

## **PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO CABINET – 14 December 2023**

### **Question 1**

**Carole Protherough, Clehonger**

**To: Councillor Price, Transport and Infrastructure**

How can expenditure on furthering the pie in the sky SLR project be justified in the context of increasing council tax and cutting services, at a time when many households are struggling with increased costs, and there are clearly significant shortcomings in services for vulnerable individuals and families ?

### **Response**

The funding requests for projects in the approved capital programme have been confirmed as manageable within current borrowing limits in the medium term financial strategy and the available balance in the capital receipts reserve.

### **Question 2**

**Mrs E Morawiecka, Breinton Hereford**

**To: Councillor Stoddart, Finance and Corporate Services**

The Southern Link Road in the capital projects programme will use £5million of capital receipts and also require £5.3million of prudential borrowing. The £5million of capital receipts could be used to reduce borrowing for other capital projects.

Building a new road will generate no income to repay the capital or cover the interest payments. Please confirm the extra cost to the local taxpayer of borrowing £10.3million, and how this will be repaid by local tax payers?

### **Response**

The project is funded by £5.3 million of borrowing. This is not new borrowing and was included in the budget approved by Council in February 2023. There is no extra cost to the taxpayer as this is already included in the Council's approved base budget.

### **Supplementary question**

Instead of cutting vital services for residents whilst increasing council tax, the council could reduce revenue costs by cancelling the Southern Link Road development project and reducing borrowing by £10.3million. This could generate a saving of up £400K or 5% of the £7.4million cost savings you are looking to make, without reducing vital services needed by residents whilst increasing council tax.

The Department for Transport shows that the mileage travelled by motor vehicles is now 4% lower than 5 years ago, and studies show that a lack of public transport is a barrier for young people to access work, education and other social opportunities. Therefore please provide the evidence that £10.3million on designs for a new road delivers a higher return on investment and better outcomes for our young people, than maintaining vital public services and good, interconnected public transport. “

### **Supplementary response**

Thank you Mrs Morawiecka the investment that this Council is making in the Southern Link Road is intended to provide infrastructure that prepares the city and the county for future growth. A full business case will be prepared in due course.

### **Question 3**

**Mr Paul Symonds, Ross on Wye**

**To: Councillor Price, Transport and Infrastructure**

In relation to the response to my question at full Council on 8 December, please explain why priority could not be given to southbound traffic leaving Ross-on-Wye town centre in order to facilitate a yellow box?

### **Response**

As per our initial response, the introduction of a yellow box at this location is only permissible in conjunction with an associated priority working arrangement.

The implementation of an associated priority working arrangement would require suitable points to be established at either end of the section of road and at locations where vehicles of all types (ie. not just cars) could wait and not prevent the passage of vehicles from the other direction.

In this case it is not considered feasible to introduce priority working for southbound vehicles leaving Ross on Wye as there would be insufficient forward visibility between the point that vehicles enter into the priority arrangement and where vehicles would be required to wait when travelling towards the town centre. This means that drivers of vehicles travelling in a northbound direction would not be able to see drivers coming southbound. For this reason, a priority working arrangement is not considered feasible.