

#### Agenda item no. 4 - Questions from members of the public

| Question No.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Questioner                 | Question                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Question to |
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| PQ 1.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Peter McKay,<br>Leominster | <p>Will this years 'Professional services supplier to support Highways and Infrastructure' work programme include:-</p> <p>a) identification of Unsurfaced Unclassified Roads on Highways Map by change of line colour,</p> <p>b) identification of Unadopted Highways Not Maintainable at Public Expense on the Street Works Register, especial those that are through routes or link to public paths,</p> <p>c) showing open spaces on the Public Rights of Way Map,</p> <p>d) an addendum to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan comprising an amplification of the Public Right of Way Glossary that says CRF's and CRB's were intended to be shown as Roads Used as Public Paths, but in fact were shown as Footpaths and Bridleways, identifying them as being prospective upgrades, along with other identified anomalies,</p> <p>and</p> <p>e) showing long term defects in red on the road and path problem webpage?</p> | Cllr Price  |
| <p>Response:</p> <p>Thank you for your question. We have no current plans to use any Professional Service Support for the items that you have raised. I have provided an update on each item that you have raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. At the 26<sup>th</sup> April meeting of the Local Access Forum, the council provided the forum with a copy of a list of Herefordshire's unsurfaced, unclassified roads and made a commitment for these to be displayed in an appropriate place on our public website.</li> <li>B. Unadopted Highways Not Maintainable at Public Expense are available on our website via the Street Works Register tab on the Highways and Public Rights of Way map.</li> <li>C. A search facility for Parks, Open Spaces and Sports Pitches is available on our website. The council have no current plans to include this information on the Public Rights of Way map.</li> <li>D. The Rights of Way Improvement Plan is in place until 2028. The council will consider this amendment when redrafting the plan.</li> <li>E. We are currently making improvements to our public rights of way defect map and I have asked Officers to consider your suggestion. We have made additional funding available for investment in the PROW network during 2025/26 in order to re-open paths and address as many long term defects as possible.</li> </ul> |                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |             |

**Supplementary question:**

Thank you for your reply to my question. I will not be attending the meeting and ask re item 'A' will these be shown with a different line colour on the Highways and Public Rights of Way Map, and re item 'B' very few if any are shown on the Street Works Register, with reply to my question 16 May 2024 being that those you are aware of and shown on the Local Street Gazetteer would be added to the Street Works Register and enquire for any progress regarding this, and re item 'C' the Highway and Public Rights of Way Map webpage provides a link to your Parks, play area and sports pitches webpage but not to your Commons and village greens webpage, or any other open space webpage you have so could these links be added?

**Supplementary response:**

Thank you for your supplemental question. Following on from the last meeting a few days back, we've had lots of discussions about many of the things that were raised, and as you're unable to attend today, I will provide a written response to your supplementary question.

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| <b>PQ 2.</b> | <b>Nigel Shaw,<br/>Bromyard</b> | <b>Is the Cabinet Member responsible aware of the number of applications for Tree Protection Orders received by the Council in the last quarter and the Council's inability to consider applications because of a lack of resource in the appropriate department?</b> | <b>Cllr<br/>Swinglehurst</b> |
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**Response:**

Yes, I am - so far in 2025, we have received 10 applications for Tree Preservation Orders.

The applications were dealt with in a timely manner and there is no inability to deliver the service. Each of these applications were reviewed by the Natural Environment Team and desktop assessments of each were undertaken.

Of these, 5 applications were considered appropriate for a site visit using the national Tree Evaluation Method for Preservation Orders. Of these, two applications were deemed appropriate for a provisional TPO to commence the consultation process for a full TPO.

Whilst we are seeking to recruit a new Tree Officer the team is supported by specialist interim resource and is performing well.

**Supplementary question:**

I am much heartened by Cllr. Swinglehurst's reply.

An application I submitted over ten weeks ago met with a prompt but cursory response that ended, "given the resources available to us."

Cllr Swinglehurst and I have discussed council staff recruitment and retention issues in the past. Is she aware of current significant salary differentials between public and private sector roles in the specialist posts that deal with these and related issues? What does she think the Council can do to improve the recruitment and retention of qualified and enthusiastic staff for these vital roles?

**Supplementary response:**

Thank you for the supplementary question.

Yes, I am aware that there can be large differences in salaries between different organisations, although it is important to note that this is only one part of the overall employment package, so for example all Council employees are eligible for a number of wider employee benefits such as flexible working and the Local Government Pension Scheme which is typically much more competitive than most private sector pension offers.

Recognising the importance of recruitment and retention, particularly for some of these hard to recruit specialist posts, the team is currently working with our Learning and Organisational Development team to explore further opportunities such as career graded posts and increased investment in learning and development.

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| <b>PQ 3.</b> | <b>Will Vaughn,<br/>Hereford</b> | <b>Are there processes and criteria within the proposed food-waste collection and disposal contracts that will allow the Council to vary its scope. or appoint a sub-contractor, to accommodate any innovative or future improved ways of collecting or processing food-waste?</b> | <b>Cllr<br/>Swinglehurst</b> |
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**Response:**

Yes. Both the waste collection contract with FCC Environment and waste disposal contract with Mercia Waste Management Ltd include change mechanisms to ensure that we can continue to drive service improvement and innovation through our waste management services.

**Supplementary question:**

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| None                           |
| <b>Supplementary response:</b> |