

Agenda item no. 6 - Questions from members of the public

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 1	Mr Fisher, Bromyard	On 1 April 2022 the Planning Inspector directed the Council to determine 36 applications to modify the Definitive Map. A deadline was set for determining each application. All deadlines have now passed; none of the 36 applications have been determined. Moreover in the case of four other applications which were determined in 2021 (M344,M345, M346,M348), the required Orders have still not been made. Will the Council confirm that this important statutory area of work will be resourced to deliver the following minimum service level: 1. A minimum of five DMMOs to be determined each year. 2. Where it has been determined to make an Order, the Order shall be made within three months of determination. 3. Where no objections are received to the advertised Order, the Order shall be confirmed within three months of the expiry of the objection period.	Cabinet member local engagement and community resilience

Response: We can confirm that there are 36 applications which the Council have been directed to determine.

Due to staffing changes and the specialist knowledge required to make these determinations none have been progressed to date, as the officer who is able to investigate has been progressing other priority applications and training newer officers.

In respect of M344, M345 and M346 these are undergoing final checks and are due to be published imminently. M348 is being re-examined and a final determination will be made over the coming weeks.

To answer your specific numbered questions:

1. We anticipate the team will be able to progress a minimum of five Definitive Map Modification Orders each year.
2. In respect of order publication this will be determined by the volume and number of legal orders being progressed however we will endeavour to make the Order within three months of determination wherever possible.
3. If no objections are received to an Order, officers will confirm the order as soon as possible, however in certain circumstances physical works and possible enforcement action may be required which will dictate the timescales involved which may cause a delay in confirming the Order within three months of the expiry of the objection period.

PQ 2	Mrs Morawiecka, Hereford	Herefordshire Council has already spent £2.456million on the Hereford Southern Link Road with the Capital programme showing budgeted expenditure on this scheme of £13.5million in 2026/27. Cabinet has said that Council approval for a capital project is not approval to spend. Who gave approval to spend £2.456million to date on this capital project and how much can the Cabinet approve to spend on this road project before a full business case and a report on value for money needs to be prepared?	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure
Response: Cabinet in March 2024 agreed to an initial budget of £10.3m to develop Phase one and gave officers delegated authority to spend. The spend of £2.456m is in line with that decision. The money has been spent on progressing land purchase, updating designs, ecology work, developing planning applications in line with updated planning regulations and producing a revised business case.			
PQ3	Mr Milln, Hereford	While this administration, at agenda item 10, appendix B, proposes to make cuts and raise charges in a number of service areas, it fails to identify the clear saving it could make at Jacobs Court in my ward. I have raised this many times over the years, most recently at Council last July. The cabinet member, unable either to justify the circa £80,000 and rapidly rising cost to the Council of its eyesore scaffolding or provide a timetable for addressing it, refused to answer my questions. What is the total financial liability (ongoing and unrecovered costs and unrealised values) to Herefordshire Council of property not included in the capital programme which has delivered no public benefit for more than two years, including long term unresolved enforcement cases such as Jacobs Court as well as unused property in its own portfolio?	Cabinet member environment
Response: Jacobs Court is not owned by the council, it is in private ownership. The council's building control service previously undertook urgent action to prevent glass windows from the building falling on to the public through erecting scaffolding. The previous owners of the building went into administration, the council is at an advanced stage of negotiation with the new owners (a consortium of the owners of the individual flats in the building) to pass on the current financial liability (£400 per month), and to ensure they complete the necessary works to ensure the building is safe. The council budget includes both a capital and revenue allocation to maintain the sites that we own and are directly responsible for.			
PQ 4	Mrs Protherough, Hereford	Herefordshire Council says that a 30minute free parking for "pop to shop" will help the local economy, whilst increasing car parking fees for visitors looking to make longer visits to Hereford & the market towns. What is the impact assessment that shows free car parking increases spending in the local economy and reduces congestion in the City centre, as opposed to offering free bus travel or investing in pay on departure systems for Council car parks?	Cabinet member roads and regulatory services

Response:

The Pop and Shop initiative is the implementation of a manifesto promise from the current administration. A free parking period in council car parks was requested by a variety of residents and businesses, and this is what is being implemented, and has been extended to on street parking in Hereford. An impact assessment has not been carried out – while a free parking period can be one contribution to supporting the local economy, there are many other measures that are relevant including enhancing the customer experience and public realm, strengthening the nighttime economy, events, culture and many other elements. In addition, it should be appreciated that there has been no increase in car parking charges since 2023. The parking strategy is currently being updated and will be consulted on later this year, park and choose (connecting car parks to other forms of transport) and the payment systems for car parks will be considered in the strategy.

PQ 5	Mr Newman, Hereford	The Cabinet member has said that this Council is committed to see a full bypass realised. This is apparently the reason that benefits of the full Western bypass are included in the Outline Business Case for the Hereford Southern Link Road, whilst not including the full capital cost of this much bigger road scheme. As councillors are being asked to approve capital spending just on the Southern Link Road, what are the direct and quantifiable benefits that will be delivered by spending over £45million on this scheme as a standalone road project?"	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure
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Response: Council is being asked to approve putting the capital funding into the budget, Cabinet will still need to make the final decision to approve spending once it has fully considered the value for money business case which will be published ahead of the decision to award the construction contract in July 2026.