

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

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 1	Ms Laan, Hereford	As I am a cyclist now recently owning an ebike, would it be possible to know if I will still be able to cycle to Sainsbury, Belmont post office, Hereford library and other services from Breinton Common? I believe the bypass will cut right across the lanes I use with no plans for an underpass for these delightful lanes? How will I therefore be able to get safely to the services? The bus from here only goes on a Wednesday morning allowing a minimum of an hour and a half before returning. This short time doesn't help Hereford shops or cafes which is why I go by bike.	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure
<p>Response: There is no intention for the bypass to cut off access through any lanes. Phase One has been fully designed and construction will start later this year. The design includes bridges so that no lanes will be blocked. Phase Two which will cross the river near Breinton and go northwest around Hereford and will cross over routes that you would use to access Hereford. The detailed design of this phase is not completed but at this time there are no plans to close or block any existing lanes.</p>			
PQ 2	Mr Milln, Hereford	Planning application 184535 related to archaeological work required conditional on the consent for application 151314. On the basis of supply of a written scheme of investigation (a brief) the application won a partial discharge. The actual archaeological work was completed with a report towards the end of last year. Assuming the report is deemed to be satisfactory an application for full discharge can now be made. When can we expect to see this?	Cabinet member environment
<p>Response: The condition has been fully discharged all details can be found here: Planning Application Details - Herefordshire Council</p>			
PQ3	Mr Sherlock, Hereford	Of the 45.3 million identified in the Capital programme position for the phase 1 bypass construction in 26/27 only 4.6 million is shown as being provided through grant funding. How is the additional 40.7 million (sourced through 'prudential' borrowing) secured and what is the risk profile to the public purse should the scheme not proceed?	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure
<p>Response: Phase one of the Hereford Bypass has a total capital budget of £45.3 million, funded through £5 million of capital receipts and £40.3 million in prudential borrowing. Borrowing via the Public Works Loan Board is a standard and low-risk mechanism for councils, offering secure and affordable long-term rates in line with professional Treasury Management advice. All borrowing decisions are made by the council's Section 151 Officer in accordance with the CIPFA Prudential Code to ensure they are affordable, prudent and sustainable. The council is fully committed to delivering the bypass in full. However, in the unlikely event that the scheme did not proceed, any expenditure that had not created a capital asset would need to be decapitalised and met from revenue reserves, creating an unplanned financial pressure.</p>			

PQ 4	Mr Morfett, Hereford	<p>The Leaders report mentions the Councils recently adopted Herefordshire Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy which I fully support. In his report he says “The resulting Herefordshire Tree, Hedgerow and Woodlands Strategy encourages residents, landowners, organisations and partners to take their own actions in support of a shared vision for a more connected treescape across the county. It sets out an ambitious but realistic long-term vision for conserving, improving and expanding Herefordshire’s trees, hedgerows and woodland network”.</p> <p>How does the construction of the Hereford Southern Link Road with the destruction of ancient woodland, (remnants of the royal hunting area of Haywood), and the felling of many ancient and venerable trees, accord with this Council adopted Strategy?</p>	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure
<p>Response: The Hereford Bypass does not detract from the Council’s ambitions in the Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy, and we are committed to delivering it in a way that protects and enhances the natural environment. Phase One includes extensive new tree and hedgerow planting, with additional land being secured for mitigation. The construction compound will also be restored and planted once works are complete. Although the route touches only a small corner of the woodland, we will keep impacts to an absolute minimum and preserve as much as possible. The Hereford Bypass is essential for easing congestion, improving resilience and supporting the county’s future, and we are determined to deliver it responsibly and sustainably.</p>			
PQ 5	Mr Stephenson, Ledbury	<p>Herefordshire residents are sick of perceived wastage by the council and seeing little to no output for its increasingly expensive council taxes. Does the council acknowledge, that it cannot simply increase council tax by the maximum, year upon year, and that it is unfair to levee its waste and shortfalls against hard working and struggling constituents? It’s time to stop with the default answer of blaming central government and be transparent about what you are doing with OUR money and what savings you are first making in house, before coming to us cap in hand. Contrary to Herefordshire council's belief, the people of Herefordshire do not have bottomless pockets.</p>	Leader / Cabinet member finance and corporate services
<p>Response: Herefordshire Council has a long record of sound, prudent financial management and continues to be assessed as financially resilient. Over recent years the Council has delivered more than £40 million in savings while protecting essential services and investing in the county’s future. The current financial pressures are driven primarily by the recent Fair Funding Review, which has left Herefordshire with one of the worst funding settlements in the country. This has created a £17.3 million reduction in Government funding over three years and assumes councils will raise council tax by the maximum allowed (without a referendum). To bridge this gap, the Council is delivering a significant £20 million savings programme through service transformation, efficiency and income generation. Despite these challenges, the Council continues to invest in infrastructure and improve services. Just last year the LGA Corporate Peer Review describing the council as “good” and striving to improve, while Ofsted recently rated Children’s Services as “good”, with “outstanding” leadership. We recognise the pressures many residents face and remain committed to managing public finances responsibly, transparently and in the best interests of Herefordshire.</p>			

PQ 6:	Mr Osborne-Brookes	"It is good to see that the expansion of rail services is being promoted for Herefordshire, as it fits with the Council's ambitions of promoting sustainable growth and reducing carbon emissions. The Leader of the Council has previously said that reopening a station at Pontrilas is a council priority, which is supported by the local MP, Jesse Norman. Herefordshire Council was working on a strategic Outline Business Case over a year ago, though I understand one had already been drafted in 2020 along with a feasibility study. Would the Cabinet member please update residents as to what progress is being made to deliver a new station at Pontrilas alongside wider rail initiatives?"	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure
<p>Response: The Council is carrying out a county-wide rail strategy review, which includes looking at the potential for a stop at Pontrilas alongside wider priorities such as double-tracking between Hereford and Ledbury and improved regional connectivity. The purpose of the review is to identify realistic, deliverable options for strengthening rail access across Herefordshire and to provide a strong evidence base for future investment and lobbying. The study is underway, and its findings will be reported later this year.</p>			
PQ 7:	Carole Protherough	"The Cabinet announced that the 2026/27 budget is supporting the local economy by giving car drivers 30 minutes free car parking on street and in Council car parks. For young people who have paid for a £1,000 bus pass to access services and education, what assessment was undertaken to show that extending these passes for students to use on evening and weekend buses would not be cost effective and would not support the high street and hospitality sector as much as 30 minutes free parking every day for car owners?"	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure
<p>Response: The Council is introducing the Pop & Shop scheme later this year: 30 minutes' free parking in all Council-owned car parks and on-street in Hereford to support quick trips and boost local trade. This practical measure is designed to increase short-stay visits and help high-street businesses.</p> <p>We have explored extending school bus passes for 16–19-year-olds to evenings, weekends and holidays. The initial assessment found significant financial and technical barriers: additional operator payments would be required and the current pass system is not yet interoperable across multiple operators. A small allocation has been set aside in 2026/27 to design a tightly scoped pilot - testing limited extensions (by time or geography) and viability, i.e. fundable within budget, can operable across operators and demonstrably value for money.</p> <p>In parallel, on 5 February 2026, in response to a council motion, the Cabinet member for Transport and Infrastructure wrote to the Secretary of State for Transport seeking Government support and co-funding for local pilots and progress towards a national approach to discounted or free youth travel - reflecting the scale of costs identified and rural service realities.</p> <p>We will report back on the pilot design and feasibility in due course.</p>			

PQ 8:	Mrs Elizabeth Morawiecka	The Leaders report says that the Council is looking to improve access to the Hereford Enterprise Zone, particularly from south-west Herefordshire and South Wales by constructing the Hereford Southern Link Road. The railway bridge at Pontrilas has a height restriction that requires lorries over 4.4m from South Wales to travel via the A49 from Ross-on-Wye/Monmouth to Hereford. What is the council doing to address this significant road constraint to large commercial vehicles seeking to access the Rotherwas Enterprise Zone from South Wales?	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure
<p>Response: Initial analysis of draft traffic data modelling indicates immediate benefits in relation to HGVs in this area by delivering phase one of the Hereford bypass. That data will be shared publicly in due course once the full analysis has been completed.</p>			