

## **Minutes of the meeting of Council held at Conference Room 1 - Herefordshire Council, Plough Lane Offices, Hereford, HR4 0LE on Friday 6 December 2024 at 10.00 am**

**Present:** Councillor Roger Phillips (chairperson)  
Councillor Stef Simmons (vice-chairperson)

**Councillors:** Bruce Baker, Jenny Bartlett, Chris Bartrum, Graham Biggs, Dave Boulter, Harry Bramer, Jacqui Carwardine, Simeon Cole, Frank Cornthwaite, Pauline Crockett, Clare Davies, Dave Davies, Barry Durkin, Mark Dykes, Matthew Engel, Toni Fagan, Elizabeth Foxton, Carole Gandy, Catherine Gennard, Peter Hamblin, Liz Harvey, Helen Heathfield, Robert Highfield, David Hitchiner, Dan Hurcomb, Terry James, Jim Kenyon, Jonathan Lester, Nick Mason, Ed O'Driscoll, Aubrey Oliver, Justine Peberdy, Dan Powell, Philip Price, Ben Proctor, Adam Spencer, Louis Stark, Elissa Swinglehurst, Charlotte Taylor, Richard Thomas, Kevin Tillet, Diana Toynbee, Rebecca Tully, Allan Williams, Rob Williams and Mark Woodall

**Officers:** Chief Executive, Corporate Director - Economy and Environment\*, Corporate Director Community Wellbeing\*, Director of Finance\*, Director of Governance and Law and Democratic Services Manager

\*denotes virtual attendance.

### **32. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Andrews, Owens, Ivan Powell, Stoddart and Stone.

### **33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **34. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **35. CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Council noted the Chairman's and Chief Executive's announcements as printed in the agenda papers.

### **36. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (PAGES 5 - 12)**

A copy of the public questions and written answers, together with supplementary questions asked at the meeting and their answers, is attached to the Minutes at Appendix 1.

**37. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL (PAGES 13 - 16)**

A copy of the Member questions and written answers, together with supplementary questions asked at the meeting and their answers, is attached to the Minutes at Appendix 2.

**38. APPOINTMENTS TO COUNCIL COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE BODIES**

Council considered a report by the Director of Governance and Law to exercise those powers reserved to Council to: review the representation; and determine the allocation of seats on committees and relevant outside bodies to political groups.

Councillor Roger Phillips proposed and Councillor Stef Simmons seconded the recommendation in the report.

The recommendation in the report was put to the vote and was carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

**That:**

**a) the number of seats on each committee as set out at paragraph 9, and the allocation of those seats to political groups as set out in paragraph 10 be approved.**

**39. ADDITION OF CAPITAL BUDGET TO DELIVER IT CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

Council considered a report by the Cabinet Member Finance and Corporate Services to approve an amendment to the capital programme to utilise underspends to fund two new projects, at a total of £368,000 for delivery of IT projects within this financial year.

Councillor Swinglehurst proposed the recommendations and introduced the report. Councillor Mason seconded the recommendations.

The recommendations were put to the vote and were carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED –**

**That Council:**

**a) Approves the addition of £368,000 in this year's capital programme, to deliver Wide Area Network (WAN) replacement project and Telephony Contact Centre project, funded from underspends in the capital programme.**

**40. REVIEW OF POLLING PLACES, POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING STATIONS 2024**

Council considered a report by the (Acting) Returning Officer to approve a new scheme of polling districts, polling places and polling stations.

Council raised a number of issues relating to the changes to polling stations proposed in the report and it was suggested that further consultation should be conducted with those members who had raised concerns regarding the changes in their electoral wards. It was felt that the report should be withdrawn from consideration at the current meeting and returned to a future meeting following consultation with affected local members.

During the course of the debate the following action was raised:

- to produce a list of concerns regarding the changes proposed, as raised by local ward members. To send to the Elections Team to inform review of the proposals and enable consultation with those local ward members raising concerns.

Councillor Roger Phillips proposed and Councillor Jim Kenyon seconded a motion that the report be withdrawn from consideration at the current meeting and returned to a future meeting of Council after consultation with those local members expressing concerns with the proposals.

The motion was put to the vote and was carried by a simple majority.

**RESOLVED – that:**

**The Review of Polling Places, Polling Districts and Polling Stations 2024 be withdrawn from consideration at the current meeting and returned to a future meeting of Council after consultation with those local members expressing concerns with the proposals.**

**41. LEADER'S REPORT**

Council received and noted a report from the Leader of the activities of the executive (cabinet) since the meeting of Council on 11 October 2024.

Council questioned the Leader and the following actions were raised:

- In response to a question, the Cabinet Member Transport and Infrastructure to raise the reinstatement of a late night bus service Hereford to Ross-on-Wye with the Hereford Enhanced Partnership;
- In response to a question, to consider the convening of a Bus Summit involving local stakeholders;
- In response to a question, to investigate and provide a response regarding the circumstances around the access to homeless support services from a former local resident;
- In response to a question, to provide clarification regarding the potential liability a parish council may incur as a result of carrying out work through the minor drainage issues grant fund;
- In response to a question, to provide a response relating to the current status of savings plans and confirm plans are in place for all those savings agreed at the February 2024 budget meeting; and
- In response to a question, regarding achieving value for money, to provide a response regarding further measures being undertaken to improve project management.

The meeting ended at 11.43 am

**Chairperson**



**Agenda item no. 5 - Questions from members of the public**

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 1	Mrs Watson, Kington	Last month, CPRE Herefordshire won an international award for its Dark Skies Herefordshire project. What actions will Herefordshire Council put in place to reduce obtrusive outdoor lighting in schools and the public buildings it owns? Herefordshire Council's website guidance and advice to reduce energy and carbon does not promote the Five Principles of Responsible Outdoor Lighting and in the Guide for Schools on Energy Savings and Carbon Reduction - the School Lighting and Heating Audit does not mention targeted lighting or installing warm tone LEDs.	Cabinet member environment
<p><b>Response:</b>                      The council's Sustainability &amp; Climate Change team is currently reviewing our carbon management plan which actively seeks to minimising energy and carbon emissions from across the Council's entire operations, schools and partners.</p> <p>As part of this officers are currently undertaking a review of best practice and are looking into a potential new policy on light pollution. We will also update our school's energy guidance to include this. It is expected that this guidance will be completed in the summer 2025.</p>			
PQ 2	Mr McGeown, Weobley	Thank you for the answer, recently received in writing, by Cabinet Member C&YP to my Supplementary question PQ1 from 17th September meeting.  So I thought I would get an overview of my PQ with relation to all other recent Public Questions and went to use your Public Question Register Six Month Record:  <a href="https://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/ecSDDisplayClassic.aspx?NAME=PDQR1&amp;ID=50000106&amp;RPID=26289390&amp;sch=doc&amp;cat=13518&amp;path=13518">https://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/ecSDDisplayClassic.aspx?NAME=PDQR1&amp;ID=50000106&amp;RPID=26289390&amp;sch=doc&amp;cat=13518&amp;path=13518</a>  So I downloaded your Register:  <a href="https://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/documents/s50096669/Public%20Question%20Register%20-%20Six%20Month%20Record.pdf">https://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/documents/s50096669/Public%20Question%20Register%20-%20Six%20Month%20Record.pdf</a>  Much to my dismay I found:  "Last updated 20 December 2021"	Chairman of the Council

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		So why don't you want the public to easily overview recent public questions?	
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**Response:**  
 Previous versions of the council's constitution, prior to May 2022, made provision to reject a public question if it had been raised within the last 6 months. This provision was supported by a question log, and answers given, at committees up until December 2021. In May 2022, the Council agreed and adopted an amended constitution. The six-month rule was removed as part of those changes. As a result it was no longer necessary for the council to maintain a public question and answer log. See: [Appendix 23 - Part 5 Section 8 Public participation guide tracked.pdf](#).

It is possible to see all questions, and the answers provided, by reviewing the relevant minutes to council committees (that permit public questions); the original question and answer provided is published as a supplement prior to the meetings. Any supplementary questions (if/where received) and answers that are provided can be found within the appendix to the published minutes of the meeting.

PQ3	Ms Ward, Hereford	<p>It is good news that Herefordshire Council has been granted additional government funding of £3.257 million for bus services. However, I note that the revenue element of the grant funding, around £1.8 million, will be used to extend the services that are currently supported by grant funding, but that the spending of the balance will be made by Herefordshire Enhanced Partnership.</p> <p>Please would the cabinet member explain in detail how the £2 million government grant received in 2023 for Bus Service Improvement Plan Funds has been spent so far and provide a breakdown of plans for the remainder of these funds which remain unspent.</p>	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure
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**Response:**  
 The Bus Service Improvement Plan plus (BSIP+) phase 3 funding that has been allocated to Herefordshire Council. This is governed by the Enhanced Partnership.

Phase 2 allocation was £952,000 for year 1 (2023/24), £952,000 for year 2 (2024/25) and £1,016,000 (25/26) for year 3. This money is being invested, in line with guidance from the Department for Transport, in extending existing routes, and re-launching new routes, as agreed by the Enhanced Partnership, under a mixture of de minimis and tendered services. A variety of different routes were submitted by bus operators, these were then graded into a priority funding order through a set of criteria, as published in the BSIP+ document on the council's website. This resulted in eight routes that are receiving support for the three years of the phase 2 funding. Namely:

- Support for E & F service
- Extend 78X to Shell Store
- Reinstate hourly 476 Hereford - Ledbury
- Reinstate hourly 492 and later PM service
- Increase 36 (66) service to 2 hourly and pm peak

Re-instate 420 Bromyard to Worcester  
 Instate later journeys on 461  
 Re-instate Sunday services on service 36 (66)

The purpose of the three years of funding is to provide consistency of bus routes over a longer period of time, with the opportunity for these routes to be routes that the public can expect to see running, thus improving the visibility of bus services and hence patronage improvements. These routes are in year 1 of funding, and the expectation is that the money for the next two years will continue to be spent on these prioritised routes. Therefore, whilst the money for years two and three is 'unspent', it is allocated. The plans are to continue with the support for these routes. These routes are being monitored regularly to capture data that can indicate the success, or otherwise of these routes. Decisions for continuation will be made by the Enhanced Partnership, based on this data.

The allocations for phase 3 are an agenda item for the next meeting of the Enhanced Partnership. New priorities will emerge over the three years, and the £1.8m of revenue spend that will be in place for 2026/27 will be used on these new priorities.

**Supplementary question:**

Since my local bus, 476, was not reinstated to hourly in Phase 2 allocation year 1 (2023/24), as planned, will the funds be carried over and added to year 2 (2025/25) + £952,000?

**Response from Cabinet Member Transport and Infrastructure:**

The 476 service is a two hourly service at present, but it is going to be changed to hourly service, the cost of which is going to be funded by BSIP+ allocation.

The change in the service has been delayed due to timing issues for the morning and afternoon journeys for passengers commuting to and from school and into Hereford for work, and to change the route to add in a new development, bus stop Hawkrise in Ledbury into the timetable.

However, I am pleased to report that all the issues have been resolved, and the hourly service change is being submitted for sign-off by the Traffic Commissioner. The hourly service is expected to operate from the end of January 2025. I can also confirm that the remaining budget for the hourly service will be rolled forward into next year.

PQ 4	Mrs Morawiecka, Hereford	The estimated cost of the Shrewsbury North Western Relief Road is reported to have increased from £81million to £178million, and the auditors for Shropshire Council confirm this new road project poses a significant risk to the council, especially as there is no clear plan for funding this road scheme. With the Hereford Western Relief Road estimated to cost at least double the cost of the Shrewsbury Relief Road, the Herefordshire Council leader's report makes it clear that there is no clear funding for even the first part of the scheme, the Southern Link Road.	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure
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		Where is the updated business case for the Southern Link Road and the Hereford Western Relief Road, to show that continuing to spend public money on these unaffordable and poor value for money road schemes is the best way to use scarce taxpayers money?	
<b>Response:</b>			
<p>The Council are aware of the reported increased cost of the Shrewsbury North West Relief Road, but it should be noted that no two road schemes are alike and therefore it cannot be presumed that the same level of increase would apply to the Hereford Western Bypass. The council is in the process of commissioning consultants to undertake an updated review of both the first phase of the Hereford Western Bypass (Southern Link Road) and the remaining route and as part of this work will be developing updated business cases for both elements of the road.</p>			
<b>Supplementary:</b>			
<p>The Cabinet member seems confident Herefordshire will not experience significant cost increases in road construction projects. However, with responsibility for Transport and Infrastructure he must know that one part of the Shrewsbury Road cost change is the 6 fold increase in mitigation of the carbon costs. This is due to the Department for Transport (DfT) changing TAG guidance on the carbon assessment process of all major transport schemes, in early 2024. This guidance is for use in business case assessments.</p>			
<p>The original South Wye Transport Package business case had a relatively low BCR. As the Southern Link Road is now just a road, without many of the benefits arising from the Active Travel Measures, the BCR will be even lower.</p>			
∞	<p>Until the business cases have been updated in line with the DfT TAG guidance and published to show these roads provide good value for money with a high BCR, would the Cabinet member explain what different costs are currently being incurred and why?</p>		
<b>Response to supplementary question from cabinet member transport and infrastructure:</b>			
<p>Since the scheme was resurrected in March, the project has mostly incurred staff costs. The council is in the process of procuring consultancy support to develop a business case to reflect the contemporary benefits and costs. The council has also appointed property consultants to begin the negotiation process for land acquisition.</p>			
PQ 5	Mr Milln, Hereford	<p>281 people were killed or seriously injured (KSI) on Herefordshire's Roads in the latest period recorded on the Council's website.</p> <p>Speed is the common factor and on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2020 this Council voted to address it first by investigating area-wide 20mph where people live.</p> <p>Herefordshire's KSI corresponds to an annual rate of 49.8 per hundred thousand, significantly higher than the 39.7 national and 37.1 West Midlands figures.</p>	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure



In spite of the societal and human costs of road crashes and the benefits of safer streets we learn that the Cabinet member will consider addressing speed only on an *advisory* basis round certain schools and rural roads where enough people have been killed or seriously injured.

In the light of this would the cabinet member please explain the evidence behind his *volte face* on the decision approved by Council in 2020.

**Response:**

It is unclear what data the question is based on. In 2023 the data for Herefordshire shows there were 82 people unfortunately killed or seriously injured in traffic accidents, this was made up of 7 fatalities and 75 seriously injured. The total represents a reduction of 23% over the 2022 figure of 107. Of these 82, only 16 were the result of a collision where the police recorded inappropriate speed as a contributing factor to the accident. 63% of these accidents were recorded on the higher speed rural road network.

The Council will be introducing some advisory 20mph zones around specific schools in Hereford in the coming year as part of our Safer School Streets programme. The Council does not currently have any plans for the introduction of area-wide 20mph zones and does not support this as a policy going forward. Looking at accident statistics across Herefordshire our highest concern remains on high-speed rural roads where we have the highest incidents of killed and seriously injured accidents. As the highway authority we continue to carefully prioritise the funding we have available for road safety improvements using a prioritisation system that takes into account accident statistics, and this will include a number of traffic calming and speed reduction schemes across the Council each year.

**Supplementary Question:** The Cabinet Member's response makes clear his U-turn on the decision members of this Council made in March 2020 to address speeding where people live fails to take an evidence-based approach to the problem. The KSI figures cited in the response do not represent an improving trend over those in the Council's *Understanding Herefordshire* website cited in the question.

Advisory limits are unenforceable and to consider only some schools is discriminatory. Children are vulnerable wherever there is speeding in their communities. The response fails to appreciate the wider benefits of safer streets such as accessibility for active travel, well-being and livability.

With the news this week that Birmingham is considering the adoption of area-wide 20mph following Wales, Cornwall, London, Lancashire and numerous other places, will the Cabinet member follow suit and embrace a more progressive, holistic, people-first approach for Herefordshire?

**Response from Cabinet Member Transport and Infrastructure:**

The Council's approach to reducing KSI is based on hard evidence and good practice to keep both motorists and pedestrians safe.

I have already replied to the original question in full and there is nothing more to add.

We totally refute the suggestion that the Council does not put the safety and well-being of Herefordshire's communities first in everything it does.

PQ 6	Mr Willmont, Hereford	One of the aims of the Hereford City Link Road was to remove through traffic from Newmarket/Blueschool Streets and Commercial Road. These roads continue to be plagued by through traffic, particularly heavy goods vehicles/vans/tractors. Irrespective of what works might be proposed for environmental improvements to Blueschool/Newmarket Streets why is there not a legal prohibition on through traffic (north to south) along these roads?	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure
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**Response:**  
The City Link Road was constructed to allow traffic to go around the city centre and not through it. Heavy good vehicles will still need access the city centre to allow for deliveries. Officers are working closely with the DfT on the designs for improvements to both Blue School Street and Commercial Road. These improvements need to take into consideration the future emerging developments in the city, the connectivity to the Transport Hub and a future parking strategy, and emerging pressures, in accordance with the council's Transport Strategy. The council's Transport Strategy covers matters such as LTP, network planning, traffic management, transport planning, parking, mobility hubs, public and school transport. The council is also committed to the development of a Western Relief Road which will offer the opportunity to detrunk the A49 and further reduce traffic through the city centre.

PQ 7	Mrs Protherough Hereford	Active Travel England is an executive agency of the Government and one of its roles is to help councils to access state of the art data and analysis to use in active travel planning and design and integrate active travel into the planning and development system. ATE meets monthly with Herefordshire Council and yet the public have been informed that no minutes or records of these meetings are made. How can Council staff, councillors, MPs and the public learn from such experts about how a small City such as Hereford could be made more accessible and sustainable by Active Travel means, if meetings with Government agencies are not recorded and how does this comply with the Nolan principles of public life and the Council's THRIVE values of conduct in particular the two value of Trust and Honesty	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure
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**Response:**  
We recognise there will be public interest in the discussions between the council and Active Travel England. The council does not formally minute these meetings on the basis that they are largely informal 'keep in touch' opportunities.  
  
Importantly, meetings between the council and Active Travel England have no formal decision-making powers. Decisions that have been, or may be taken in the future, by the council around active travel measures are subject to the council's access to information rules and our legal obligations. This is to ensure that decisions taken by the council are open, transparent and accountable.

PQ 8	Ms Martin Hereford	<p>In FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUEST FOI2024/01673 copies of minutes of meetings were requested between Herefordshire Council and Active Travel England from January 2024 to date. The following response was provided:</p> <p>"A: The Service Area have advised they do not have any minutes to share, as none are taken due to the informal nature of the meetings."</p> <p>Given that taxpayers fund members of staff to attend these meetings, please explain why they are not minuted, what other meetings with Government bodies are not minuted and how this complies with the Nolan Principles."</p>	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure
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**Agenda item no. 6 - Questions from members of the Council**

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
MQ 1	Cllr Liz Harvey, Ledbury North	<p>In February 2024, in order to achieve a balanced budget and to mitigate the worst effects of applying the maximum increase allowed in Council Tax, your minority administration gave assurances to this Council that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £2.3m of reserves would be repaid by savings delivered by the Children’s Directorate; and</li> <li>• All income received above that budgeted from council investments would be used to provide additional targeted support to hard hit families.</li> </ul> <p>Please would the Leader confirm that you going to honour these firm undertakings?</p>	Leader
<p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>We recognise the challenging financial climate and its impact on individuals and we continue to provide support to households in hardship. The Council Tax Reduction Scheme, approved by full Council in February 2024, continues to provide support at the maximum level to those most in need with more than 11,000 households expected to receive 100% discount on their council tax through this scheme – paying no council tax at all. The scheme provides support to eligible households regardless of their council tax banding. In addition, the Council continues to offer support to residents through award of Discretionary Housing Payments, administration and allocation of the Household Support Fund, support services provided by Talk Community and by providing temporary housing solutions for individuals who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. It is expected that this support will continue in 2025/26.</p> <p>As at Period 6 of 2024/25 (September 2024), the Children &amp; Young People Directorate is forecasting a balanced position against the approved revenue budget. This forecast assumes delivery of Savings Targets S2 and S3 in full and that activity in progress over the remainder of the year will achieve Savings Target S3 by 31 March 2025; Savings Target S4 is currently assessed as ‘at risk’. This means that the Directorate will have achieved £2.3m of savings in 2024/25 without using the additional budget allocated from reserves by the Budget Amendment approved by Full Council in February 2024.</p> <p>As at P6, the revised forecast, including management recovery actions, highlights that the additional budget allocation of £2.3m is not forecast to be used in 2024/25. This is currently presented as an underspend and included in the overall forecast position for the year to report performance against the approved Revenue Budget of £212.8m. Due to the volatility of the Directorate’s demand-led activity and risk of impact on the outturn position, until the full year results and achievement of savings are known, the final requirement from the additional budget cannot be confirmed. We are continuing to monitor financial performance and identify recovery action in 2024/25, however, any overspend on the council’s Revenue Budget in 2024/25 must be funded from the council’s available reserves.</p>			
<p><b>Supplementary Question:</b></p>			

In quarter 2 of current FY £1.2 million additional interest has been received; the likely outturn will be over £2million of extra income from interest received. Will this additional income be used to increase support to hard up households, consistent with the commitment at the budget meeting, or should the credibility of such pronouncements be considered unreliable.

**Response to the supplementary question from the Leader:**

There was doubt regarding that the commitment mentioned had been made and officers had been asked to investigate but were also unsure where it had come from. It is important to highlight the positive news that the council is gaining interest and income. The Council Tax Reduction Scheme had been maintained to help over 11,000 households and the Household Support Fund continued to be provided.

MQ 2	Cllr Dave Boulter, Whitecross	The Leader’s Report states that “1,100 high value jobs have been created” on the Enterprise Zone. What is the evidence businesses on the site are required to provide to evidence the achievement of these jobs, and what is the definition of ‘high value’ that you are using to test and to agree their figures?	Cabinet member economy and growth
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**Response:**

The Hereford Enterprise Zone Ltd Board has a Placement Strategy setting out a range of criteria that a business must meet to qualify to locate on Skylon Park. The Placement Strategy ensures only businesses that in key target sectors that will create higher value employment (more better paid jobs) located on the Enterprise Zone. The business commits at the point of contractual sale of the land as to how many jobs they will create as a result of their business growth on the Enterprise Zone.

Following a review of the Hereford Enterprise Zone at the Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee in November, we are also committed to commissioning an external economic impact assessment to gather and review the evidence required to further quantify the significant impact it has and continues to make to the Herefordshire economy.

**Supplementary Question:**

It was not felt that the question had been adequately answered and additional detail around the claims in the response of 1,100 high value jobs was requested including: how many companies are involved; how many employees they have; and what the average salary is across those companies.

**Response to the supplementary question from the Cabinet Member Economy and Growth and the Leader:**

It was felt that the answer had been provided and the detail would be contained in the economic impact report which had been commissioned.

A recent business consultation event had taken place recently with employers of 3,800 employees which was positive engagement. There was a commitment that the detail would be shared with Cllr Boulter when available.

MQ3	Cllr Pauline Crockett,	Many of us have witnessed and experienced the devastation caused by recent and repeated flooding in our County. Every time this happens homes are ruined and lives are thrown into turmoil!	Cabinet support member
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		<p>Our County's drainage system is unable to cope with the scale and frequency of these severe weather events. Residents need action now.</p> <p>This Council must robustly enforce landowner riparian responsibilities, and take action to better manage water on and off the public highway.</p> <p>The Council must also maintain the operational effectiveness of existing flood defence schemes and ensure that the Environment Agency does likewise.</p> <p>In my Ward all of my Parishes have had to report serious flooding events, I am sure I am not alone!</p> <p>What are this administration's immediate plans to improve the protection of our residents and where will you be investing early?</p>	
<p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>This administration is utterly committed to addressing the serious flooding risks that have caused such hardship to residents, and disruption to our schools and economy. It is clear to everyone that the events are becoming more frequent and more intense. In response to the October and November floods, and building on the motion passed by this council at our last meeting, we have set in progress a county wide project to understand each and every flood or near-flood event, and then, where possible, take remedial action – whether that be addressing failures or capacity issues in our drainage system, resolving problems with how quickly the rivers can get water away, looking at – as I mentioned in the previous meeting of Council – our plans for new homes in light of their contribution to flood risks, and yes, as you suggest, working with landowners and where necessary taking enforcement action where riparian responsibilities have been neglected. We will also be looking at improving our flood mitigation and emergency response services.</p> <p>Solving a problem in one area carries the risk of moving it elsewhere. This work will require coordination of all of those risk areas, and as the Lead Local Flood Authority we will be taking leadership of all the various bodies involved in this – the Environment Agency, Welsh Water, Severn Trent Water, The Lugg and Lower Wye Internal Drainage Boards, and so on, as well as the parish councils who we have already partnered with to map any missing assets and develop a deeper understanding of the local drainage network.</p> <p>To this end we have already seconded staff into a growing flood team so that we have the ability to move forward on this across the county, and they are already hard at work. We are drawing funds from our [emergency response budget] and will be asking this council to support investment in flood response in our capital budget next month. There is much in climate change that is beyond our control. But rest assured we will leave no stone unturned in facing this.</p>			
<p><b>Supplementary question:</b></p> <p>It was not felt that the response had answered the question. If we are borrowing to fix the roads surely we should be fixing the drainage issues first. Can assurance be provided that the developments at Three Elms and Lower Bullingham will not proceed as we are aware of the flooding issues on those sites. As per my original question, what are the immediate plans?</p>			

**Response to the supplementary question from the Cabinet Support Member:**

A full flooding assessment would be undertaken as necessary as part of any planning process. In terms of response, a team has been developed, access to emergency funding had been arranged and proposals for capital funding toward long term structural changes to ensure the phasing of response is correct. The requirement for match funding to support works had also been lifted which had been seen as a hindrance to improvements previously.