

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO CABINET – 28 APRIL 2022

Question 1

From: Ms S Watkins, Hereford

To: cabinet member, infrastructure and transport

Although some progress has been made and the Beryl bikes are extremely popular, what will be done to make cycling safer in the city? I live on Kings Acre Road and this route into Hereford is not safe for cyclists. I have experienced many near misses. If I cycle from my house (near Blue Diamond) to the city centre, none of those roads are cycle friendly, culminating in the large roundabout by Tesco. The cycle track from Stretton Sugwas towards the city is fantastic and well used - we need more of these type of cycle tracks to encourage more cycling and less car use.

Response

Thank you very much for your positive comments about the Beryl scheme and I am glad we were able to extend the service after a competitive tender and also that we will soon see more electric bikes, which have been extremely popular, coming into the bays. We are also in the early stages of looking at providing some cargo bikes so people can do their shopping on a Beryl. Beryl tells us, in no short measure due to the support provided by Pedicargo, that their Hereford scheme, although smaller than some, is one of the most successful and well used and are full of praise for the residents of Herefordshire who have taken the scheme to their heart.

Regards current cycle path/route provision, you are right, we simply do not have enough good quality cycle routes in and around the City. And what previous administrations, through different schemes, have provided in the past has not been good enough, particularly in relation to the practice of installing non-segregated cycle lanes, using the shared pavement approach instead and also accepting schemes that gave up when it came to designing safe pathways through junctions. The political focus in the past has been on very large road projects and serious efforts to make Hereford a safe and efficient cycling and walking City has not been pursued with the same vigour (although I must also give credit to the previous Conservative administration for overseeing the introduction of the Beryl scheme).

This Council is strongly committed to improving and extending all active travel options and through the development of our ambitious new Hereford City Masterplan we are looking to improve and design new schemes that make it much easier and safer to travel by bike, foot or bus.

Here our ambition is to sensibly and expediently design as many segregated – and crucially, connected - routes as possible and to also highlight and improve the ‘safe routes’ that currently exist and go through some of our quieter side streets and roads. We are also looking at slow speed/20mph zones in parts or the whole of the City to enable a safer more friendly road environment where roads must be shared by cyclists and motorists. As always, this is about balance, we need those that use cars through choice or need to still be able to do so but rebalance some of that space and treat cyclists and pedestrians with parity.

This will require a mind-set change in motorists and complementary measures will be introduced to aid that change. Hereford will - in the short to medium term – have a new

safe properly connected network for cycling separate from cars and segregated from pedestrians. This will include the key transport corridors such as the A438 Kings Acre Road and the junctions which we know present real problems for cyclist and pedestrians such as the Whitecross roundabout. The new route designs will be following the latest government guidance set out in Local Transport Note 1:20 and outlined in the government's Gear Change Strategy.

This is supported by the latest research which shows that improved walking and cycling options with reduced traffic creates more attractive, healthier and safer spaces for people and families to shop and spend their leisure time.

In addition to developing new dedicated cycle routes we also offer a range of free support including our adult cycle training sessions, Bikeability and road safety training, school travel plan support, Park and Choose sites and business advice through our Travel for Work Network.

Question 2

From: Dr N Geeson

To: cabinet member, environment and economy

First, many congratulations on this list of so many excellent Recommendations and a great Action Plan from the Citizens Climate Assembly. With regard to Protecting and Enhancing Nature we see there will be a focus on collecting evidence more widely. There may be local knowledge from local residents about wildlife, waterways, flood risk, soil properties, etc. that could add to this evidence. Could there be a specific mechanism to help collect local knowledge so that it can be shared and used easily?

Response

Thank you for your positive comments on the action plan which was developed by bringing together the excellent work from the Citizens Assembly, a review of national best practice, existing activity, the countywide climate & nature action plan and officer recommendations.

Working in partnership is absolutely essential to addressing the climate and ecological emergency and I completely agree that we need to bring together all of our collective knowledge. The mechanism for this will be through the development of the new Nature Recovery Strategy and Nature Recovery Mapping which will bring together, update and

improve all the available datasets available in the county. This will be developed in partnership and will include a consultation process to collate this.

In addition I would also encourage residents to submit any local wildlife data to the Herefordshire Biological Records Centre which collects and collates data about species, designated sites and habitats for the county.

Supplementary question

I thank the Cabinet Member for Environment and Economy very much for her positive answer. I would like to know how we can be informed about the new Nature Recovery Strategy and Nature Recovery Mapping as these develop further.

Response

The cabinet member explained that guidance from the government was still coming through so it was not possible at this time to say what public engagement would take place or when but it was essential that local people were involved. She gave an assurance that public engagement would take place and that she would follow up on this with officers and make a further statement in due course.