

COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS TO CABINET – 22 JULY 2021

Question 1

Councillor Tracy Bowes, Belmont Rural Ward

To: Cabinet member, infrastructure and transport

The questions and concerns being raised by Independents and It's Our County Councillors and by members of the public back in 2016 and 2017 should have led to these overspends being admitted to and action taken to address the ballooning project costs. How was it that their questions and concerns were allowed to be deflected with misleading and dissembling responses from Officers and Politicians?

Response

Thank you Cllr Bowes, that is a fair question. I cannot say whether councillors or officers deliberately set out to mislead or dissemble in their responses but I can say it is my opinion that the Council historically has fallen short in giving clear and fair responses to questions from members of the public and councillors. However, I have full faith in the new Chief Executive's open, honest and robust approach to transparency.

Looking forward, we as an administration have always tried to be as honest and open as possible when responding to councillor and public questions, no matter how embarrassing or otherwise those answers may be because if we are not always accountable to the public what is the point of being elected representatives of the public - being clear and transparent is the least tax payers can expect from us.

Question 2

Councillor William Wilding, Penyard Ward

To: Cabinet member, infrastructure and transport

Ref the City Link Road.-

Surely the point of the road connecting to a transport hub, is so we could provide active transport measures linking it to the city. At present this road doesn't have a dedicated cycle path. Why was this not designed into the original scheme?

Response

Thank you Cllr Wilding, I concur with the opening part of your question but cannot answer the second. That is a question that should be asked of the previous Conservative Cabinet Member or the previous Leader of the Council.

I do know that when the City Link Road was first being publicly discussed way back in 2009/10 much focus was given by the then Cabinet Member, Cllr Graham Powell, on what an important cycling route this would be – to and from the railway station and transport hub – but by the time we got to actual delivery we got a huge broad road with

lost space in a central reservation and a shared cycle path dumped on the pavement. I cannot yet work out where along the process this change occurred or if it was originally always to be a substandard shared path on the pavement. We intend to revisit and improve this poor offering, which is no longer in compliance with the government's guidance, LTN 1/20, which says the government will no longer support shared pedestrian and cycle paths.

Question 3

Councillor Paul Andrews, Hagley Ward

To: Leader of the Council

When the link road was completed, the then Conservative Leader of the Council, Jonathan Lester, said it had been built on time and on budget. Was that true?

Response

Thank you for that question. Once again it may be more appropriate to ask that question of Cllr Lester. My own view is that I have a high regard of Cllr Lester as someone who always attempts to speak accurately and truthfully on matters but I think it is not accurate to say that the road was built on time and on budget when we have not finished paying for it and costs associated with land purchases and Compulsory Purchase Orders have increased considerably. It may be he was not presented fully with the facts before he made such statements.