

Council**Thursday, 14 May 2015, County Hall, Worcester - 10.00 a.m.****Minutes****Present:**

Mr A A J Adams, Mr R C Adams, Ms P Agar,
Mr A T Amos, Mrs S Askin, Mr J Baker, Mr R W Banks,
Mr M L Bayliss, Mr A N Blagg, Mrs S L Blagg,
Mr C J Bloore, Mr PJ Bridle, Mr M H Broomfield,
Mr J P Campion, Mr S J M Clee, Mr S C Cross,
Mrs P E Davey, Mr P Denham, Mr N Desmond,
Ms L R Duffy, Mrs E A Eyre, Mr A Fry, Mr S E Geraghty,
Mr W P Gretton, Mrs J L M A Griffiths, Mr P Grove,
Mr A I Hardman, Mr M J Hart, Ms P A Hill,
Mrs A T Hingley, Mrs L C Hodgson, Mr C G Holt,
Mr I Hopwood, Mr M E Jenkins, Ms R E Jenkins,
Mr R C Lunn, Mr L C R Mallett, Mr P M McDonald,
Mr A P Miller, Mrs F M Oborski, Mr J W Parish,
Mr S R Peters, Dr K A Pollock, Mr D W Prodger,
Prof J W Raine, Mrs M A Rayner, Mr A C Roberts,
Mr J H Smith, Mr R J Sutton, Mr C B Taylor,
Mrs E B Tucker, Mr P A Tuthill, Mr R M Udall,
Mr G J Vickery, Mr T A L Wells and Mr G C Yarranton

Available Papers

The Members had before them:

- A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated)
- B. Seven questions submitted to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (previously circulated); and
- C. The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 14 February 2015 (previously circulated).

1655 Apologies and Declaration of Interests (Agenda item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Mr J W R Thomas.

One declaration of a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest was made by Mr C B Taylor in relation to his wife's employment as a supply teacher with the Council (Agenda item 13 - for which Mr Taylor withdrew from the Chamber).

1656 Chairman's Announcements (Agenda item 6)

The Chairman announced she would not be standing for re-election, referred to the printed Announcements and her year in office and thanked members and officers for making it such a memorable year.

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| 1657 | Chairman
(Agenda item 2) | <p>The nomination of Mr I Hopwood was moved by Mr P A Tuthill and seconded by Mr A I Hardman. There were no other nominations.</p> <p>RESOLVED that Mr I Hopwood be elected Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year, to hold office until his successor becomes entitled to act.</p> |
| 1658 | Vice-Chairman
(Agenda item 3) | <p>The nomination of Mr A P Miller was moved by Dr K A Pollock and seconded by Mrs E A Eyre.</p> <p>A further nomination, that of Mr A Fry was moved by Mr P M McDonald and seconded by Ms P A Hill.</p> <p>RESOLVED that Mr A P Miller be elected Vice-Chairman of the Council until the election of the Chairman at the next annual meeting.</p> |
| 1659 | Public
Participation
(Agenda item 4) | <p>Three petitions were presented at the meeting:</p> <p>Mrs F M Oborski presented a petition on behalf of residents of Linden Avenue, Kidderminster who were calling on the County Council to install suitable measures to reduce through traffic in this residential road. Such measures included consideration being given to an enforced "Access Only" Order, a 20mph speed limit or speed bumps.</p> <p>Mr S R Peters presented two petitions; one was concerned about the amount and speed of traffic on the Alcester Road on the bend at the junction with Hollywood Lane and at the two bus stops near Dark Lane. The petitioners sought a pedestrian crossing in the locality.</p> <p>The other petition, from another group of Hollywood residents, also sought a safe, controlled crossing of the main Alcester Road, in Hollywood.</p> |
| 1660 | Minutes
(Agenda item 5) | <p>RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.</p> |
| 1661 | Chairman's
Announcements
(Agenda item 6) | <p>The Chairman referred to earlier announcements made by the outgoing Chairman and made reference to a Chairman's Charity Day which would be taking place on 2 October 2015, more details of which would be available at the next meeting.</p> |
| 1662 | Constitutional
and Other | <p>The Council had before it a report which set out the timelines of ensuring scrutiny panels were properly</p> |

**Matters -
Realignment of
Overview and
Scrutiny
arrangements
(Agenda item
7(a))**

aligned to the Council's new Operating Model and that a more even balance of responsibilities was achieved across them to ensure effective scrutiny.

The report explained that in 2014 the Council had agreed that the structure of Overview and Scrutiny be reviewed to establish what changes might be required to function effectively within the new Operating Model. Cross-party discussions had taken place involving members of OSPB and Group Leaders to help inform the recommendations within the report.

The report set out the details and supporting information.

Following cross-party discussions, it was proposed that the following remits should be adopted:

Panel	Business Area
OSPB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny performance • Coordinate and agree the scrutiny work programme for endorsement by Council • Co-ordinate workload • Call-ins • Allocate Council-wide issues not otherwise falling within the remit of a particular Panel to one of the Panels • Consider reports and recommendations from Panels or Task Groups • Monitor the quality of scrutiny
Adult Care and Well-Being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Well-being • Adult Social Care
Children and Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Social Care and Families • Public Health relating to Families • Education and Skills
Economy and Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economy • Environment • Highways • Infrastructure
Corporate and Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioning, contracts and commerce and ensuring the corporate commissioning cycle works well • Transformation • Finance • Localism and Communities

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation and employees
Health O&S Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local NHS bodies and health services

The proposals received cross-party support.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and the proposals within it be agreed for the re-alignment of the remits of the Scrutiny member bodies as set out in paragraphs 6 and 7 of the report [and set out above].

1663 Constitutional and Other Matters - Political Balance on Committees and Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Member Bodies (Agenda item 7(b) & (c))

The Council had before it a report about political balance on Committees which set out that the Council was under a legal duty to ensure that the seats on its ordinary committees were allocated between the respective political Groups on the Council in accordance with the principles of political balance as far as was reasonably practicable.

The Council on 12 February 2015 (minute number 1648) had established a Pensions Committee following the production of the long-awaited Local Government Pension Scheme (Amendment) (Governance) Regulations.

A seat on the Appointments Etc. Panel was currently 'shared' alternately between the 2013 Group and the Independent Alliance Group. With the creation of the new Pensions Committee, those two Groups were now entitled to one seat on either the Pensions Committee or the Appointments Etc Panel (i.e. a full seat would now be available to the Group not represented on the Pensions Committee). These proposals would satisfy the overall requirements of political balance. There was no change to allocations other than for those two member bodies.

The same report also set out the need for the appointment of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of committees. Members' attention was drawn to the revised Appendix 2 showing the proposals which had been circulated to all members.

RESOLVED that

- (a) regard be given to the establishment of a new Pensions Committee and the allocation of places upon its political structures be

1664 Constitutional and Other Matters - Constitution - 2015 update and Council meeting dates for 2016 (Agenda item 7(d) & (e))

confirmed in accordance with Appendix 1 to the report, and

- (b) the constitutional appointments as set out in the revised Appendix 2 to the report be confirmed.**

The Council had before it a report which set out that the recent amendments to the directorate structure together with some legislative changes had provided the opportunity to review and refresh the Council's constitution to incorporate these and produce a 2015 edition of the document.

The Council's attention was drawn to a number of proposed updates set out in the report.

A copy of the updated Constitution – May 2015 edition had been made available in the Members' Support Unit, at County Hall Reception and on the Council's website.

The report also set out that meetings of the County Council had been arranged until November 2015 (these were 9 July 2015, 17 September 2015 and 12 November 2015). The report set out the dates proposed for meetings in 2016. The Council was advised that the date of the Local Government Association (LGA) conference had not been set and so the recommendation relating to the July 2016 Council meeting might be subject to alteration.

RESOLVED that

- (a) the 2015 Constitution be approved and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to keep it updated; and**

- (b) the Council meeting dates for 2016 be:**

**14 January 2016
11 February 2016
12 May 2016
7 July 2016
15 September 2016
10 November 2016.**

1665 Overview and Scrutiny - Annual Report (Agenda item 8)

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board (OSPB) introduced the report. He thanked participants for their contribution to the scrutiny process over the last year and scrutiny officers for their assistance.

1666 Overview and Scrutiny - Future Work Programme (Agenda item 9)

The report was noted.

The Council had before it a report containing suggestions for future scrutiny topics and a proposed work programme.

A debate ensued during which the following principal points were made:

- the recommendation before the Council had been produced following widespread consultation and negotiation
- it was a far-reaching and yet a realistic plan
- concerns were expressed that there was a backlog in a number of areas and the workload was not decreasing
- it was suggested that scrutiny might wish to focus more on the overview aspect and looking forward as in pre-decision scrutiny. There was also the need to cover wider more strategic issues such as devolved powers
- there had been good work done to protect Worcestershire residents in Winterbourne
- there may be some merit in making increased use of task and finish groups to allow a wider vision and to cover more topics. Flexibility was key.

RESOLVED that the 2015/16 Scrutiny Work Programme be endorsed.

1667 Reports of Cabinet - Matters which require a decision by Council (Agenda item 10(a))

The Council had before it a report which contained details of various changes to capital and revenue expenditure consequent upon the receipt of a number of grants from the Government.

The details are set out in the report which included:

- Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards Grant 2015/16 and Delayed Transfers of Care Grant
- Children's Services - Additional Revenue Grants and Education Capital Grants
- Hoobrook Link Road

- Tenbury Wells Household Recycling Centre

A debated ensued during which the following principal points were made:

- the success criteria for delayed transfer of care
- the process for authority of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards applications was explained.

RESOLVED that

- (a) the use of the Deprivation of Liberty Standards Grant for 2015/16 and the additional Delayed Transfers of Care monies be approved and the revenue budget cash limits be updated accordingly;**
- (b) following the announcement on 2015/16 Children's Revenue and Capital Grants the revenue budget cash limits and capital programme be updated accordingly;**
- (c) (i) an additional £3.5 million facility be set aside in the Capital Programme for the Hoobrook Link Road Scheme;**
(ii) such a facility be covered by the virement of £3.5 million from the existing Capital Programme unallocated contingency; and
- (d) the planned use of PFI reserve for the relocation of Tenbury Household Recycling Centre be approved and the Capital Programme be updated accordingly.**

1668 Reports of Cabinet - Summary of decisions taken (Agenda item 10(b))

The Leader of the Council reported the following topics and answered questions in relation to them:

- Scrutiny Report : Integrated Waste
- Resources Report
 - Resource Budget Monitoring 2014/15 Outturn Forecast as at 28 February 2015
 - FutureFit Programme Update
 - Capital Programme Budget Monitoring: 2014/15 Actual Expenditure as at 28 February 2015

1669 Reports of

The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Economy, Skills and Infrastructure presented his report which

**Cabinet
Members with
Responsibility -
Report of
Cabinet Member
with
Responsibility
for Economy,
Skills and
Infrastructure
(Agenda item
11(a))**

covered a number of overarching issues:

- a general perspective of the last 15 months
- economic growth and investment
- Worcestershire LEP/SEP
- EU Funded projects
- Other economic development projects
- Worcestershire Business Central
- Connecting schools and business
- University Technical College
- NEETS
- Infrastructure projects
- Strategic planning, development control and Waste and Minerals Plans.

The Cabinet Member with Responsibility answered questions about the report which included:

- areas not covered by the report where perhaps the Council was performing less well. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility acknowledged it had not been possible to cover every individual aspect of his work but assured Council that he believed the Council's performance overall was to be commended
- inward investment to the county might prove to be short-lived and might result purely from relocation rather than expansion of internal business generation. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility stated that the Council's aim was to achieve high quality, well paid jobs for residents in the county and added that Worcestershire had the third fastest growing economy in the country after Oxford and London
- the Cabinet Member with Responsibility was asked what support had been given to the third sector and responded that the Council were happy to give support to a wide range of businesses to secure local prosperity
- attention was drawn to the contribution made by railways to the county's economic well-being. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility outlined some of the local initiatives involving rail travel and also wider regional and national strategic planning
- members asked about economic development in particular areas of the county and the Cabinet

Member with Responsibility gave examples and reassured members that the County Council was working to ensure all areas benefitted from efforts to expand and support business in the county

- a specific reference was made to the horse racing industry and the future of Worcester Race Course. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility responded and referred to partnership working in this area
- comments were made about the uptake of superfast broadband and how residents might access these enhanced services both now and in the future. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility confirmed this was one of the Council's priorities
- the level and nature of the support available to parents to use the web portal to facilitate their children's work placement. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility confirmed that the Council were committed to increasing the number of facilities online and enabling residents to do this
- the apparent discrepancies in the figures for NEETs given in various documents. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility referred to different reporting periods and the levels of success when tracing students on leaving full-time education.

The Cabinet Member with Responsibility also promised:

- to follow-up particular communication difficulties members had experienced when contacting the Chairman of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)
- to remove, or explain, acronyms in future reports
- a detailed response regarding the works at Kidderminster Railway Station and specifically the maintenance and cosmetic renovation of the road bridge
- to look at match funding by the private sector and whether this was adequate
- to look at the skills mix available from the Graduate 2 Business
- to signpost weblinks to Women2web so members could have a wider appreciation of the opportunities

1670 Reports of Cabinet Member with Responsibility - Report of the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Transformation and Commissioning (Agenda item 11(b))

available.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for his report.

The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Transformation and Commissioning up until 8 May 2015 presented his report which covered a number of overarching issues:

- market development
- digital Council and customers
- modernising Human Resources
- property and estates
- Legal and Democratic Services
- communication and branding
- supporting the business with intelligence and performance monitoring

The Cabinet Member with Responsibility answered questions about:

- where the £100,000 savings from the CoACH Directorate had come from. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility referred to staff savings within the Directorate
- whether some of the Council's customers were being excluded because of the Council's adoption of digital strategy. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility restated the Council's desire to move towards a 'digital Council' and ensure all residents could access the opportunities this provided
- how far the Council had moved to providing its staff with the Living Wage. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility confirmed the Council was taking an incremental approach as had been agreed previously
- whether the quality of legal work had been maintained whilst demands placed upon the Council had increased. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility was able to reassure Council that quality remained high and investment in staff had resulted in increased throughput of work.

The Cabinet Member with Responsibility also promised to pursue with the Council's provider of digital support services the length of time it was taking either to provide

support or assist with various equipment applications

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for his report.

**1671 Question Time
(Agenda item
12)**

Seven questions had been received by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and been circulated before the meeting. All the questions were asked (or taken as read). All answers are enclosed with these Minutes.

**1672 Notices of
Motion - Notice
of Motion 1 -
Unqualified
Teachers
(Agenda item
13)**

The Council had before it a Notice of Motion standing in the names of Mr P Denham, Mr P M McDonald, Mr R M Udall and Mr R C Lunn as set out in the agenda papers.

The Motion was moved by Mr P Denham and seconded by Mr P M McDonald who both spoke in favour of it.

The Council then agreed to consider and deal with the Motion on the day.

A debate ensued during which the following principal points were made:

- that the scale of the problem was largely unknown; what was known was the detrimental effects unqualified teachers were having on children's education
- there was an assumption that anyone could teach and this devalued the contribution made by qualified teachers
- qualified teachers were being denied jobs whilst unqualified members of staff were taking classes
- World Class Worcestershire deserved the best qualified teachers.

Members also spoke against the Motion:

- the movers of the Motion had chosen to ignore the very valuable contribution that Higher Level Teaching Assistants, Teaching Assistants and instructors made to the life of schools
- the use of unqualified teachers was the exception rather than the rule
- independent schools across the country employed unqualified teachers and there was no evidence they had poor standards.

1673 Notices of Motion - Notice of Motion 2 - 20 mph speed limits (Agenda item 13(b))

On being put to the meeting the Motion was lost.

The Council had before it a Notice of Motion standing in the names of Mrs E B Tucker, Prof J Raine, Mrs S Askin, Mr M E Jenkins, Mrs F M Oborski and Mr T A L Wells as set out in the agenda papers.

The Motion was moved by Mr M E Jenkins and seconded by Mrs F M Oborski who both spoke in favour of it.

The Council then agreed to consider and deal with the Motion on the day.

It was then moved by Mrs P Agar and seconded by Mr P M McDonald as an amendment to the Motion that:

"Paragraphs 1 and 2 as printed to stand.

Many councils across the country, of various party political control, have or are in the process of implementing, wide-area 20mph speed limits on residential and urban roads without traffic calming. Over 14 million people now live in these areas.

Public health and other bodies such as NICE, Public Health England, the LGA and the WHO all support such a policy. It is described as the most cost-effective way to improve health equality by tackling inactivity, obesity and isolation, whilst also being child, disability, elderly and dementia friendly.

The following paragraph to replace paragraphs 3 and 4 as printed:

We therefore ask the County Council to extend its current pilot schemes for 20mph limits to include new pilots for wide areas and call for a Cabinet report which would indicate methods, enforcement and ensuring support from local communities."

Both the mover and seconder of the amendment spoke in favour of it.

On being put to the meeting this amendment was lost.

The substantive motion was then put to the meeting and was also lost.

1674 Reports of Committees - Summary of decisions taken by the Audit and Governance Committee (Agenda item 14(a))

The Council received the report of the Audit and Governance Committee containing a summary of decisions taken.

1675 Reports of Committees - Summary of decisions taken by the Planning and Regulatory Committee (Agenda item 14(b))

The Council received the report of the Planning and Regulatory Committee containing a summary of decisions taken.

The meeting ended at 1.18 p.m.

Chairman

This page is intentionally left blank

COUNCIL 14 MAY 2015 - AGENDA ITEM 12 – QUESTION TIME

Answers given at the meeting may have been a précis of the full answer which is set out below. In some cases additional information is also included. Where, due to time or other constraints, it was not possible for the question to be asked formally the written response is also included below.

QUESTION 1 – Mr P M McDonald asked Mr M Bayliss:

"Would the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Transformation and Commissioning please inform me how much unpaid overtime is being carried out by County Council employees?"

Answer given

The County Council does not routinely record unpaid overtime nor does it have a mechanism for doing so. However, the County Council expects managers to take appropriate action if it becomes apparent that an employee is working excessive hours. This should be done for a number of reasons but perhaps most importantly, to help ensure the wellbeing of our employees and to help them strike a balance between work and their personal life. It is also worth noting that employees below chief officer level benefit from our Flexi-Time scheme which allows for additional hours worked to meet particular requirements of the job to be taken as flexi-leave.

Supplementary Question

In response to a supplementary question about employees not being paid for work done Mr Campion asked the questioner to let him have evidence of any systematic non-payment.

QUESTION 2 – Mr P M McDonald asked Mr M Bayliss:

"Would the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Transformation and Commissioning please inform me of how many males and females are on zero-hours contracts and short-term contracts?"

Answer given

(a) zero hours

Worcestershire County Council currently employs 670 staff on a relief, casual or sessional basis (zero hours). Of the figure quoted, 491 (73%) are female and 179 (27%) are male – this proportion closely mirrors the overall gender profile of all Council employees (75% are female and 25% are male).

(b) Temporary Contracts

Worcestershire County Council currently employs 151 staff on temporary or fixed term contracts of 12 months or less. Of the figure quoted, 110 (73%) are female and 41 (27%) are male - this matches the male/female split of our zero hour staff and also closely mirrors the overall gender profile of all Council employees (75% are female and 25% are male).

Supplementary Question

In response to a supplementary question about whether the Council were discriminating against women Mr Campion refuted this and stated that any arrangements only mirrored the gender make-up of the Council's workforce as a whole.

QUESTION 3 – Mr R M Udall asked Mr J Campion:

"Can the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families confirm what funding, help and support is provided for parents by the County Council for childcare and early education for two year old children?"

Answer given

Funding is available for children living in a household receiving any of these benefits:

- Income Support
- Jobseeker's Allowance
- Support through the Immigration and Asylum Act
- Pension, Child Tax or Working Tax Credits
- Disability Living Allowance.

Children are also eligible if they have an Education Health and Care Plan, are Looked After, adopted or on a Child Protection Plan.

Supplementary Question

In response to a question about some form of help for parents whose total family income exceeded £16,000 but who still fall below the county average Mr Campion outlined the County Council's approach to reducing dependency by increasing prosperity overall.

QUESTION 4 – Mr J W Parish asked Mr M J Hart:

"Given the serious situation being caused by bed blocking at NHS Worcestershire hospitals would the Cabinet Member with the Responsibility for Health and Well-being please inform me of how many 'step-down' and rehabilitation beds are available in the county?"

Answer given

I would have to say we do not wish to portray the vulnerable as "bed blockers". Most people who are discharged from the acute hospitals can go straight home to the care of their GP. For those people who require a period of rehabilitation or further assessment there are three pathways of care - people are allocated to the most appropriate pathway by the Patient Flow Centre:

1. Some can return to their own homes for rehabilitation with support – typically for up to 6 weeks. The CCGs and the Council commission 'Promoting Independence' services that can take around 8 people daily, expected to rise to around 10 people daily by June.
2. Some are discharged to community beds – these are available at:
 - (a) The 5 NHS community hospitals (Tenbury, Princess of Wales, Pershore, Evesham, Malvern) and the Kidderminster site. Collectively these have around 240 beds of which about half are used for general and specialist rehabilitation.
 - (b) One of the Council provided facilities: Timberdine (28 general and specialist stroke rehabilitation beds); Howbury (16 rehabilitation beds); and the Grange (28 rehabilitation beds currently).
 - (c) Worcester Intermediate Care Unit
3. Those who are likely to require long term residential or nursing care can be discharged initially for a period of assessment to beds commissioned from local care homes. The Council has contracts with 25 homes for this service and there are typically 10-12 beds available daily.

Supplementary Question

In response to a supplementary question about historical levels of delayed discharge from hospital and the current level of provision Mr Hart reiterated his answer and the key statistics he had quoted.

QUESTION 5 – Mrs F M Oborski asked Mr J H Smith:

"Many members of the public in Kidderminster, whilst supporting the idea of switching off two out of three street lights at midnight, are appalled at the way this policy has been carried out. Specifically they are angry that there was no consultation with local County Councillors or residents about which individual lights are either on or off!

In some streets in my Division it means that lights which poke out through street trees are left on, giving very restricted light, whilst unobstructed lights are switched off. Similarly it means that the tree-lined foot way "Offmore Lane" which is used by shift workers walking into town and people leaving events at Kidderminster Cricket Club is in total darkness whilst nearby Wordsworth Crescent is brilliantly illuminated!

Can the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways assure me that a review will be held into the selection of lights to be switched off and that the detailed local knowledge of local Members will be utilised to ensure that public safety is not compromised?"

Answer given

Lights to be switched off are selected using a GIS map database so that the target 2 out of 3 side street lamps to be converted to part-night is achieved. Whilst this shows the best location of the lighting columns, it will not highlight the areas where columns may be affected by tree growth etc. Tree growth is dealt with through the established *noticing system* for tree owners to cut them back. Offmore Lane is currently being dealt with in that way.

Before we started this whole process I ensured each local councillor was invited to a member briefing session prior to the initiative being implemented in their area, and Kidderminster was no exception. There were consultation meetings on 16 June (25 June updated meeting) and 8 April (update). These were very poorly attended.

Plans showing the lighting columns to be converted to part-night, and ones to remain on, are published on the County Council's website.

After conversions are carried out, it is sometimes possible to arrange swaps provided the overall number of converted lamps remains the same and the distribution of lit lamps is consistent.

Initially, members of the part-night conversions team held a number of sessions in Tesco supermarkets with plans available to promote the initiative and field questions. However, as the take up was small, this is now being replaced with a newspaper campaign in each area shortly before the installation programme is set to commence which guides readers to where information can be found and how to make comments. The plans are also available at local libraries as soon as they have been published.

Wordsworth Crescent is lit with low-energy lamps that are excluded from conversion to part-night, which is why it contrasts with many surrounding streets.

There is an accessible parallel alternative route to Offmore Lane along Sheraton Drive that was taken into account when the part-night plans were drawn up. This was done so that other streets in the area can remain lit and still achieve the target for energy saving. I have this in plan form which I am happy to share with Mrs Oborski.

QUESTION 6 - Mrs F M Oborski asked Mr J Campion:

"School pupils, especially those in the primary phase, are extremely trusting of members of the teaching profession and really do believe everything their teacher tells them.

This puts a very great responsibility upon teachers; especially at election time, to maintain "professional standards" and not to seek to impose their personal political beliefs upon vulnerable, trusting young children.

During the recent election campaign: my 10-year old god daughter's homework consisted of Labour Party campaign literature on which she was asked to comment as to why her family should Vote Labour!

Her 8-year old brother came home, from the same school, and told his parents that "You must Vote Labour, they are the only Party that wants us to live!" The same child was also taught the "anti-Nick Clegg" "I'm sorry" song by his teacher!

Does he agree with me that these are examples of completely unacceptable, unprofessional actions by the teachers concerned?

What steps can he and senior officers of this Council take to ensure that appropriate action is taken to prevent this sort of behaviour by teachers in Council schools who are our employees?"

Answer given

During the recent General Election campaign the Council was made aware of one incident of a school using political material from outside that constituency to support a homework activity. In that case the teacher in question used material from a range of different sources to support the development of the children's understanding about, and use of, persuasive writing.

It is important for teachers to make the content of lessons relevant to the children they teach and making use of current events and raising awareness of topical issues is to be encouraged. However, it would appear from the examples given that in a very small number of cases teachers may be in danger of introducing personal bias into their lessons. The County Council will continue to work with schools to ensure Worcestershire children receive a balanced and quality education.

Supplementary Question

In response to a supplementary question about guidance given to achieve a balance Mr Campion reassured Council that this was the approach used.

QUESTION 7 – Mrs E B Tucker asked Mr S E Geraghty:

"Infrastructure proposals for Pershore within the SWDP are very limited and planning guidance appears to tie the hands of Highway Development in what they can require of developers. How will the County Council work to prevent worsening of congestion and highways safety?"

Answer given

I would like to thank Liz for her question. The intention is to deliver identified improvements to the network as contributions are secured from the developer activity. The quantum of development proposed by SWDP for Pershore is, I believe, 823 new dwellings. The key development site (two phases) is Station Road/Wyre Road delivering a total of approximately 700 homes, with Phase 1 having being granted permission and is currently under construction.

The SWDP Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies that contributions will be needed from development in Pershore for a number of local highways network improvement including:

- A4101/B4048 Worcester Road and Three Springs Road
- A4104/ B4083 Station Road, Worcester Road High Street and Wyre Road

Worcestershire County Council is working closely with the South Worcestershire Local Planning Authorities in order to receive the appropriate contributions from developers towards mitigating the effect their development has on the highway network. Developer contributions can only be secured to make a development acceptable in planning terms i.e. to directly offset the impact of their development. Any contributions requested from the developer need to be directly related to the impact of their proposals, and be fair in terms of extent and cost. In addition to highway improvements, there are also contributions to be sought for improvements to walking and cycling facilities at Pershore rail station, plus contributions towards improving public transport.

Whilst not part of the SWDP IDP, improvements to the wider network around Pershore are being considered as part of the transport package, including a new bridge and link road between the A44 and B4083. A business case is currently being developed to bid for external funding.

Supplementary Question

Mrs Tucker gave examples of individual congestion sites which were causing much concern in the town and sought reassurance that these concerns would be addressed. Mr Geraghty said he was happy to meet Mrs Tucker with Mr Smith (the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways) to gain an insight into the particular problems raised.