

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO CABINET – 21 JULY 2022

Question 1

From: Ms E Beavan, Hereford

To: Cabinet Member, Commissioning, Procurement & Assets

I know that many people in the county are keen to recycle and do their bit to help the environment.

However, we have seen that recycling alone just doesn't work, because plastics are just being shipped off overseas or to other areas and not actually processed properly. Many household items are also not currently easily recyclable.

What assurances can Hereford Council give that adequate funding will be attributed to ensure that real investment can be made NOT just in rubbish collection but in the PROCESSING FACILITIES as well?

Plastics stay in the environment and don't just disappear because they've been sent elsewhere and eventually end up in our water course, our food, our bodies.

We need imaginative and future proof thinking on this to ensure it will meet the need of a growing population and actually recycles our waste.

Response

Thank you for raising this important issue which is something we have been progressing as part of our ambitious waste management review and our continued commitment to addressing the climate and ecological emergency.

In Herefordshire our recycling is currently collected, sorted at our jointly owned EnviroSort facility in Worcestershire and then sent for either further sorting or processing into material which can then be used in a manufacturing process. To ensure these materials are processed correctly duty of care checks are undertaken by our partner, Worcestershire County Council.

In November last year we went further by securing additional assurances on the processing of our materials and now require that Mercia and its subcontractors seek our permission, undertake environmental impact assessments and subsequent auditing of any recycling materials moving beyond the UK and European Economic Area.

On a national level, the government recently introduced a new plastic packaging tax and is currently finalising new legislation following the introduction of the Environment Act 2021 by seeking to reduce the amount of packaging waste produced and to increase recycling levels across the country.

Here we welcome the introduction of a new schemes including new Extended Producer Responsibility which supports the producer pays principle by placing additional responsibilities on the producers of packaging, and also the new Deposit Return Scheme which will introduce a financial incentive to support residents to increase the amount they recycle.

To help us stay abreast of and contribute to new innovations we are also working with Incpen Europe, which is the Industry Council for packaging and the environment, to help develop new ways to reduce waste and increase re-use and recycling.

Question 2

From: Mr P McKay, Leominster

To: Cabinet Member, Infrastructure & Transport

Thank you for advising that your aim is to make the List of Anomalies viewable online again, and may I request that you include the digitised copies of Parish Submissions showing CRF's, in-conformance with the 2017-2027 Rights of Way Improvement Plan (Draft) they being key sets of records held by HC, required to enable those raising the 2021-2041 Local Plan to make informed decision concerning duly made representations that 'Public Carriageway or Cart Road or Green Lane mainly used as footpath - CRF' that were shown as Footpaths to the detriment of other users such as people with mobility problems, cyclists and equestrians who may also use these ways, be protected greenways, with use not obstructed with kissing gates, or diverted to footpath standard, etc., not neglecting the Anomalies and CRF's for another 20 years?

Response

I can confirm that these records are available to be viewed at the Herefordshire Archive and Records Centre, Fir Tree Lane, Rotherwas, Hereford HR2 6LA. They are not currently available in digital form on-line and it may be appropriate to review how they are held and the practicalities of making them more widely available. However, resources in the team are limited and, with many other competing priorities, I am unable to say when any review might be completed.

The Local Plan will undoubtedly seek to promote greater use of sustainable modes of travel to access services and for leisure purposes, and the public rights of way network will form an important part of realising that ambition.

Supplementary question

Local Access Forum minutes April 2021 record that it would cost approximately £40m to resolve all the PRow record issues, and I note your recognition that may be appropriate to review how the supporting information is held and the practicalities of making this more widely available.

An Evidence Base could set out how this situation occurred in an informative, structured and meaningful context, so all may better understand, support funding applications, with voluntary assistance sought from parishes and user groups.

All in conformance with the objectives of the 2017-2027 Rights of Way Improvement Plan (Draft), protecting CRF greenways for a fraction of that cost.

I ask that this be put before the Local Plan 2021-2041 consultation process before that closes on 29 July enabling comprehensive informed consideration by our planners?

Response

A written response was promised.

Written response

The recent transfer of the PRow team back into Herefordshire Council means we are in a better position to review the condition of the network, the backlog of works and the prioritisation of

maintenance needs. With limited funds, this will allow us to identify the highest priorities for investment and where the valuable work of volunteers will help the most.

In addition, we are seeking the support of Jesse Norman MP for a practical way forward to address the backlog of Definitive Map applications, and I would be happy to share those ideas should they bear fruit.

The emerging Local Plan will assist in identifying a clear role for the PRoW network where it can support active travel and reduce reliance on the car. The new Local Transport Plan, expected in early 2024, will have an objective for the decarbonisation of the transport system, and will also recognise the importance of active travel and how the PRoW network can help to deliver the goals of the Local Plan.