

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

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 1	Mr Hassell, Ewyas Harold	We are residents of Monks Retreat in Ewyas Harold by the side of Dulas Brook. As you will be aware, Ewyas Harold was badly affected last November by the flooding caused by Storm Claudia. We understand that a raft of proposals have been drawn up by our local parish council and environmental health and we would like to know if these will be implemented before this coming Autumn?	Cabinet member Local Engagement and Community Resilience.
Response: We appreciate the concerns of residents affected by flooding and understand the desire to see improvements delivered as quickly as possible. A number of potential measures have been identified through discussions involving the Parish Council, the Environment Agency and other relevant organisations. In terms of the measures that will be in place before the autumn: - Herefordshire Council's Flood Risk Management Team has supported Ewyas Harold Parish Council in developing a Community Flood Plan, which has now been completed. - The team has been liaising with the Parish Council on the development of a community flood signage scheme to help improve local resilience. The scheme will enable trained local volunteers to legally close roads in and around Ewyas Harold during flood events. A suitable date needs to be arranged for volunteer training, after which the scheme can be formally implemented. - Herefordshire Council has been working with the Environment Agency to support the planned clearance of the blocked culvert beneath the B4347 during the summer holiday period, helping to restore its capacity to convey high flows more effectively. The following medium- to long-term flood risk management options are currently under consideration. Subject to the necessary consents, permissions and approvals being secured from relevant organisations and stakeholders, we are aiming to deliver these measures by April 2027: - Investigating the ownership of a historic ditch and liaising with the Internal Drainage Board on its reinstatement, with the aim of conveying flood water away from the highway and back into the Dulas Brook. - Undertaking a survey of the accessible sections of the historic culverted watercourse (locally referred to as the "Stinky Ditch"). The survey findings will be shared with the Internal Drainage Board, which has the relevant powers to consider and progress any necessary maintenance or clearance works.			

- Developing a drainage improvement scheme for the area opposite Smith's Garage. This aims to provide a more effective route for floodwater to drain away once river levels recede, reducing the duration of flooding and associated road closures.
- Progressing the installation of a debris catcher upstream of the bridge on the Dulas Brook in response to issues experienced previously when a tree became lodged beneath the bridge. This work also includes investigating the construction of a flood bund adjacent to the playing fields. Delivery will be subject to the completion of a Flood Risk Activity Permit (FRAP) process and associated lead-in times.

In addition to the measures outlined above, the Environment Agency has arranged initial Lot 1 surveys for residents affected by flooding to assess which Property Flood Resilience (PFR) measures may be suitable for their properties. Please note that the implementation of any recommended PFR measures will be subject to securing funding, with potential funding opportunities currently being explored.

Herefordshire Council is also investigating the feasibility of a larger-scale upstream attenuation scheme that would utilise natural flood management measures to reduce peak flows and provide temporary floodwater storage. This project is currently at an early stage of development. Separately, a further flood risk management project is being explored. As discussions on this project remain at a preliminary stage, it is not yet possible to provide further details or confirm a delivery timeline.

PQ 2	Mrs Protherough Hereford	A Transport Hub is for Changing Places. Will Herefordshire Council reconsider their decision not to site at the railway station a so named appropriate facility, with space and the right equipment, to enable disabled people to make themselves clean and comfortable, before continuing their journey?	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure
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Response: A disabled toilet is being provided at the Transport Hub and we can confirm that the design of the new facility meets all building regulations and disabled access legislation requirements. Inclusion of a larger changing facility was not a requirement that was considered at the time of the design of the Hub. The development of the Transport Hub did not include any renovation of facilities at Hereford Railway Station. Placement of such a facility within the railway station would be a matter for Network Rail. Having reflected on your question, however, the council will seek to engage with Network rail and Transport for Wales to explore whether they have any plans to update their facilities.

PQ 3	Mr Milln Hereford	At Cabinet on 25th June I asked about the overdue library and museum projects and was told preconstruction agreements with contractors were being finalised. The response lacked clarity or credibility and was followed up by the Independent resulting in a Council press release on 30th June admitting it had hit the buffers. This was entirely predictable. At planning stage in 2023 and again direct to the CEO in November 2024 we advised against the rooftop terrace and restaurant scheme for Broad Street as unnecessary, costly and damaging to historic fabric . Assurances were given which we now know to have been untrustworthy. With the gross overspends on its City Link Road and Blueschool House Projects in mind what lessons for transparency and prudence has this administration learned from its management of these and other major capital projects?	Leader
Response: The council continues to lead projects in an open and transparent way in accordance with our constitution. Individual governance decisions are taken for all capital spend and Record of Officer Decisions are published to reflect all operational decisions thereafter. Performance is reported at public cabinet meetings on a quarterly basis. Through the council's project management structures, we continue to review and identify lessons learnt at each stage. In terms of the Hereford Museum and Art Gallery project, the previous administration included the proposed additional roof terrace and café in their original proposals. This would have added circa £10m to the overall project cost and, as a result of subsequent detailed cost validation, this has proven not to be affordable. To ensure that we can deliver a new long term outstanding museum and art gallery for residents of the county and visitors, and to retain £12m of external grant funding, we have taken managed and pragmatic decisions to bring the project back within the available budget. Supplementary question: Thank you for your response to my question about lessons learned of the stalled Museum and Library projects, though a little disingenuous to be pointing the finger. After more than three years in office this administration must accept responsibility. After all it promoted and passed the plans and budgets for both projects. With the prospect of further delay even basic maintenance of the old museum/library has stalled. Its cabinets, which might have been brightened with displays while they remain, left empty and covered with years of grime. Its fine ironwork gates, firmly locked trapping litter and corroded for want of a necessary lick of paint. With a facade opposite the Cathedral, it creates a poor impression for our visitors Stitch-in-time care is not costly so what are the reasons for the neglect and how to you propose to address this?			

Response to supplementary question:

Renovating a project like the museum is a huge exercise and we are working through it to deliver the best scheme we can given the constraints and the needs to address some of the key factors in the building. But I take the point about the appearance of the building whilst we're working through these essential plans and strategies to improve the building so that we've got a fantastic museum. I can confirm that all of the litter has been removed from the front by the by the railings that you suggest. Whilst I appreciate it would be great to do a lick of paint, we are close to being in a position where we can firm up what we really need to do to do a really good job. So I wouldn't want to do anything prematurely let's do it right at the right time. But as I say, the the litter that you refer to has been removed. Thank you.