or city link road as they are developed. There is no dedicated budget because the information has been developed within existing resources. The website is enhanced by using photographs of the hoardings which are now in place around the new city link road site. The space on the hoarding was sold to generate income.

Question from Mrs J Morris, Hereford

Question 4

Local transport plan

With reference to the draft local transport plan policy, on page 16 it says in reference to bus services - "Subsidy is allocated to services on the basis of the relative costs of providing the service and rider-ship (cost per passenger). A service qualifies for subsidy if the cost per passenger is at, or below, a standard amount. This standard amount alters in line with budget availability. **At the time of writing (2012)** the rate is £4 per passenger."

Would the cabinet member confirm that the public are actually viewing the 2015 local transport plan and what the update, current 2015/16 standard rate, actually is per passenger?

Answer from Cllr P Price, cabinet member infrastructure

The correct version of the consultation draft local transport plan 2015 is on the council's website. I can confirm that the current rate per passenger guiding decisions on subsidy is £4 as per the draft document, reference to 2012 is a typographical error and should refer to 2015. Any comment received on the draft document will be considered in finalising the plan for adoption by Council.

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Supplementary Question

As the Local Transport Plan is for the next 16 years - what is the anticipated rate at which this standard rate will change?

Answer from Cllr P Price, cabinet member infrastructure

It is difficult to predict what the standard rate of change will be. However, consultation on the matter is planned with the rates to be reviewed annually.

Question from Dr N Geeson, Hereford

Question 5

Local transport plan

The local transport plan currently under public consultation includes a strategic environmental assessment (SEA) based on a list of objectives to protect the environment. Unfortunately this SEA is not new but is based on previous SEAs, including that for the core strategy, which was criticised for not recognising up-to-date baseline environmental data. Since the proposed Western relief road corridor crosses the River Wye SAC (that is a European designation) and SSSI, why does the council mention only very few environmental assets by the riverbank that might be affected, and consistently fail to recognise the scheduled ancient monument at the National Trust site of Breinton Springs, Breinton Wood ancient woodland, (designated a Local Wildlife Site), extensive landscaped parkland, and a local geological site at Red Rocks? If so much up-to-date environmental evidence is missing, surely this SEA, which is required both by European law and the national planning policy framework, cannot be either reliable or lawful?

Answer from Cllr P Price, cabinet member infrastructure

The evidence base for the strategic environmental assessment (SEA) for the local transport plan (LTP) is shared with the evidence base developed for the sustainability appraisal for the core strategy as both strategies include the same proposals in respect of major transport infrastructure such as the Hereford relief road. The issue about the evidence base being up to date and comprehensive with regard to the Breinton area was raised at the core strategy examination in public and considered by the inspector. The inspector concluded that the core strategy was robust in terms of its sustainability, had been subject to an adequate sustainability appraisal, and that the core strategy was sound. The council considers that the SEA for the LTP is also sound.

Supplementary Question

Special areas of Conservation like the River Wye are supposed to be protected by European legislation in the form of Habitats Regulations. In para 1,3,4 of the Strategic Environmental Assessment accompanying LTP4, I quote:

‘Herefordshire Council considers it unlikely that significant negative effects on European sites will occur from the LTP4’

Surely any new river crossing could not avoid production of significant negative effects, especially where there are scheduled monuments, Local Wildlife Sites and Local Geological sites, and surely a specific Habitats Regulations Assessment is needed.

Answer from Cllr Price

Evidence will be provided in due course.

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Question from Ms K Sharp, Hereford

Question 6

Enterprise zone employment

With the council making significant investment in the Rotherwas enterprise zone to support the creation of 4,000 new jobs, would the cabinet member please confirm how many additional, new jobs have been created on the zone (excluding those that have been transferred from other sites in Herefordshire)?

Answer from Cllr G Powell, cabinet member economy and corporate services

Five developments are complete on site. Companies occupying this new space are bringing 273 new jobs to Herefordshire over the first three years of occupation. Four more developments will be finished at the end of January, which will add to the jobs total.

A number of these developments are being constructed by local building contractors, boosting their businesses too.

The Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (MLEP) and the Enterprise Zone (EZ) board has always had a policy of welcoming growing local companies as well as seeking to attract businesses from further afield. Providing the right space in the right location for a local company allows them to expand and to employ more local people, and to build on and expand their established local supply chains.

In order to secure these jobs the EZ needs to prepare and provide infrastructure to sites so that the land is ready for investors to buy. They then build their new premises, occupy the buildings, and then over a period of time, create new job opportunities.

A major benefit of the zone's funding arrangements is that the business rates generated are recycled through the MLEP, with the council having a call on these funds to repay the infrastructure investment it is making. The MLEP is also supporting future growth of the zone by securing government funding for the A49 – A465 southern link road.

Question from Ms C Protherough, Clehonger

Question 7

Local transport plan

The LTP4 SEA para 4.6.30, shows that in 2009 the county's carbon footprint per capita was 16.2% higher than the rest of the UK. Since then the rest of the country has reduced its carbon footprint by 13% whilst Herefordshire has only reduced by 10%. With the council's plans for economic and housing growth across the county, including major new road infrastructure which is expected to increase car use, what are the forecast carbon emissions between now and 2031 and what amount is anticipated to come from transport within the county?

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Answer from Cllr P Price, cabinet member infrastructure

We do not have a breakdown for the county level of this projection, however government projections indicate that transport related carbon emissions will reduce nationally by 16% between 1990 and 2030. This compares with an overall projected reduction of 50% for the same period which indicates that whilst government expects transport carbon emissions to reduce over time they are unlikely to reduce at the same rate as the overall average.

The council has set a target of reducing co2 emissions by 80% on the 1990 base by 2050. The most recent emissions data would indicate that we are on track to achieving that target.

Question from Mr J Perkins, Hereford

Question 8

Southern link road

With the deadline of April 2016 fast approaching for providing a full business case to the Dept for Transport for the South Wye transport package, and planning permission for the Southern link road still outstanding, would the cabinet member please confirm that Herefordshire Council will be submitting a full business case for the sustainable transport measures that will tackle congestion in South Wye, ahead of any road building?

Answer from Cllr P Price, cabinet member infrastructure

April 2016 was a target date not a deadline. A full business case for the South Wye transport package (which comprises new link road and associated active travel measures) will be submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) before any road building.

Question from Ms P Churchward, Breinton

Question 9

Local transport plan

Given that the cabinet member has asked people to take time away from their Christmas preparations, holiday and family in order to meet the December 31st consultation deadline for the local transport plan 2016-2031, it would be helpful if he could provide specific examples of past LTP proposals that have been changed or introduced as a result of public consultation, particularly from the 2010 consultation on LTP3.

Answer from Cllr P Price, cabinet member infrastructure

I am pleased to note that some responses to the consultation have already been received; however the point made about the timing of the closing date is accepted and I can confirm that the deadline for receipt of responses has been extended to 5.00pm on Friday 29 January.

The following examples demonstrate the value of engaging in consultation:

- Respondents to the local transport plan (LTP) consultation in 2010 included the Hereford relief road as one of the top four transport priorities countywide. We have listened to this feedback and a Hereford relief road is now included in the draft LTP.

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- 71% respondents to the LTP consultation in 2012 said that we should target public transport subsidy to a core network, which we have done.
 - 63% respondents to the LTP consultation in 2012 said that road maintenance was important and supported a proactive approach. This was also supported in the 2012 Herefordshire quality of life survey which identified road and pavement repairs as areas most in need of improvement and a priority. In 2014 and 2015, the council has invested an extra £20m to fix the county's roads.
 - 59% respondents to the LTP consultation in 2010 said they supported more measures to encourage sustainable transport. We successfully bid for government funding to help deliver the £11million Destination Hereford project which has included the construction of the Connect 2 Hereford Greenway cycle bridge and route.
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Question from Ms D Toynbee, Eaton Bishop

Question 10

Destination Hereford

£11 million was allocated to the council for the Destination Project to April 2015, to develop low carbon transport and support sustainable economic growth in Hereford. Would the cabinet member detail how the final Destination Hereford package has performed against the targets of reduced congestion and increased rural access to public transport?

Answer from Cllr P Price, cabinet member infrastructure

The impact of the Destination Hereford project is currently being evaluated and will be reported to cabinet as part of the normal performance reporting process.

Question from Ms P Mitchell

Question 11

Local transport plan

The draft LTP4 policy document contains an ambitious and very welcome policy on active travel, aiming for cycling to account for 15% of all journeys in Hereford by 2032 (p 30). This is a very big difference from the share modelled in the 2014 Hereford transport strategy review which showed that by 2032 cycling would account for less than 5% of trips on Hereford's road network (table 3.8).

What modelling has the council undertaken since the Hereford transport strategy review report to analyse the impact of a 15% mode share for cycling in 2032 on a) the number of cars using the Hereford relief road, which the 2014 transport strategy review says will not be needed until 2027, and b) peak hour congestion in Hereford?

Answer from Cllr P Price, cabinet member infrastructure

The 15% target for cycling mode share by 2031 demonstrates our commitment to promoting sustainable modes of travel. As a target and not a forecast no modelling has been undertaken.

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