

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO CABINET – 26 JANUARY 2023

Question 1

From: Mr P McKay, Leominster
To: Cabinet Member, Infrastructure & Transport

May I please have an update on progress re an integrated highways, public rights of way and open spaces map viewable online, reference reply to question of 26 May?

Response

Unfortunately the work to produce the map as described has hit an issue in relation to the work required to pull the information into one map. As a consequence we will need to look at a bespoke map for which a significant amount of work to develop and implement is required. As an interim measure the Council will be adding links to the Open Space and Property maps on the map page. This will be implemented within the next couple of weeks.

Question 2

From: Ms Reid, Hereford
To: Cabinet Member, Children and Families

Please state the amount budgeted for the legal costs of the [Children and Young People] directorate (eg care proceedings).

Response

The costs budgeted for legal within the Children and Young People directorate budget is £125,000 for 2022/23; this is due to increase to £232,000 for the next financial year 2023/24.

For completeness, it should be noted that a significant proportion of the legal costs in respect of Children and Young People sit outside of the directorate. The budgeted costs, including staffing, for legal costs in respect of the Children and Young People directorate are £1,168,000 for 2022/23 and £1,340,000 for 2023/24.

Supplementary question

£1,572,000 (£232,000 + £1,340,000) is budgeted for the legal costs of the Children and Young People Directorate in 2023-24. The base budget for Early Help and Early Years combined is £1,437,000. Early Help is support to prevent children going into care. The base budget for Looked-After Children (LAC) in 2023-24 is £28,724,000. Herefordshire has a high rate of LAC. Placement Sufficiency is on the Corporate Risk Register. The rate of care proceedings in Herefordshire is about double England's and Statistical Neighbours' rates. Ofsted: "Some children are in pre-proceedings who do not need to be ..." Investing in supporting families and implementing statutorily recommended Family Group Conferences would reduce the high cost of LAC and care proceedings.

Please itemise the budget of £1,572,000. For example, the amount related to Children's Services and the amounts for care proceedings and litigation within Children's Services.

Response:

The response to your initial question noted the budgeted costs for 2023/24 for legal costs in respect of children and young people was £1,340,000; this figure was for the total budget

(included the budget which sits within the directorate – which is the £232,000) rather than an amount in addition to the budget held within the directorate. With apologies if this was not clear.

An itemisation of the 2023/24 budget is as follows:

Staffing	£807,997
External Fees	£300,000
Fees	£177,000
Translation & Interpretation	£40,000
Transport & Subsistence	£15,000
Total	£1,339,997

In respect of litigation, any claim for compensation is reviewed on its own merit and reparatory action is taken as appropriate. We currently do not have monies specifically budgeted for any potential future compensation claims.