

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO CABINET – 28 February 2019

Question 1

Mrs V Wegg-Prosser, Breinton

To: cabinet member, infrastructure

In the light of confirmation from the Marches LEP that £2,145,000 from the DfT retained scheme for the South Wye Transport Package had been provided to the Council for the year 2016/17, and that a further £1,698,610 had been incorrectly advanced to the Council from LGF/LEP retained schemes underspends in 2015/16, and that no SWTP 'DfT retained' sums of money can be advanced to the Council in the year 2018/19, how will the Council fund the balance of monies it intends to spend in this current financial year on the SWTP?

Response

The total amount of income received from the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership is £3,843,609.71; this has been correctly treated as grant in the year received. South Wye Transport Package expenditure incurred in 2018/19 will be funded from Local Transport Plan grant as set out in the cabinet member report in November 2018. This report is available on the council's [website](#)

Question 2

Mrs E Morawiecka, Breinton

To: cabinet member, infrastructure

Would the relevant cabinet member please explain what all the money spent to date on the whole South Wye Transport Package (SWTP) has been spent on?
It would be helpful for openness, transparency and accountability if the amount spent could be itemised by the unapproved SWTP budget headings such as land purchases; professional fees; construction costs; etc

Response

In addition to the forecast set out in the published papers, capital spend to the end of 2017/2018 on the SWTP project totalled £4,977,931.67. This comprised £4,786,544.24 professional design development fee costs and £191,387.43 spend on land acquisition and compensation payment costs.

Supplementary Question

The answer only provides spend to the end of March 2018 and so ignores the costs incurred in 2018/19, which included the public inquiry in November 2018. As set out in the response to the question of 31 January, Council and cabinet decisions to date have only approved spend of £2.75m in respect of professional fees relating to the SWTP. The written answer confirms that to the 31 March 2018 there was an authorised spend of £2,036,544 of professional fees on this capital budget before we even take into account what has been spent on professional fees in 2018/19. Who has authorised £4.786m worth of payments, over £2m in excess of the amounts permitted by various council decisions to be spent on professional fees and what action is being taken to protect taxpayers money from the uncontrolled profligacy of this administration on capital projects?

Response

All decisions have been taken according to decisions made by cabinet. We have approved that delegated officers will continue to work this scheme up. A further written response will be provided.

Question 3

Mr R Palgrave, How Caple

To: cabinet member, infrastructure

The Corporate Delivery plan states that detailed design of the preferred route for the Hereford bypass to inform the submission of a planning application will be undertaken in 2019-20. At Council on 15th February we heard from the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure that "the bypass will be taken forward by Highways England and the Department for Transport probably whether we like it or not". Would detailed design work done by Council's consultants on the bypass next year not be unnecessary and wasteful if Highways England assume responsibility for the project, given that they (Highways England) would need to ensure compliance with trunk road design standards?

Response

The detailed design work is neither unnecessary or wasteful because the scheme is an essential part of the infrastructure improvements needed to facilitate growth in the county, enabling the development of new housing and freeing up land for economic use as well as helping to address congestion and air quality issues in the city. Whichever public body ultimately takes forward this scheme would need the work to be done and we are carrying out that work in compliance with the design standards required by Highways England and the Department for Transport. I fully expect delivery of the bypass to be funded by central government.

Question 4

Mrs C Palgrave, How Caple

To: cabinet member, transport and regulatory services

The Appendix to the Corporate Delivery Plan says that in 2019-20, Council will progress the delivery of a city centre multi-storey car park. Increasing parking capacity in the city will encourage greater use of cars for commuting and other trips into the city centre. How is this consistent with the statements made in the Local Transport Plan Strategy on the need to reduce the number of short car journeys, and to convert short car journeys to active travel, reducing congestion, improving air quality and health?

Response

The council's parking policy for Hereford is set out in the local transport plan (LTP) 2016-31 [policy document](#).

The corporate delivery plan commitment to progress a city centre multi-storey car park is supported by the policy set out in the LTP. The policy includes proposals to rationalise public car parks through the replacement of smaller car parks with fewer, larger car parks including multi-storey car parks. This approach isn't intended primarily to increase capacity but to improve the council's ability to manage car park use, reduce traffic circulation in the central

area and differentiate between long stay (commuting) and shorter stay (shoppers, tourists) parking. Greater influence over these factors can assist with the aim of reducing short, car based trips.

This policy is being implemented alongside other aspect of the parking policy which will further help manage demand and encourage more shorter distance trips to be undertaken using more sustainable modes such as walking, cycling and local buses:

- on street parking charges have now been introduced in the historic core;
- residents parking schemes have been reviewed and extended around the fringes of the city centre;
- parking charges have been introduced in Herefordshire Council staff car parks;
- parking charges have been kept under review and increased periodically.