

COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS TO CABINET – 29 JULY 2021

Question 1

From: Councillor Graham Andrews, Kings Acre Ward

**To: Cabinet member, commissioning, procurement and assets
Cabinet member, finance, corporate services and planning**

The recent weeks has highlighted the large variances in project management control that has been completed on significant high profile projects, that have been late on delivery and over budget.

I see new Senior Project Managers are now in place, however will HC continue to outsource projects to provider such as BBLP who appear have a poor delivery record HC, or will HC engage their own Project Managers for all future projects, where control is more accountable?

Local Project Managers in local projects may provide greater results

Response

Thank you for your question Cllr Andrews. You are correct to highlight that historical project management failures have been a matter of concern in certain areas of the council and that legacy issues continue to come to light.

Since coming into office we have made it a priority to create a Project Management Office (PMO) and to staff it with professional and experienced project managers and now Delivery Directors to lead on the many important projects in which this council is investing.

Our substantial public realm partnership contract with BBLP has been independently examined. The shortcomings to which you refer stem more from the way the contract has historically been operated.

Item 8 on today's agenda is about learning the lessons from how this contract has previously been managed. The recommendations propose the improvements necessary to the way the council operates this contract in the role of 'Customer' which are necessary to derive the full benefit from this partnership arrangement in future. These new contracting and commissioning posts in the PMO will put the checks and balances in place to create and maintain the constructive tension between supplier and customer that are necessary to deliver and demonstrate future value to our residents.

We shall continue to use the flexibility that a mix of in-house and contracted-in project managers provides in order to manage the fluctuations in work flow on the delivery of large and complex projects. Whether the Project Managers are our own permanent staff or are specialists working with us for short periods of time, you can be assured that the culture of professional project management is now with us and is here to stay at Herefordshire Council.