

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO CABINET – 17 January 2019

Question 1

Mrs E Morawiecka, Breinton

To: cabinet member, infrastructure

The Spotlight Review summary of recommendations no. xvii says “The executive is recommended to fast track measures to enable safe walking and cycling, within the city of Hereford and our Market towns, and to encourage these modes of active travel to reduce obesity and to enhance mental and physical health and wellbeing.”

The executive response says “accepted” but the action does not reflect this. The response does not ENABLE safe walking and cycling but just talks of getting insights as to why people don’t walk/cycle or promotions.

Information is available both locally and nationally that risk of injury/safety (actual and perceived) is a main factor preventing walking/cycling. What is the Executive actually DOING TO PROVIDE “safe routes to school”; support school travel plans with capital investment in surrounding areas to promote walking/cycling; 20mph speed limits in residential areas?

Response

The proposed actions set out in the cabinet papers in response to the recommendations from scrutiny include insight work that will be undertaken to understand why people do / do not use active travel measures. This is essential if we are to ensure that investment is directed to measures that will be of most impact. However this isn’t the only action, and the response includes a continued commitment to the promotion and facilitation of walking and cycling in Hereford and the market towns. This commitment will continue to be demonstrated through the delivery of the infrastructure needed to enable safe walking and cycling and the promotion of active travel.

Through our Local Transport Plan we have over many years invested in a range of projects to improve facilities for cycling and walking across the county and improve safety along routes to school, including the introduction of 20mph zones, particularly in the vicinity of schools.

We already have over 17 miles of off-road cycle provision in Hereford including some key routes to schools and colleges. These include, but are not limited to:

- the recent improvements on Holme Lacy Road providing wide shared use routes and controlled crossings to primary schools in this area
- A new wide shared use route along the City Link Road providing a direct safe route to primary schools and colleges from the west of the city.

The council is committed to delivering improvements for walking and cycling as part of both the South Wye Transport Package (SWTP) and Hereford City Centre Transport Package (HCCTP) projects. We are also about to launch a consultation on 29 January 2019 setting out a range of possible improvements which, together with the bypass, form the Hereford Transport Package (HTP). The delivery of the HCCTP and SWTP walking and cycling schemes should commence from 2020 onwards and along with the HTP walking and cycling improvements will provide a safe and attractive network which will help and encourage students and parents to consider walking and cycling to school as an alternative to short car trips.

Alongside infrastructure improvement, we support all schools to develop and implement their travel plans through a range of initiatives. We have a dedicated walking and cycling programme, delivered by Sustrans. We lead a programme of term time activities, travel plan support and a growing programme of school holiday activities and free Bikeability training offered to all schools.

The council is also committed to delivering active travel schemes and behavioural change projects in the market towns. Transport strategy reviews for Bromyard, Leominster and Ledbury are included in the Local Transport Plan programme. These strategy reviews are looking at all transport issues in each town and identify a programme of active travel schemes for each. Once these are completed, they will inform future decisions regarding schemes for implementation.

The councils [Choose how you move](#) webpages provide lots of information about a whole host of facilities, services and opportunities to enable people to find healthy and enjoyable alternatives to using their cars.

Question 2

Ms K Sharp, Hereford

To: cabinet member, infrastructure

South Wye has high levels of childhood obesity. With over £5million already spent on the South Wye Transport Package and a total capital project fund of £35million, where are the Active Travel measures that are integral to achieving the objectives of the scheme and that were due to be made public at least 2 years ago?

Response

Possible improvements within the South Wye area were subject to public consultation. Just over a year ago, in December 2017, Cabinet considered the results of this consultation and authorised officers to progress detailed design of recommended measures and to produce a programme for delivery – including implementation of those measures that may be delivered in advance of a new road. I am due to consider a report next month that will determine the programme of schemes to be delivered as part of the South Wye Transport Package.

Active travel measures are an integral part of any major scheme development for a variety of very good health and environmental reasons. However they will not alone address the very real issue of childhood obesity and it is therefore important to support the wider actions proposed in response to the scrutiny recommendations.

Question 3

Dr N Geeson, Hereford

To: cabinet member, infrastructure

In 2012 modelling suggested that a 10% increase in cycling/walking in urban areas could save the NHS £1bn over 20 years. Childhood obesity is greater than average in Hereford, so when will projects like the St. Owens St. bike lane exhibited in 2017 become a priority? The excuse that we have to wait up to 10 years for a bypass to provide space to do this is nonsense. There are many examples of towns and cities that have imaginative and very successful active travel measures, without introducing new roads.

Response

Increasing cycling and walking is one of our priorities and there has been no suggestion that there will be a ten year wait for implementation of the St Owen's Street cycle scheme. Consultation on the design of the St Owen's Street scheme was carried out last year and was well received. Detailed design is currently being finalised to enable the construction during the next financial year. Delivery of cycle improvements is one of our priorities and we will continue to deliver such schemes. During 2018, we delivered a first phase of improvements to Holme Lacy Road (a key route into the Enterprise Zone) together with a new cycleway along the Straight Mile in Rotherwas. Phase 2 of works to Holme Lacy Road are planned for further development this year. In addition, the council has delivered an ambitious programme of walking and cycling schemes as I detailed in my response to public question 1 above, and is planning millions of pounds worth of investment as part of the Hereford City Centre, South Wye and Hereford transport packages.

Alongside investment in infrastructure the council delivers a Healthy Lifestyle Trainer project in partnership with Public Health to support residents to improve their health through increased active travel. We are currently out to tender for an on street cycle hire scheme for Hereford City and we have introduced a Cycle Lengthsmen scheme – maintaining Hereford's 17 miles of off-road dedicated walking and cycling network. We are currently upgrading the cycle signage in Hereford and will be introducing cycle way marking and we are investing in improved facilities for Park & Choose sites. We deliver a free programme of led cycle rides including new and returning cyclists, women's only rides and family rides.

Question 4

Ms J Angulatta, Hereford

To: cabinet member, infrastructure

On the 4th January 2019 NICE (National Institute for Health & Care Excellence) stated in a draft Quality Standard that Councils should develop and maintain routes that give priority to pedestrians, cyclists and those using public transport over motorised vehicles.

What is the Executive committed to doing so that safe walking, cycling and public transport receives investment ahead of other modes of transport to improve the health of the local population?

Response

I refer to the responses given to the earlier public questions where I have set out the improvements already made and proposed, and have also set out the ambitious and sustained active travel behavioural change programme being delivered by the council known as 'Destination Hereford'. This programme has been successful in increasing walking and cycling levels in Herefordshire since it started in April 2011, and has contributed towards a 5% reduction in car use between 2016 and 2017 and a 26% increase in cycling in the same period. This council is the only one in the West Midlands to win funding from all three rounds of the Department for Transport funding programme to support changes in travel behaviour to more active modes of travel since 2011, which demonstrates the soundness of our proposals.

Question 5

Mrs H Powers, Breinton

To: cabinet member, infrastructure

The Spotlight Review para 3.11 says Active Travel Measures are contained in the Herefordshire Council Local Transport Plan 2016- 2031 where one objective is to promote healthy lifestyles by making sure that new developments maximise healthier and less polluting forms of transport by delivering and promoting active travel schemes and by reducing short distance single occupant car journeys on the roads of Herefordshire. Please explain how major new developments at Holmer; Station Approach; Bartestree; Ledbury are delivering safe walking/cycling travel schemes that will contribute to a comprehensive network, reducing short journey car use, particularly the school run?

Response

The council's policy and guidance ensure that any major new developments include where possible infrastructure to support walking and cycling. Developers are required to provide links to existing walking and cycling routes to ensure a continuous and safe access which will encourage new residents to walk or cycle short journeys and this approach is set out in current council planning guidance.

The new developments at the locations you identify have delivered schemes which will support walking, cycling and public transport for new residents and also existing residents within these areas. Examples of schemes which have already been implemented include:

- On and off road cycle routes
- Pedestrian and shared pedestrian/cycle crossings
- New bus stop facilities
- Contributions to enhanced bus services
- Signalised junctions including pedestrian and cyclist facilities

Further improvement schemes will come forward at these locations and other parts of the county as a result of development contributions.

Question 6

Mrs C Protherough, Clehonger

To: cabinet member, infrastructure

It is reported that the fast-tracking of the delivery of active travel infrastructure was supported by the spotlight review. Residents of South Wye have waited years for improvements to the Holme Lacy road, the active travel measures for the South Wye Transport Package have still not been published years after being promised and the transport hub for the station as part of the City Link Project does not exist; even as a paper drawing. What time scale does the Executive consider to be "Fast tracking"?

Response

The executive is committed to delivering projects as quickly as possible. However these large package projects do take time to develop and to secure funding. We have consulted on possible improvements for both the Hereford City Centre Transport Package (public realm

improvements including the transport hub) and South Wye Transport Package (active travel measures). As I set out in my response to public question number 2 I am due to confirm the programme for active travel measure delivery in the South Wye area next month.

Designs for the transport hub at the city's train station were developed in outline in 2015/2016 and we are currently refining the design taking into account key stakeholder feedback. We have reviewed the current bus provision in Hereford and completed a future needs study. This will mean we will be ready to launch a public consultation in the second half of this year. This consultation will inform a decision on the detailed design of the scheme, which we currently anticipate will be delivered on site from 2020.