

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

Question No.	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 1	Rhys Griffiths, Tupsley	In March meeting the council they were going to conduct a feaseabilty study on the Whitehouse community hub building so I am asking has this been done and when is the work going to begin or is the building going to be left in its current state for another winter of storms to deteriorate further therefore costing more than the budget the council has set aside for repairs.	Councillor Bramer
Response: The council recognises the importance of the Whitehouse Community Hub to local residents and is committed to bringing the building back into safe and active community use. Following assessment of the condition of the building, the council has confirmed that the approach will be to repair the existing building. The procurement process to appoint the consultant team needed to progress the works is now underway, with the tender due to close on 2 October. Once appointed, the consultant team will support the council to develop the detailed scope and progress the repair works. Alongside this, officers are working with the local community on the future use of the hub. Officers have met with representatives of the Tupsley Whitehouse Project and the local ward member to update them on the council's plans, and further discussions are taking place to consider how the building can best meet the needs of the local community when it reopens.			
Supplementary Question:			
Supplementary Response:			
PQ 2	Paul Newman, HR2 7LR	The Western Bypass Phase 1 Update Report to Cabinet claims the benefit of the road is to “reduce traffic on Walnut Tree Avenue, Holme Lacy Road and on a section of the Belmont Road”. At the last Cabinet meeting I was told “A series of Quiet Route schemes have been designed that will connect the Belmont area to the new cycle improvements being constructed on the Holme Lacy Road.”	Councillor Price

		The capital programme makes no mention of the delivery of these cycle schemes between Belmont and Holme Lacy Road. With £4million spent already on the road scheme, please explain why the Council has decided not to fund and deliver these Quiet Routes ahead of a more complex, expensive £45million road, when the former would reduce overall vehicle use and doesn't destroy the natural environment South of Hereford?	
Response: The council has not abandoned the Quiet Route proposals. They are referenced within the business case for the Hereford Bypass as routes linking Belmont Road, Holme Lacy Road and the city centre, with the aim of encouraging more travel choices through walking and cycling. Traffic reductions resulting from the bypass would support the development of western "Quiet Routes" and improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. Quiet Routes However, the bypass and the Quiet Routes are intended to address different transport challenges. While active travel measures can reduce some local car journeys, they would not remove the significant volume of cross-city and freight traffic that currently uses routes such as Belmont Road, Walnut Tree Avenue and Holme Lacy Road. The council's position is therefore that the schemes are complementary rather than alternatives, with the bypass helping to reduce through-traffic on local roads while creating better conditions for walking, cycling and public transport.			
Supplementary Question:			
Supplementary Response:			
PQ 3	Haydn Osborne-Brookes HR6 9EA	Local residents are facing increasing costs for fuel as wars continue across the world, and many residents would welcome good, low cost and sustainable transport alternatives to using the car, such as good, frequent public transport or safe walking and cycling routes. The Hereford Bypass Phase 1 Update Report to Cabinet shows that the only community benefit of the road scheme is to "reduce traffic on Walnut Tree Avenue, Holme Lacy Road and on a section of the Belmont Road". How does it help the local economy and residents across the County by expecting	Councillor Price

		them to repay over £40million or more of loans along with interest on the debt, at a time when interest rates are anticipated to rise?	
Response: The council recognises the real pressures that many residents are facing from the increasing costs of living, including fuel and transport costs, and understands the importance of affordable, reliable and sustainable travel options. Investment in public transport, walking and cycling remains an important part of the council's wider transport approach. However, the council also has to plan for the long-term needs of Herefordshire. The bypass is intended to address longstanding congestion in and around the city, including traffic that currently uses residential and unsuitable local roads. By helping to unblock congestion, the scheme is expected to support improved journey reliability, reduce traffic pressure in key residential areas and contribute to better air quality over the longer term. Relief from congestion will benefit all road users, including those using public transport, walking, cycling and travelling by car. Journey time reliability is particularly important for running dependable bus services, and the bypass is expected to help create more consistent conditions for public transport as part of a wider transport network. When fully realised, the bypass will support regeneration, open up space for thousands of new homes and jobs, improve access to employment areas, and help grow the local economy. Without the necessary infrastructure, future housing, employment and regeneration opportunities would be much harder to deliver in a planned and sustainable way. The council is mindful that major infrastructure projects involve significant costs, particularly at a time when public finances and household budgets are under pressure. That is why the scheme is subject to detailed business case assessment, scrutiny and governance before further commitments are made. The council's approach is to ensure that any investment is carefully considered, affordable, deliverable and represents value for money for residents over the long term.			
Supplementary Question:			
Supplementary Response:			
PQ 4	Tracey Bowes HR2 7ZW	The Bypass Phase 1 Full Business Case identifies that only 43% of residents have access to an hourly bus service (in morning peak and early daytime off peak periods) falling to only 8% of residents with access to services that run every 30 minutes (para 2.8.1). “Buses are the most used form of public transport in Herefordshire, with 1.5 million trips made in 2023 and 2024, rising from 1.1 million in 2022 (Herefordshire Council – Local Transport	Councillor Price

		Plan 5)”). The Hereford Bypass Phase 1 Full Business Case identifies a high level of travel by private motor vehicle between Belmont and the HEZ. To improve city connectivity and reduce the number of vehicles driving between Belmont and the HEZ, why is the Council not proposing to provide regular, low cost bus services directly between Belmont and Rotherwas?	
Response: The council recognises the importance of improving bus services, including better links between residential areas and key employment locations such as Rotherwas. There are existing bus services serving parts of South Wye, Belmont and the Hereford Enterprise Zone, but the council accepts that these do not provide the type of direct, high-frequency Belmont to Rotherwas service you have mentioned. Any new or enhanced direct service would need to be considered alongside passenger demand, operating costs, available funding and the ability of operators to run the service sustainably. The council is considering bus improvements through its wider transport work, including the Local Transport Plan, Bus Service Improvement Plan, city bus priority measures, the new Transport Hub and future discussions with operators. The bypass is not intended to be an alternative to public transport investment. Rather, it is part of a wider package of transport measures. By reducing congestion on key routes and improving access to the Hereford Enterprise Zone, the scheme is expected to create better conditions for more reliable bus services, alongside walking and cycling improvements.			
Supplementary Question:			
Supplementary Response:			
PQ 5	Amanda Martin, HR2 6BD	The Bypass Phase 1 report at 4.3 Legal Implications states that: “Construction can commence in advance of any residual land acquisitions providing that there remains a realistic route to acquiring the residual land (whether through conclusion of private negotiations or through compulsory purchase).” In theory the Authority could commence construction prior to completion of transfers of all land required. No planning consent	Councillor Price

		has been granted for haul roads, attenuation ponds, etc. to enable the full construction works. Due to the financial risk to County residents of any cost overruns arising from potential delays to land acquisition of 12 to 18 months, or as a result of outstanding planning permissions interrupting construction works, will the Cabinet confirm that no contractual commitment to road construction contract will be made until these matters are resolved?	
Response: The council recognises the financial and delivery risks associated with a major infrastructure project of this scale. No decision to award the main construction contract is being made through this update report. The report asks Cabinet to note progress under the Pre-Construction Services Agreement and to allow further corrective work to be completed on design, cost and programme. The Corporate Director will report back to Cabinet before any construction contract is awarded, and that decision will need to consider the full business case, affordability, deliverability, value for money, land position, planning matters and outstanding third-party approvals. Construction can legally begin before every residual land interest is completed, provided there is a realistic route to securing the remaining land. However, a decision to proceed will only proceed where it is satisfied that the risks are understood, manageable and within the agreed governance and budget.			
Supplementary Question:			
Supplementary Response:			
PQ 6	Mrs J Morris, HR4 OSP	The Hereford Bypass Phase 1 Full Business Case references numerous appendices to support the commentary in the main document. Despite the Council's website news page advising that the supporting documents would be available, at the time of this question, the various appendices have not yet been published. As the Full Business Case is marked as final, where may I find the missing supporting appendices?	Councillor Price
Response:			

Ahead of the Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee (held on 20/7/2026) the council published the full business case for Hereford Bypass Phase One, alongside the following documents: Assessment Criteria Hereford Western Bypass Phase One Full Business Case; Hereford Western Bypass Phase One Full Business Case, Appendices A-H and Appendices I-S. These can be viewed here: <https://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/ieIssueDetails.aspx?IId=50055499&PlanId=0&Opt=3#AI73052>. However, we have now added this full link to the news item to make it easier for viewers to access the all the papers.

Supplementary Question:

Supplementary Response:

PQ 7	Kate Seekings, HR4 0LQ	Para 36 of the Q1 2026/27 Budget report makes it clear that “Where capital projects are funded by external grants, there is further risk that delays in delivery mean that grant conditions and time constraints cannot be met resulting in the loss or clawback of grant”. With time running short for starting and completing significant capital works to historic buildings for both the museum and library, can the Cabinet member is on the monthly board meetings of the Stronger Towns Fund and the Project boards, please update the public and the many volunteers in these services, as to what the timeline for successful completion looks like?	Councillor Biggs
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Response:

The council remains committed to securing the long-term future of both Shire Hall and Hereford Museum & Art Gallery. As work has progressed, further surveys, technical investigations and cost reviews have been undertaken to ensure both projects remain affordable, deliverable and provide lasting benefits for residents and visitors. We are currently reviewing the detailed designs and corresponding cost plans in the context of budget and funding timelines. We will work closely with partners to maximise the benefits delivered through these investments and ensure the best possible value is achieved within the available budget and funding deadlines. We will provide a further update on this work in October.

Supplementary question:

Supplementary response:

PQ 8	M Burns, Hereford	The Council was reported as having allocated £200,000 to the Burcott Bridge, Hereford in May this year.	Councillor Price
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		Due to safety concerns the pedestrian bridge has now been closed, reducing the road bridge to a single, one-way system, increasing congestion in the City Centre. Resolving this situation would do much to tackle Hereford traffic congestion and yet there seems to be no mention of any capital project in the Q1 finance reports. The Council say that works to resolve the situation cannot be considered until the outcome of a grant application. With no additional funding or capital project in the Cabinet reports, please advise how long Hereford residents will need to wait for this situation to be resolved?	
Response: We recognise the inconvenience this has caused to residents, businesses and road users, and we thank them for their patience. The £200,000 allocation referred to in May relates to design work for the future replacement of the College Road road bridge in partnership with Network Rail and is separate from the current closure of the pedestrian footbridge. The footbridge was closed following a condition assessment that identified deterioration requiring urgent action to protect public safety. To maintain a safe route for pedestrians, it has been necessary to divert them across the adjacent road bridge, which in turn has required the introduction of a one-way traffic system. Resolving the issue is complex and involves a number of organisations. Any repair or replacement work requires specialist contractors with expertise in working over a live railway, agreement from Network Rail for track access, and further surveys to determine the most appropriate solution. The footbridge also carries important utilities services that local homes and businesses rely on, including pipes, cables and other connections, providing energy supply and telecommunications, which must be protected throughout any works. Officers are currently assessing the available options for repair or replacement and are programming further surveys with Network Rail. Once the likely costs, funding requirements and delivery timescales are better understood, the council will provide a further update and a clear programme for the next stages of work.			
Supplementary question:			
Supplementary response:			

PQ 9	Mr E Morfett, Hereford	Since the procurement strategy was agreed by Cabinet in July 2025 and the PCSA was awarded in March 2026 there has been significant disruption to global supply chains due to conflict in the Middle East. This has led to significant construction inflation with the Department of Business and Trade publishing preliminary figures showing that Construction materials prices for “All Work” rose by 6.0% in the 12 months to June 2026. How will this Council Cabinet judge the risk of further capital cost escalation when, the detail in the documents for its consideration to proceed only cover the impact of supply disruption up until June 2026? The 42% rise in the oil price since June 2026 suggests we have already missed the boat. (The international oil price has risen 42% from under \$70 to over \$100 per barrel, with most projections of third quarter prices remaining above \$100 per barrel).	Councillor Stoddart
Response: The council recognises that construction inflation, supply chain disruption, energy, labour and wider market conditions can affect the cost and deliverability of major capital schemes. This wider context, including continuing volatility in construction costs and supply chains, is part of the reason, alongside findings from the PCSA, why the matter is being brought back to Cabinet now, so that members can consider the latest position before any further decisions are taken. The risk and impact of increases in capital costs will be considered as part of work to review and confirm total project costs prior to the award of the construction contract.			
Supplementary Question:			
Supplementary Response:			
PQ 10	Mrs E Morawiecka, Hereford	The S151 officer must be congratulated for her honesty in the Q1 2026/27 Budget report about the pressure from	Councillor Stoddart

		revenue overspends on the Council's reserves and the immediate action required to protect the Council's overall financial resilience (para 13). The risk of overspends in future years on so many significant capital projects has increased due to design changes, delays and construction inflation. However, the Capital report 2026/27 Table B shows no significant increase in the anticipated costs for some major construction projects, which is inconsistent with the narrative. In a capital rationing situation what projects are prioritised for delivery, so that at least some can be completed in the next 5 years, without impacting local services and the Council tax paid by residents?	
Response: Last year, Herefordshire Council delivered one of its most ambitious capital programmes in recent history, with £86 million being invested in vital infrastructure, from roads to emergency housing, to support long-term local growth and improve residents' daily lives. This year, many of our priority projects are well underway, nearly completed or recently completed, including Merton Meadow flood alleviation works, the Hereford Transport Hub, Holme Lacy Road safer travel improvements, Peterchurch Primary School redevelopment and John Venn building for temporary housing. At the same time, we are keeping our important historical assets, such as the Shire Hall and HMAG maintained for future development, and are about to begin works to increase capacity at Aylestone School, Hereford while seeking public views on proposals to establish a new school for SEN in Ross-on-Wye. Future capital decisions will continue to be assessed through the council's governance and budget monitoring processes, taking account of affordability, deliverability, risk, value for money and the potential impact on local services and council tax payers.			
Supplementary Question:			
Supplementary Response:			
PQ 11	Charlotte Stidston, Hereford	Many parishes to the West of Hereford, such as Madley, Bishopstone, Stretton Sugwas, Breinton, etc are concerned about the prospect of "rat running" on narrow rural lanes during and after construction of the Southern Link Road, especially with the original planning condition for the road to restrict HGVs on Belmont Road. For these parishes to understand the impact on their communities of the extra vehicle movements arising from the new road	Councillor Price

		and to appropriately locate future development in neighbourhood plans, will the Cabinet member make available the Hereford Strategic Transport Model (HSTM) data for the traffic on their parish roads during construction of the SLR and then 1 year post opening, 5 years post opening and 10 years post opening, at no cost to the parishes affected by this council road scheme?	
Response: The council recognises the importance of local communities being able to understand the potential impacts of the bypass scheme, including on parish roads and local traffic movements. We have a strong record of transparency on this project and have made available thousands of pages of documentation, modelling data and evidence to support public scrutiny and informed debate. Traffic modelling has been undertaken to inform the development of the Full Business Case, including forecast years for the opening year (2028), design year (2043) and forecast horizon year (2061). These outputs have been used to assess the scheme's wider impacts and benefits, including changes in traffic flows, journey times, congestion, access to employment areas and the wider transport network. The council will continue to be transparent as the project progresses and will publish further information, data and evidence where it is appropriate and practicable to do so, so that residents, parish councils and members can continue to scrutinise the scheme and understand its impacts.			
Supplementary question:			
Supplementary response:			
PQ 12	Chris Parnell Smith, HR4 7JH	The Full Business Case accepts that traffic will increase on roads near the new route as drivers re-route, and the Statement of Reasons confirms fresh modelling was carried out in 2025. The C1098 Bridge Sollers Road — 4 to 7 metres wide, already signed unsuitable for HGVs, and carrying 2,290 (2016) vehicles a day — was outside the 2015 study area, and no forecast for it has been published. Before the construction contract is awarded, will Cabinet publish the 2025 modelling outputs for the C1098 and commit to a prohibition of through traffic and a 7.5-tonne weight limit on that road, funded as scheme mitigation — the same instrument the scheme already requires on the A465 Belmont Road under planning condition 21?	Councillor Price

Response:			
The council recognises the importance of local communities being able to understand the potential impacts of the bypass scheme, including on parish roads and local traffic movements. We have a strong record of transparency on this project and have made available thousands of pages of documentation, modelling data and supporting evidence to inform public scrutiny and debate. These assessments consider a wide range of impacts, including traffic flows, journey times, congestion, access to employment areas and the wider transport network. The council will continue to publish further information, data and evidence where appropriate and practicable as the project progresses, so that residents, parish councils and members can continue to scrutinise the scheme and understand its impacts. While weight restrictions operate elsewhere in the county, they have been introduced to address specific local circumstances. The council continues to assess the impact of the bypass scheme on both the strategic and local highway network, and the concerns raised about the C1098 will be considered as part of that ongoing work.			
Supplementary question:			
Supplementary response:			
PQ 13	Michelle Green, Madley	Phase 1 of the bypass will increase use of the C1098 which is 'unsuitable for HGVs', single track in many places, blind corners, no pavement and habitations on the roadside. Parish footpaths and Bridleways cross/end on this road, yet it is unsafe to walk. HGVs use this road, often causing gridlock and could be disastrous if emergency services needed access. Last week Greyfriars Bridge was shut, lorries were stuck on the road; one reversed and damaged our property. I wrote to the company who said their driver was diverted by the Police. I asked my Counsellor why the road cannot exclude HGVs and was told that the Police do not have sufficient resources. Yet the new development at Hereford Point has a restriction in place. So does the bridge at Holme Lacy. Please consider excluding HGVs over 7.5t (except access) from C1098 to improve safety for all road users in advance of phase 1	Councillor Price

Response: The council acknowledges local concerns raised about the C1098, particularly given its rural nature and the impact that large vehicles can have on local communities. The council continues to assess the impact of the bypass scheme on both the strategic and local highway network, including potential effects on traffic movements on local roads such as the C1098. While weight restrictions operate elsewhere in the county, they have been introduced to address specific local circumstances and do not automatically justify a similar restriction on this route. Any proposal for a weight restriction would need to be supported by evidence, assessed against wider network impacts and progressed through the appropriate statutory processes. The concerns raised by residents and parish councils will continue to be considered as part of the council's ongoing assessment of the scheme and its wider impacts.			
Supplementary question:			
Supplementary response:			
PQ 14	Jeremey Milln, Hereford	In respect of the Museum and Library projects in Hereford the Council has nearly £12million of Stronger Town Fund grant of which £4.435m appears in the Capital Report to have been spent on the Museum & Art Gallery and £430k on the Library. The original proposals for the Museum were estimated to be £14million over the capital budget. With the Council's revenue budget looking to be overspent by £11million by the end of this financial year, reducing reserves, and with costs on other capital projects increasing, what is the latest forecast capital funding shortfall and what savings may be made by the proposed design reductions in the two schemes?	Councillor Bramer
Response: The council remains committed to securing the long-term future of both Shire Hall and Hereford Museum & Art Gallery. As work has progressed, further surveys, technical investigations and cost reviews have been undertaken to ensure both projects remain affordable, deliverable and provide lasting benefits for residents and visitors. We are currently reviewing the detailed designs and corresponding cost plans in the context of budget and funding timelines. We will work closely with partners to maximise the benefits delivered through these investments and ensure the best possible value is achieved within the available budget and funding deadlines. We will provide a further update on this work in October.			
Supplementary Question:			

Supplementary response: