

## Summary of the Issues Raised at Meetings

### North Herefordshire – Lady Hawkins Leisure Centre, Kington

<i>Attendees</i>	<i>Councillors; S Bowen, Mrs J French, J Goodwin, J Hope, R Phillips, R Stockon, J Stone. 22 members of the public</i>
<i>Presentation</i>	<i>Queries/Comments</i>
<i>Update</i>	<p>Chief Executive gave response to two questions, which had been posed prior to the meeting;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reassurance sought about the Herefordshire Jarvis contract.</li> <li>• What is the budget for implementation of the new Licensing Act?</li> </ul>
<i>Budget Consultation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern about the number of councillors (58.) representing a population of 177,000 and how councillors expenses can be justified given this ratio.</li> <li>• Similarly comments about the cost of Parish Councils.</li> <li>• Suggestion to sell off Wesleyan Chapel to raise capital.</li> <li>• Delay the proposed improvements to Kington Library.</li> <li>• Check for duplication of work by the voluntary sector.</li> <li>• Query about staffing levels for the Kington Regeneration Partnership.</li> <li>• Lower public expectation by educating residents about the disadvantages, as well as advantages, of living in a sparsely populated rural county, especially expectations relating to road systems.</li> <li>• Support canvassed for Community Transport Scheme, in terms of its contribution towards staying put objectives and its addressing of social/rural isolation issues, by CX of Herefordshire Voluntary Action Group.</li> <li>• Concern about the format of the consultation questionnaire, and the lack of monetary values attributed to choices. It was felt that without this it was impossible to make an informed selection of one service over another. This also gave rise to strong concerns about the quality of the data that will be collected.</li> <li>• Questions and concerns about Herefordshire Council's job evaluation process; the impact of this on staff, in terms of recruitment and retention of a quality workforce and the cost of the process.</li> <li>• An advocate spoke on behalf of Teme Valley Youth Services (Wigmore) and explained the importance of 'match funding' for the project.</li> <li>• Support canvassed for the Citizens Advice Bureau, and a request for the release of the 'Best Value Review of the Voluntary Sector' report.</li> <li>• Concern expressed about the cost of administering the Market Towns and any overlaps involved in this.</li> <li>• Query about the number of staff employed on short term contracts.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Query about £2million efficiency savings and who is involved in identifying these, and by what criteria.</li> <li>• How will the resulting budget decisions be presented to the public, given that monetary values have not been attributed to the questionnaire choices?</li> <li>• Concern about any possible closure of Leominster Leisure Centre.</li> </ul>
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**Central Herefordshire – Withington Village Hall**

<i>Attendees</i>	<p><i>Councillors; J Guthrie, B Matthews, Mrs Robertson, B Wilcox, M Wilson.</i></p> <p><i>Apologies; Councillor Mrs J Pemberton</i></p> <p><i>13 members of the public</i></p>
<i>Presentation</i>	<i>Queries/Comments</i>
<i>Update</i>	<i>None</i>
<i>Budget Consultation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was felt, that people had not been afforded the opportunity to make informed choices due to the lack of monetary values for the questionnaire choices.</li> <li>• Will Members be expected to make decisions in this way, i.e. without values given for their choice options?</li> <li>• Concern about the number of staff employed by Herefordshire Council and the ratio of this to the County's residents.</li> <li>• Is the Authority too small, has the break from Worcestershire been justified?</li> <li>• Given the problem of Government funding having been based upon outdated census figures, what is the Council doing to address this, and why can't the council simply refuse to meet Government set targets in protest?</li> <li>• Concern expressed about migrant retirees adding to the Adult Care budget total.</li> <li>• Councillors' expenses were raised as a concern</li> <li>• A justification for the cost of using specialist consultants was requested.</li> <li>• Concern over costs attached to the maintenance and running of numerous buildings/office accommodation.</li> <li>• What are the costs involved in running private taxis for school children?</li> <li>• The Council should consider a freeze on all new recruitment until the budget has been agreed.</li> <li>• What areas are being considered for the Council's internal cost cutting exercises?</li> <li>• Is the Herefordshire Jarvis partnership a cause for concern?</li> <li>• Have car parking charges provided a valid means of generating revenue?</li> <li>• Are waste recycling targets being met?</li> <li>• What are the costs involved in advertising in the City/Town papers?</li> </ul>

**Ross-On-Wye – John Kyrle High School**

<i>Attendees</i>	<i>Councillors; G Davis, Mrs J Hyde, Mrs R Lincoln, G Lucas. Apologies; Councillor Mrs A Gray. 27 members of the public</i>
<i>Presentation</i>	<i>Queries/Comments</i>
<i>Update</i>	Brief comment by Cllr Davis in response to press articles and letters following the September Forum.
<i>Budget Consultation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Giving the relative value of the budgetary shortfall against the Council's total expenditure would have been helpful.</li> <li>• General comment about the questionnaire and questions about the wider consultative process.</li> <li>• Requests for conclusions of the 'Value for Money' survey of the Voluntary Sector.</li> <li>• What % of the budget is given in funding to the Voluntary Sector?</li> <li>• Comment from a Trustee of the Citizens Advice Bureau regarding funding levels to the charity.</li> <li>• Will the Heritage Centre close, as suggested by the press?</li> <li>• Comment about the importance of 'match funding' to voluntary groups.</li> <li>• The budget survey should reflect 'value for money' comparisons between various service providers.</li> <li>• Many comments about the importance of tourism and the valuable contribution of Tourist Information Offices and voluntary groups such as Ross in Bloom.</li> <li>• Questions and concerns about respite care and the reduction in this provision, along with the closure of some care homes.</li> <li>• What is the cost of the budget consultation?</li> <li>• Questions and comment about the computation of Council Tax and the perceived inequalities with the present system.</li> </ul>
<i>Other Issues</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The disputed ownership of Gypsy Lane.</li> <li>• Question about a no waiting order for Brookfield Road/Brampton Street.</li> <li>• Question about grants for shop frontages; Hightown, Hereford.</li> </ul>

**East Herefordshire – John Masefield High School, Ledbury**

<i>Attendees</i>	<i>Councillors; P Edwards, B Hunt, R Mills, D Rule, R Stockton. Apologies; Councillor T Hunt, Mr Len Huff (Chair Ledbury Independent Traders) 34 members of the public</i>
<i>Presentation</i>	<i>Queries/Comments</i>
<i>Update</i>	<i>None</i>
<i>Budget Consultation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerns about budget questionnaire, as expressed at other area forums.</li> <li>• Various comments about Council Tax levying and calculation, banding and the perceived unfairness of the tax.</li> <li>• Comment about the importance of tourism and Tourist information Offices.</li> <li>• Falling standards of local services especially those for Older People.</li> <li>• Why no bus passes for Older People?</li> <li>• Representation from; Community Transport Schemes, Ledbury Shop Mobility, Ledbury Day Care Centre and concern about the impact of any cuts on the health and well being of local residents.</li> <li>• Affordable housing needed for local people.</li> <li>• Representation from Ledbury Youth Centre, to recognise the importance of this service to the local community.</li> <li>• Praise for the recycling initiatives.</li> <li>• Traffic congestion and a transport policy framed to address this.</li> <li>• Local Area Forums are poorly advertised and not many residents are aware of them, what is being done to improve this?</li> </ul>

## Hereford City – Shirehall

<i>Attendees</i>	<i>Councillors; Mrs P Andrews, Mrs E Bew, P Edwards, D Fleet, Mrs J French, G Hyde, Mrs M Lloyd-Hayes, Ms G Powell, Miss F Short , B Walling. 50 members of the public</i>
<i>Presentation</i>	<i>Queries/Comments</i>
<i>Update</i>	<i>None</i>
<i>Budget Consultation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staffing levels queried.</li> <li>• Concerns about the ability to meet future demands upon social care services, given the projected increase of the older population.</li> <li>• How has Government funding for education been spent?</li> <li>• Concern about the low numbers of residents present at the Forum.</li> <li>• Reassurance needed about Jarvis and what would happen should they declare bankruptcy.</li> <li>• How is staff morale, given the current job evaluation process?</li> <li>• Is the Authority too small to be viable in the longer term?</li> <li>• More information is needed for the consultation to be meaningful and for residents to make informed choices.</li> <li>• The survey should also provide information about which services are statutory and which are discretionary.</li> <li>• Concern about the number of sites and buildings that the Council operates from.</li> <li>• Many comments about car parking and charges; is it fair for the City car parking charges to subsidise rural areas? there is not sufficient parking, charges at night impact on businesses.</li> <li>• Concern about any new development, i.e. new roads, if ongoing maintenance costs are involved.</li> <li>• Eign Gate improvements and associated costs.</li> <li>• Complaints about Traffic Wardens and perceived lack of discretion over cases where older or disabled people are delayed by as little as five minutes.</li> <li>• What is the Council's current borrowing commitment and associated repayment costs.</li> <li>• What areas (internal) have been identified for realising savings?</li> <li>• Queries about Christmas park and ride scheme, in the light of Sunday Bus service cuts.</li> <li>• Herefordshire Matters, is it value for money?</li> <li>• Request from Parish Councils for the minutes of the Forums to be put onto the Council Website.</li> </ul>
<i>Other</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggestions for future agenda items included; litter and cleanliness, feedback on the Budget Consultation, ways to improve Forum attendance.</li> </ul>

### Golden Valley - Peterchurch

<p><i>Attendees</i></p>	<p><i>Councillors; C Mayson, D Taylor. Apologies; P Turpin 32 members of the public</i></p>
<p><i>Presentation</i></p>	<p><i>Queries/Comments</i></p>
<p><i>Update</i></p>	<p>Response prepared by Stephanie Canham (Head of Social Care) to a query regarding care assessments. Prepared reply given to three prior questions regarding the Budget Consultation.</p>
<p><i>Budget Consultation</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are independent assessments of the Council's performance really independent?</li> <li>• Concern about staffing levels and the appropriateness of these.</li> <li>• Numerous comments about poor information given on the questionnaires and the difficulty in making informed choices. Queries about why further background documentation wasn't available on line.</li> <li>• Why consult at all? Is it just an exercise in public relations?</li> <li>• Concern about possible cuts in Adult Care services and the increasing demands of an ageing population,</li> <li>• Bed blocking problems and the impact on Community Hospitals.</li> <li>• Will the Lengthsman's Scheme be cut?</li> <li>• Justification for job evaluation process?</li> <li>• Does 'Herefordshire Matters' provide value for money?</li> <li>• Can the Council afford to continue to provide services that are rated as good/excellent?</li> <li>• Requests for the continuation of rural library services.</li> <li>• If the consultative process identifies areas for cuts, how much will they be cut by?</li> <li>• Praise for frontline council services especially first point of contact.</li> <li>• Request for bureaucratic process to be streamlined rather than service cuts.</li> <li>• Comment about value for money services provided by the voluntary sector in particular Community Transport.</li> <li>• Eign Gate costs queried.</li> <li>• Concern at the lack of contributions from businesses towards Christmas lights and frontage improvements.</li> <li>• The importance of tourism to the area.</li> <li>• The necessity to continue to provide public conveniences.</li> <li>• Council tax, perceived inequalities.</li> <li>• The importance of youth services.</li> </ul>