

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

Question No.	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 1.	Mr Emil Morfett, Hereford	<p>The Hereford Bypass is to support the Western Urban Expansion of Hereford City adding 14,000 new houses. Thousands more houses will add 30-50% more traffic to and from Hereford on existing roads. This will also necessitate destruction of extensive natural capital and greatly expand the County carbon footprint.</p> <p>Unlike all new UK infrastructure plans, no foundational evidence-based analysis was presented by this Council to show the environmental and emissions impact of both Phases, no evidence on lifetime carbon budgets and none on easing congestion. Answers to public questions continue to lack any analysis of an evidence-base for this infrastructure development.</p> <p>Where are the missing keystone, foundation documents, to justify development on the environmental impacts of Phase I and congestion relief of Phase I and II?</p>	Councillor Price, Transport and Infrastructure
<p>Response:</p> <p>The Hereford Bypass will support the building of homes and creation of employment sites. In July 2024 all Council's in England were given new and increased mandatory targets by the Government. These new homes will of course require supporting infrastructure. It is right that the Council has infrastructure being delivered alongside the building out of these sites. The Council response to the challenge provided by the increased homes target will be guided through the emerging local plan and recently published Local Transport Plan (LTP 5).</p> <p>It is accepted that development at the levels proposed will have an impact on the natural environment. The Council will continue to work on schemes that it develops itself and with developers on their projects they deliver to manage these impacts fully in line with current and future regulations.</p> <p>In common with all UK Infrastructure that is being progressed, Phase One of the bypass has been through a full planning process and produced all necessary environmental information to support that application. The publication, in the coming days, of the Scheme Information Report, which provides a technical overview of context, impacts and assessment work will provide sufficient information in the development of the Full Business Case. This will be further substantiated with the publication of the Full Business Case which will be presented to cabinet in July 2026.</p>			

Supplementary Question:

The UK Road Infrastructure budgets now include Emissions Sources: Major impacts come from embodied carbon in steel, concrete, and asphalt, alongside operational emissions from vehicles. The Seventh Carbon Budget (2038–2042) necessitates dramatic cuts, with surface transport emissions projected to need an 86% reduction by 2040 from 2023 levels.

Despite this increase in National awareness and the declared Climate and Ecological Emergency in 2020 followed by the 2026 National Security Assessment on Global Ecosystems highlighting the impact of climate change on biodiversity, showing the risk of ecosystem collapse, degradation of our food, water, health and supply chains.

Why did this Council refuse to publish a full and updated traffic analysis, ecological impact analysis, emissions analysis and Lifetime Carbon analysis of its Phase I and Phase II infrastructure plans, prior to giving it the green light?

Supplementary Response:

In progressing with Phase 1 of the Bypass the Council has met all statutory obligations. The Council will in the coming days publish a scheme information report that will address several matters raised in the question. The FBC, due to be published in July, will include a full carbon management plan.

A contractor, Grahams, has been appointed, and they are working on the final stages of design. As an Achilles Carbon Reduce and PAS 2080 certified company (these certifications demonstrate a commitment to measuring, managing, and reducing carbon emissions across operations) the final design will include a full environmental assessment including carbon impact.

Phase 2 has yet to be designed to any level of detail and therefore it is not possible to start looking at any such detailed analysis on that phase.

PQ 2.	Rhys Griffiths, Hereford	In the December meeting the council said the Whitehouse community hub building would be repaired so my question is have the council made any provision of funds in this years budget for the work to be done and what is the approximate time line for the work to begin, thank you.	Councillor Bramer, Community Services and Assets
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Response:

There is currently an allocation of £184,000 within the 2026–2029 capital programme for the Whitehouse community hub building. This is intended to support works to the building, either through making good the existing facility or forming part of a wider redevelopment approach. At this stage, the position remains under review. We are continuing to investigate the condition of the building and develop options to ensure the most appropriate

long-term solution is delivered. This includes considering how the asset could be improved and potentially enhanced, while maintaining its community function. Any wider redevelopment options, and associated funding beyond the current allocation, are still to be confirmed.

In terms of programme, no fixed start date has been agreed at this point. The immediate focus is on feasibility and option development, which will then inform scope, funding, and delivery timescales. Which we will confirm with the Whitehouse community hub group.

Alongside this, we are continuing to engage with local community groups and partners to understand how the space could best be used in future to support local needs and activities. This will help ensure that future plans for the building support a sustainable, community-led offer and make the best use of the space for local residents.

Supplementary Question:

When the building is repaired what plan will be put in place to prevent this happening again?

Supplementary Response:

The current issues were as a result of the previous occupier undertaking unlicensed works which led to structural failure with the building. The council will ensure the repairs are structurally sound, comply with building control requirements, and we will continue to monitor the building moving. A future lease will explicitly require the council (as landlord) approval of any structural works.

<p>PQ 3.</p>	<p>Maggie, Setterfield Hereford</p>	<p>The LCWWIP shifts down cycling in priority by explicitly increasing other active travel measures and by putting the LTP literally in front of Cycle planning.</p> <p>Given projected increases in fuel costs we need good cycling and walking provision in place as we are nudged heavily towards active travel.</p> <p>Many question recent decisions to spend ear-marked cycle infrastructure funding where seemingly convenient to work rather than where most needed – eg the closure of Gt Western way causes inconvenience and real safety issues for hundreds of daily users, with poor signage of alternative routes and the frustration of seeing little progress.</p> <p>To minimise the use of expensive outside consultants would Cabinet please consider appointing a dedicated Cycling Officer for Herefordshire with appropriate infrastructure design experience & capable of working well with users to ensure active travel moneys are more efficiently applied?</p>	<p>Councillor Price, Transport and Infrastructure</p>
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<p>Response: Thank you for your question and for emphasising the importance of high-quality cycling and walking infrastructure in Herefordshire's approach to active travel.</p> <p>The Local Cycling, Walking and Wheeling Infrastructure Plan (LCWWIP) does not reduce the priority of cycling within the Council's long-term transport strategy. Instead, it supports the Local Transport Plan (LTP) by ensuring active travel is consistently considered in future transport decisions. The LCWWIP firmly places active travel within a balanced package of measures that support sustainable travel, climate commitments, health outcomes, and value for money.</p> <p>We recognise that rising transport costs make the provision of safe, attractive routes for cycling and walking more important than ever and we are committed to delivering improvements that enable more people to make everyday journeys by active modes.</p> <p>Regarding recent works on Great Western Way, we acknowledge the disruption caused by temporary closures. Safety and essential maintenance required these measures and we appreciate the feedback regarding signage and communication. Lessons from this scheme are already informing better management and public information for future works.</p> <p>On the suggestion of appointing a dedicated Cycling Officer, the Council agrees that strong in-house expertise is vital. A new Principal Integrated Transport Officer post has already been approved to lead delivery of LCWWIP priorities. Further strengthening cycling and active travel expertise. We value the contribution of cycling groups, local campaigners, and everyday users in shaping this work. Ongoing engagement will continue to shape our active travel programme to benefit Herefordshire's communities</p>			
<p>Supplementary Question: None</p>			
<p>Supplementary Response:</p>			
<p>PQ 4.</p>	<p>Mrs Morawiecka, Breinton</p>	<p>I was advised in answer to my question at the last full council meeting re HGVs coming into Hereford from South Wales that "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" . The data on which this answer was provided had incorrectly included all daily buses travelling back & forth on the Belmont Road in the HGV count & assumed, without evidence, that these would be rerouted onto the new Southern Link Road & the A49. With public help, the traffic</p>	<p>Councillor Price, Transport and Infrastructure</p>

		count data from Sept 2025 has now been corrected, so would the Cabinet member review his previous answer and, using origin & destination traffic data, explain the claimed benefits of the £45million Southern Link Road?"	
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Response:

Thank you for your question and for highlighting the corrected HGV data. As noted, the figures have now been updated, and we will continue to strengthen our quality assurance processes to ensure buses are not incorrectly counted within HGV classifications in future surveys. However, this does not change our analysis of the challenge and the benefits that the road will bring. The survey data shows that 435 HGVs still travel on Belmont Road.

Phase One alone provides a strong case for investment. Early indications assess the Benefit–Cost Ratio (BCR) at between 1.8 and 2.5, which represents medium to high value for money. Across the standard 60-year appraisal period, total monetised benefits are estimated at between £53.9 million and £77.4 million, including:

Around £47 million in travel-time savings, improving journey reliability for residents, businesses and visitors.

Improved access to the Hereford Enterprise Zone, enhancing its attractiveness to investors and supporting new jobs and economic growth.

Health and environmental benefits, including reduced traffic volumes through residential areas such as Belmont, Hunderton, Red Hill, Putson and Lower Bullingham—improving daily conditions for local communities.

Noise reductions for properties along key corridors, including more than 450 homes along the A465, as well as parts of Holme Lacy Road.

An estimated 18 accidents avoided, including 11 slight-casualty reductions.

A reduction of approximately 4,285 tCO₂e, equivalent to around £0.95 million in greenhouse-gas benefits (2023 prices).

Further information and data will be provided at the Full Business Case stage later this year.

Supplementary Question:

Thank you for recognising the error in the traffic data relating to the Hereford Southern Link Road (SLR).

The corrected figure of 435 relates only to HGVs between Walnut Tree Avenue and the Railway Bridge with just 107 HGVs on the Belmont Road (location V Camera) - 18 travelling North East into Hereford (the HGVs most likely to reroute onto the SLR) and 89 heading South West, out of Hereford.

When validating the traffic modelling from September 2025, the Lidl Superstore was under construction. Does this explain the 328 extra HGVs travelled on the Belmont Road between Walnut Tree Avenue & the railway bridge, but not passing the V camera further along the Belmont road, and does Origin and Destination data support the assumption that HGVs by Walnut Tree Avenue will reroute onto the SLR outside of Hereford?

Supplementary Response:

Response at the cabinet meeting on 26th March 2026:

A written response will be provided.

Written response provided on 1 April 2026:

The Council does not have origin and destination data for this site on Belmont Road. However, looking at what data is available, there is a DfT's count site (Count Point 57225) on the A465 near to Pontrillas Sawmills which gives us a good indication of the levels of HGV traffic on the A465. This shows that there's typically 450+ HGVs a day on this section of the A465 and there has been even higher numbers in the past. Although they provide estimated data for every year, the last manual count was in 2022 and it shows a total of 478 HGV, with 230 traveling north toward Hereford and 248 traveling south away from Hereford. The DfT count site clearly shows a split between north and south bound traffic being consistently closer to 50%. As you have suggested, it appears that there was something unusual with the September 2025 traffic count and that the north bound HGV count was being affected by the roadworks. We will investigate this further and if needed we will run a fresh survey. Please have assurance the data was only used for comparison purposes and has not been used in the modelling work which supports the business case for Phase One.

PQ 5.	Mrs Jackie Morris, Hereford	The LCWWIP on page 135 highlights that routes with close proximity to schools can play an important part in enabling children & parents/guardians to walk, cycle or wheel. After much work with Council Officers for over 25 years, a proposed cycle route connecting Whitecross High & Stretton Sugwas Primary along the length of Kings Acre Road, away from the 40 mph road was ranked 4th in the council cycling infrastructure plan for funding, that was never forthcoming. Despite requested from Breinton Parish councillors during the LCWWIP consultation why has this route not been included in the LCWWIP for funding?	Councillor Price, Transport and Infrastructure
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Response:

Thank you for your question.

Feedback submitted during the LCWWIP consultation—including from Breinton Parish councillors—was considered by the project team, and the final plan was updated where evidence supported doing so. In this instance, although the route is recognised as a desire line, it did not meet the

threshold for inclusion in the first phase of LCWWIP priority corridors; the threshold assessment looks at viability, modal shift opportunities and cost/funding opportunities.

Importantly, the LCWWIP is a live document intended to support ongoing development of the network over time. The Council will continue to review opportunities for school-focused improvements through future updates, design development work, and as external funding becomes available. We remain committed to working with local communities, schools and parish councils to ensure that opportunities for improving safe access to education facilities are considered as part of future programme development.

Supplementary Question:

None

Supplementary Response:

PQ 6.	Mr. Jeremy Milln, Hereford	<p>It is appreciated that the LCWWIP public consultation at item 7 on today's agenda attracted 1648 visits and a healthy 760 contributions</p> <p>Westco's 40 page feedback report of February 2023 on the 2022/23 Hereford City Masterplan consultation, also using the Commonplace platform and interactive map, showed that 393 people responded to the survey and 627 to the interactive map with more than 2000 comments and suggestions helping to shape the final draft Plan published in March 2023 shortly before the new administration scrapped it.</p> <p>How many responses were received by the end of the latest Hereford City 2050 Masterplan consultation run over the Christmas/New Year period and why was the City Council, as the chief stakeholder, not consulted or even notified?</p>	Councillor Biggs, Economy and Growth
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Response:

The Council is in the early stages of developing the Hereford City Masterplan 2050, which reflects a renewed strategic approach shaped by the current administration's Council Plan, updated transport plan and wider policy framework, including a commitment to develop the Hereford Bypass. This sets out a vision for an economically stronger, healthier and better connected Hereford, enhancing the historic centre, maximising green space, supporting local businesses and improving how people travel into, across and around the city - whether by foot, bike, bus, car or train. It also aligns with commitments to improve air quality, reduce carbon emissions and plan for future homes and infrastructure needs. In developing the outline framework for the Masterplan 2050 some initial engagement was undertaken, including via the council website as well as face to face conversations. This occurred in Hereford City Centre and at local colleges, inviting residents, businesses and partners to share their views on key themes including culture, education, health, homes, movement and potential development areas across the city. In terms of responses received, the

online questionnaire returned 11 submissions. The in-person drop-in sessions generated approximately 80 suggestion slips. Full consultation will take place once Cabinet has reviewed the draft and any amendments have been made. This will include meaningful engagement with key stakeholders, such as the City Council, Hereford City BID, businesses, public bodies, and further public engagement, and we look forward to hearing their views.

Supplementary Question:

Historic England's influential urban Panel, visiting Hereford in 2007 and 2018, reminded us of the need for an overarching City area masterplan to realise Hereford's economic, social and environmental potential through good place-making. It had been a requirement of the Inspectorate examining the Local Plan.

The plan drafted in early 2023 ready for final consultation was the result of the input of many hundreds of people with more than 2000 suggestions. It had a broad democratic basis. Yet your administration, finding it did not like it, scraps it, wasting tens of thousands of pounds. Now we learn you are to draft a new plan based on just 11 on-line submissions, there being no meaningful consultation.

This is in clear breach of the Gunning Principles built in you your Code of Conduct which require consultation to be done conscientiously, at a formative stage and with adequate time. How do you justify breaching these principles and the waste of money in scrapping the previous plan?

Supplementary Response:

Thank you for your supplementary. Firstly, the previous plan was a draft plan. It was never adopted by this administration. What we are working on is a Master Plan that's good for everyone. When we talk about consultation, this original question was about consultation, and I'm reminded of Terry Wogan with his breakfast show, bless him, when the readers' letters or listeners letter that would come in and Lord Harbinger of Doom was a regular contributor to those letters, when you're doing consultation of this sort, what you must engage with, is everyone. That's not just naysayers, not just the critics but those that will enable and be positive around things. We need young people for the future, we need businesses, we need everybody to be involved. So, our consultation, we haven't done consultation so far, its pre consultation, we now have something to nearly consult on in terms of a draft piece, that, when its completed we'll engage with all stakeholders, we'll engage as wide an audience as possible to ensure we get all the feedback we need through there.