

Council**Thursday, 14 January 2016, County Hall, Worcester****Minutes****Present:**

Mr I Hopwood (Chairman), 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 P J Bridle, Mr J P Campion, Mr S C Cross, Mrs P E Davey, 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 M E Jenkins, Ms R E Jenkins, Mr R C Lunn, Mr L C R Mallett, Mr P M McDonald, Mr A P Miller, Mr T A Muir, Mrs F M Oborski, 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, Mr J W R Thomas, Mrs E B Tucker, Mr P A Tuthill, Mr R M Udall, Mr G J Vickery and Mr G C Yarranton.

Available Papers

The Members had before them:

- A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated).
- B. 9 questions submitted to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (previously circulated).
- C. The Minutes of the Council held on 12 November 2015 (previously circulated).

1736 Apologies and Declaration of Interests (Agenda item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Mr M H Broomfield, Mr S J M Clee, Mr P Denham and Mr T A L Wells.

Mr Muir was welcomed to the Council.

Mr S E Geraghty declared an interest in Agenda item 6(a) being the County Council's representative on the Malvern Hills Science Park Board.

Mr P A Tuthill declared an interest in Agenda item 10 as a member of Malvern Town Council and item number 6(b) as a member of the Cotswold Line Promotion Group.

1737 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

	(Agenda item 2)	
1738	Minutes (Agenda item 3)	RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
1739	Chairman's Announcements (Agenda item 4)	The Chairman referred members generally to the printed announcements and drew particular attention to county residents who had been recognised in the New Year's Honours List.
1740	Constitutional Matters - Election of the Leader of the Council (Agenda item 5a)	RESOLVED that Mr S E Geraghty be elected Leader of the Council.
1741	Constitutional Matters - Political balance on Committees (Agenda item 5b)	The Council had before it a report on alterations to the political balance consequent upon the results of the Stourport-on-Severn by-election. RESOLVED that political balance on committees in the light of the recent Stourport-on-Severn by-election be as set out in the Appendix to the report.
1742	Constitutional Matters - Designation of Statutory Scrutiny Officer (Agenda item 5c)	The Council had before it a report setting out the requirement to designate one of its officers as the Statutory Scrutiny Officer. The report described in light of structural changes that the post of Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager was recommended to be so designated. RESOLVED that the post of Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager be designated as the Council's Statutory Scrutiny Manager.
1743	Reports of Cabinet - matters which require a decision by Council - New Technologies in Care (Agenda item 6a)	The Council had before it a report on how new technologies were becoming available that could improve people's experience of care and help them to retain their independence. In addition, there was a saving on staff time, thereby helping to ease the difficulties providers were experiencing in recruiting and retaining their workforce. The Cabinet wished to make use of these new technologies – including completely new systems as well as new applications of existing technologies. The last few years had seen a surge in development of such systems.

1744 Reports of Cabinet - Matters which require a decision by Council - Minimum Revenue Policy Provision

These included:

- Assistive technologies that monitored people's environment and condition
- Self-care applications, and
- Robotic aids

The Council had already been promoting the use of assistive technologies to meet low level needs for a number of years. The next phase of the introduction of new technologies would focus on systems that could meet established care needs.

All new technologies would be developed with the full involvement of service users and their families. In some cases, systems would be customised specifically to their needs.

The report confirmed that the Project would make a major contribution to achieving savings of £3.4 million annually related to developing and sustaining the market for adult social care, which were already included in the Medium Term Financial Plan. It would also play a vital role in mitigating cost pressures of £1.8 million annually arising from rising demand and the costs of older people in nursing, residential and home care.

The Cabinet had therefore agreed to set aside £2 million one-off monies from Directorate reserves to invest in the development of new technologies on the basis of business cases from Innovation Partners that can demonstrate clear benefits. The Council would also apply for additional funding from the European Union, which was available to support innovation in care.

RESOLVED that an addition of £2 million of Adult Services and Health Reserves to the Capital Programme be approved to invest in the development of new technologies in care.

The Council had before it a report on a Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy for long-term borrowing before 1 April 2008.

The report set out the County Council was required, under the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008, to make a Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) charge to the revenue account in relation to capital expenditure financed from borrowing or credit arrangements. The report explained that this was the annual amount charged

**(Agenda item
6a)**

to the budget each year to repay the principal element of long-term borrowing and was based on a system of self-regulation informed by the Council's professional judgement of 'prudent provision'.

The Guidance stated that "the broad aim of prudent provision was to ensure that debt was repaid over a period that was reasonably commensurate with that over which the capital expenditure provides benefits".

The report also set out that the Council used long-term borrowing as part of an overall financing strategy to fund long-term capital investment in projects such as road construction and school improvements and it was sensible to ensure assets were paid for over their useful life. Approval of a change to the existing MRP policy was being sought that would match debt financing to the useful life of the assets being financed and achieve cost reductions over the medium term.

The report set out that the current regulations were implemented in 2007 and allowed for different treatment of long-term borrowing incurred pre and post 2008. The regulations required regular review of the policy and the opportunity was being taken to better align debt repayments to the asset lives and ensure the policy is prudent without being overly prudent.

The financial climate over recent years had prompted a number of local authorities to review their own MRP policies to ensure the best method for repaying long-term borrowing is being applied.

The MRP charge for pre-2008 long-term borrowing currently resulted in a payment that was much higher than an average payment based on actual asset lives would suggest. The Council was therefore currently paying off debt faster than it received the benefits.

Following in-depth work across the Council's fixed assets the average life had been professionally assessed as being 43 years. The report concluded that it was important to underline that the total debt repayment under this proposal would still remain the same.

RESOLVED that the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy for long-term borrowing pre-1 April 2008 to be based on matching the debt repayments to the average asset lives being 43 years be approved.

The Council had before it a report which set out support

Cabinet matters which require a decision by Council - Capital Programme Addition: Malvern Hills Science Park Phase 5 (Agenda item 6a)

for the development of Malvern Hills Science Park Phase 5 with an additional investment of £4 million for demolition, site clearance of existing building and subsequent construction of Phase 5. As a Game Changer site, the development of Malvern Hills Science Park (MHSP) was a strategic priority identified through the Strategic Economic Plan and Corporate Plan. The project had been promoted in partnership with MHSP Ltd and Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP) and would be fully funded by the WLEP Growth Deal grant allocation with no impact on the Council's long-term borrowing. The Council was being asked to add the scheme to the Capital Programme and that the cash limits be updated accordingly.

RESOLVED that a £4 million addition to the Capital Programme for Malvern Hills Science Park Phase 5 be approved, to be fully funded by the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership Growth Deal grant allocation, and that the cash limits be updated accordingly.

1746 Reports of Cabinet - Decision taken by Cabinet (Agenda item 6b)

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

- Delivering the Corporate Plan – FutureFit Update
- Demand Management, Prevention Policy and 0-19 Services Commissioning Plan
- West Midlands Rail Devolution
- Future Arrangements for Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee and County Regulatory Services (Trading Standards and Animal Health Services)
- Worcestershire County Council Renewable Energy Strategy and Renewable Energy Research Paper
- 2016-17 Budget and Council Tax
- Resources Report
- Balanced Scorecard – Future Fit Performance and Corporate Risk Update

1747 Notices of Motion - Notice of Motion 1 - spending on public footpaths (Agenda item 7)

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

The Notice of Motion was moved by Mrs E B Tucker 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.

An amendment was then moved by Mr C J Bloore and seconded by Mr P M McDonald to add:

"Council recommends that in the spirit of localism the £2million set aside for footpath maintenance is then devolved to elected members so they can work with local residents to ensure money is spent where it is needed the most".

The mover and seconder of the original motion agreed to the addition of this wording and so the motion as altered became the substantive motion.

An amendment was then moved by Mr J H Smith and seconded by Mr S E Geraghty to replace the substantive motion with:

"Council requests that Cabinet gives careful consideration in its preparation of a draft Budget and Capital Programme to recommending that a proportion of spend of the proposed £12m "Driving Home" highway infrastructure improvement programme be invested in maintaining and improving public footways across the county".

In response to a procedural query the Head of Legal and Democratic Services gave advice on the validity of the amendment stating that it did not negate the original motion as altered but was a valid amendment.

The Council then debated the amendment during which the following principal points were made:

- the heart of the argument was that a significant sum should be made available for footway maintenance to deal with much urgent and necessary work. The proposal was not specific to an amount only that it should be significant and realistic
- that a good standard of footways was essential if the Council was to achieve its health promotion aims for overall fitness. Moreover a number of user groups relied on well-maintained footways, not least people with a disability, a visual impairment or the elderly infirm
- that local members had an important role to play in ensuring efficient and effective use of resources. The amendment now before Council sought to reduce this

role and was indicative of how the local member was perceived generally

- the subject needed serious consideration and should not be dismissed lightly
- the request would be considered as part of the budget-setting process but it would be imprudent at such an early stage to suggest a definitive figure
- a scrutiny exercise was currently being undertaken in this area and it would be premature to talk about specifics before that evidence had been considered
- the amendment was not dismissive of the important role of the local member but professional expertise of officers was impartial and that specific mechanisms were in place for local members to influence maintenance and other work schedules and these should not be bypassed
- more money was to be spent in this area and we could build upon work already underway.

On being put to the meeting the amendment was carried and became the substantive motion.

RESOLVED - Council requests that Cabinet gives careful consideration in its preparation of a draft Budget and Capital Programme to recommending that a proportion of spend of the proposed £12m 'Driving Home' highway infrastructure improvement programme be invested in maintaining and improving public footways across the county.

1748 Notices of Motion - Notice of Motion 2 - Procurement Policy (Agenda item 7)

The Council had before it a Notice of Motion standing in the names of Mr P M McDonald, Mr R C Lunn, Mr L C R Mallett, Mr G J Vickery and Ms P Agar.

The Notice of Motion was moved by Mr P M McDonald and seconded by Mr R C Lunn 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 Mr M L Bayliss, seconded by Mr C B Taylor that the word relevant be added to the motion as printed so as to read:

"This Council notes that the UK Government has taken

steps to tackle the issue of tax abuse by companies seeking to secure Government contracts for the supply of goods and services and has issued Policy Note 03/14: promoting tax compliance.

Subject to Worcestershire County Council officers reviewing the practical implementation issues, we request that the Cabinet Member with Responsibility considers incorporating Procurement Policy Note 03/14 into all relevant procurement procedures, including tenders, also this motion calls for the Cabinet Member with Responsibility to consider Council's procurement policies to be amended to ensure that all bidders for Council contracts self-certify that they are fully tax compliant in line with central Government practice."

The amendment was then debated.

On being put to the meeting the amendment was carried and became the substantive motion.

RESOLVED - this Council notes that the UK Government has taken steps to tackle the issue of tax abuse by companies seeking to secure Government contracts for the supply of goods and services and has issued Policy Note 03/14: promoting tax compliance.

Subject to Worcestershire County Council officers reviewing the practical implementation issues, we request that the Cabinet Member with Responsibility considers incorporating Procurement Policy Note 03/14 into all relevant procurement procedures, including tenders, also this motion calls for the Cabinet Member with Responsibility to consider Council's procurement policies to be amended to ensure that all bidders for Council contracts self-certify that they are fully tax compliant in line with central Government practice.

1749 Notices of Motion - Notice of Motion 3 - Fostering costs (Agenda item 7)

The Council had before it a Notice of Motion standing in the names of Mr P M McDonald, Ms P A Hill, Mr R C Lunn, Mr L C R Mallett, Mr G J Vickery and Ms P Agar.

The Notice of Motion was moved by Mr P M McDonald and seconded by Ms P A Hill who both spoke in favour of it.

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

An amendment was moved by Mr J P Campion and seconded by Mrs E A Eyre.

"Families who foster children whether for the public or private sector have to be applauded for their dedication as they offer young children the opportunity of a sense of belonging within their home environment.

The County Council gives the foster parents money that goes towards taking care of the child and in our case that cost is an average of £430 PW, for in-house placement. The cost to the Council is now over £8m annually and expected to be £10m next year.

With the cost increasing by nearly a million pounds each year the time has come to have this area scrutinised to ensure the extra £370 cost is going towards high quality foster placements delivering the best outcomes for the children in our care.

Thus, the Council to ensure it is receiving value for money calls upon the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel to scrutinise such expenditure and to seek reassurance that the Council's current plans to recruit more in-house foster carers is being successfully delivered".

In response to a procedural question, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised that it was in order for Council to suggest additions to the work programme of an individual Scrutiny Panel as a committee of the Council.

The mover and seconder of the original motion accepted the amendment as an alteration.

This amendment became the substantive motion which on being put to the meeting was then carried.

1750 Notices of Motion - Notice of Motion 4 - Bus Provision (Agenda item 7)

The Council had before it a Notice of Motion standing in the names of Mr R C Lunn, Mr G J Vickery, Mr L C R Mallett, Mr C J Bloore and Ms P Agar.

The Notice of Motion was moved by Mr R C Lunn and seconded by Ms P Agar 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 widespread frustration was expressed across the chamber at the service being provided by the bus company in question. The Cabinet

Member with Responsibility gave Council information about the measures being taken to ensure the public received an acceptable service.

RESOLVED - this Council is concerned about the quality and standard of bus provision provided by the Diamond Bus Company.

Council calls upon the Cabinet Member with Responsibility to consider opening discussions with the Transport Commissioners to achieve real improvements in the reliability, quality and customer satisfaction. If necessary to consider a revocation of their licence.

1751 Notices of Motion - Notice of Motion 5 - Work of the Council (Agenda item 7)

The Council had before it a Notice of Motion standing in the names of Mrs E B Tucker, Prof J W Raine, Mrs S Askin and Mrs F M Oborski.

The Notice of Motion was moved by Mrs E B Tucker and seconded by Prof J W Raine who both spoke in favour of it, considering that the current use of Council was too restrictive.

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

An amendment was moved by Mr R M Udall and seconded by Mr P M McDonald the effect of which was to delete the first two paragraphs of the printed Notice of Motion and the first word of the third paragraph.

On being put to the meeting this amendment was lost.

On being put to the meeting the Notice of Motion as printed was carried.

1752 Annual Report of the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board (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. The Chairman also thanked Scrutiny Officers, especially Ms Suzanne O'Leary who had now left the Council's employment, for their assistance over the course of the year.

The report was noted.

1753 Reports of Cabinet

The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Health and Well-being presented his report which covered a number of overarching issues:

Members with Responsibility for Health and Wellbeing (Agenda item 9)

- the work of the Health and Well-being Board
- improving health and well-being
- health protection
- community safety
- the Council's approach to prevention of ill health
- Public Health Ring Fenced Grant (PHRFG)
- Health and social care intervention
- Future of Acute Hospital Services in Worcestershire.

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

- the role and scope of preventative services
- the need for positive, direct action in key areas of health promotion
- demand management as described within the report
- the need to ensure advertising campaigns for screening services were targeted effectively
- resources available to meet communicable disease outbreaks
- the role of Health and Well-being champions. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility undertook to circulate details of the champions to all members
- the need to expedite the findings of the Acute Hospital Services Review.

The Cabinet Member with Responsibility promised:

- a written response on the success criteria for drug and alcohol services
- to look further at the age ranges of people called to screening programmes to see if other vulnerable groups might be included.

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

1754 Question Time (Agenda item 10)

Nine questions had been received by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and had been circulated before the meeting. Eight questions were asked at the meeting and answered. Question 7 was formally withdrawn. (All answers are enclosed with these Minutes).

1755 Reports of Committees - Summary of decisions taken by the Audit and

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

**Governance
Committee
(Agenda item
11a)**

**1756 Reports of
Committees -
Summary of
decisions taken
by the Pensions
Committee
(Agenda item
11b)**

The Council received the report of the Pensions Committee containing a summary of decisions taken.

**1757 Reports of
Committees -
Summary of
decisions taken
by the Waste
Credit
Governance
Committee
(Agenda item
11c)**

The Council received the report of the Waste Credit Governance Committee containing a summary work being undertaken.

The Council adjourned for luncheon between 1.10pm and 2.00pm.
The meeting ended at 3.00pm.

Chairman

COUNCIL 14 JANUARY 2016 - AGENDA ITEM 10 – 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. Where a question has been withdrawn that is also indicated below.

QUESTION 1 – Mr P M McDonald asked Mr J Campion:

"Would the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families please inform me of the amount of money paid out in compensation to students over the last two years for accidents that have occurred in our schools, on school trips and of any other amounts paid out to children in our care such as foster children for any other reason?"

Answer given

The answer is zero in relation to payments made by the Council for compensation due to accidents which happen on school trips or for any amounts paid out as a result of accidents of any kind to children in our care.

QUESTION 2 – Mr P M McDonald asked Mr J H Smith:

"Would the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways please inform me of the costs of filling in pot holes over the last two years and how much work remains to be done despite the current spend?"

Answer given

We have a holistic approach to repairing Defects, and our Highway Maintenance Contract is based on Target Prices with actual Costs collected for the whole Service. The Target Price for each Defect is £65.35.

In 2013/14 we repaired nearly 29,000 defects, of which 57% (16,500) were carriageway defects with a Target Price of approx. £1,080,000.

In 2014/15 we repaired nearly 33,000 defects, of which 44% (14,500) were carriageway defects with a Target Price of approx. £947,000.

This year to date we have completed 13,000 defects of which 34% (4,420) were carriageway defects with a Target Price of approx. £290,000.

There are currently 276 recorded awaiting repair all of which will be completed before the "due date" (as all defects are). There will of course be more carriageway defects recorded between now and 31 March as we continue to carry out Safety Inspections in accordance with the programme, however as you can deduce from the figures already given the overall number of carriageway defects is falling.

As usual the advice is if you know of a problem let us know too.

Supplementary Question

In response to a supplementary question about the resources required for this area Mr Smith said this was under constant review to see the Council achieved the best outcomes and the best value for money.

QUESTION 3 – Mr A T Amos asked Mr J H Smith:

"Would the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways please provide me with an update on progress in installing real-time bus indicator boards at bus stops in Worcester city as a means of assisting passengers to plan their journeys and monitor bus cancellations and delays?"

Answer given

The central system is now fully operational and tracking buses that have been appropriately equipped and predicting their arrival times at stops. 70+ buses have been fitted with on-bus equipment and 34 in-shelter displays have been procured and built.

There are currently 8 Information Points which have been procured with 5 currently being built. Audio functionality is installed on all on-street infrastructure, which is activated by the user's key-fob

In-shelter displays will be installed and made operational in 5 shelters on the Tolladine and Ombersley Road for testing purposes in the week commencing 18 January 2016 (subject to confirmation). Once it has been established that the system is functioning correctly, a further 16 displays will be installed along Key Corridor Locations, week commencing 1 February 2016 (again subject to confirmation) and these will include:

- Ombersley Road
- Bromyard Road
- Lowesmoor
- Newtown Road
- Woodgreen Drive.

Supplementary Question

In response to a supplementary question about further progress in this area Mr Smith said the process would be monitored as real-time indicator boards were of genuine assistance to the travelling public.

QUESTION 4 – Mr M E Jenkins asked Mr A N Blagg:

"Following the agreement made at the recent International Climate Talks in Paris to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, can the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Environment inform me when Worcestershire County Council will be joining other councils in signing up to the Local Government Association's Climate Local Initiative?"

The Climate Local Initiative (<http://www.local.gov.uk/climate-local>) aims to support councils both to reduce carbon emissions and to increase resilience to a changing climate."

Answer given

Worcestershire County Council (WCC) have been working broadly in line with Climate Local Guidance and clearly Climate Local are aware of our work, (e.g. recent article in LGA 'First' magazine showcasing WCC's work incorporating climate resilience into our new buildings), however we don't currently report our annual progress to Climate Local and so aren't listed

on the website. There's no reason why we can't report our progress going forward. Not being listed certainly doesn't mean a lack of action to tackle climate change. The Council has a long history of work on this agenda. Below are just some examples:

- WCC co-ordinate the Worcestershire wide Climate Change Strategy: 2012 – 2020 (a partnership strategy with other Worcestershire based organisations)
- WCC run a carbon management programme which has enabled a reduction of 14% of the Council's carbon emissions since 2010. From 2012/13 to 2014/15 we reduced our energy costs by £145,000 and generated over £80,000 savings by investing in our own renewable energy systems
- Through ERDF & WCC funded programmes we have helped more than 160 small businesses save 1,500 tonnes CO₂ and reduced their energy costs by 24% in the last 2 years and supported approximately 90 businesses in the green services and products sector to develop their businesses
- Through the WCC Coordinated Warmer Worcestershire programme more than 4,000 families have been supported to reduce their energy consumption in the last 3 years. We are currently enabling 750 families to insulate their solid wall homes through a DECC funded programme
- WCC have installed a countywide electric vehicle charge point network (funded by OLEV and private sector)
- Flood Risk Management Strategy is currently out for consultation
- WCC currently bidding for funding to continue and widen low carbon support to businesses and to help those in fuel poverty.

There is vast disparity between councils in terms of activity on this issue, however we and others, e.g. Sustainability West Midlands, consider WCC one of the more active councils. In order to reaffirm the Council's commitment it's recommended the Council sign up to the climate local commitment which I intend to make available to all Councillors. It affirms what WCC is already doing through the Worcestershire Climate Change strategy and action plan (progress report and updated plan due in next few weeks) and the Council's own carbon management and sustainability programmes (reported through the balanced score card and Corporate Environmental report). The Climate Local website is also an extremely useful source of information and guidance for future development of the council's work in this area.

QUESTION 5 – Mr R C Lunn asked Mr J H Smith:

"Can the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways explain when the "Choose How You Move" survey report about Redditch is due to be published? What has caused the delay?"

Answer given

The Choose How You Move Redditch final evaluation report has been published on Worcestershire County Council's website and can be viewed here:

http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20055/strategies_plans_and_bids/808/the_worcestershire_local_sustainable_transport_fund_bid

Supplementary Question

In response to a supplementary question about a possible integrated transport plan for Redditch Mr Smith outlined that the Council continued to work with partners to achieve the best possible outcomes for all residents.

QUESTION 6 – Mrs F M Oborski asked Mr A N Blagg:

"When the Energy from Waste Plant being built at Hartlebury was planned it was intended that non-recyclable plastics would be burnt. The Paris Climate Change Conference appears to rule that out.

Can the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Environment inform me what the change to materials to be incinerated will have on the facility when it comes in to operation and what the medium- and long-term impacts are likely to be on the business case?"

Answer given

The Energy from Waste Plant currently under construction in Hartlebury has been designed to treat all residual household waste including any plastics that have not been separated for recycling.

My understanding of the Paris Climate Change Conference agreement is that the Government has agreed to limit the increase in global temperatures, ensure that emissions peak as soon as possible and then start to fall, but as yet there are no specific details of how this is going to be achieved.

Assuming that following the Paris Climate Change Conference legislation is changed and 'non-recyclable' plastics are 'banned' from being incinerated then that would potentially reduce the Calorific Value of the input material being delivered to the Energy from Waste Plant. The impact of this would be that, subject to any other constraints, more residual waste could be processed at the facility, allowing the Council to cater for any additional waste growth, due to increases in housing across both Worcestershire and Herefordshire. This diversion, of waste, from landfill to energy recovery would reduce the CO₂ impact of its disposal. The Energy from Waste Plant has been designed to cope with waste inputs covering a range of Calorific Values and this diversion of material is currently believed to have a minimal impact on the Calorific Value of the total input material. In the medium to long term this will mean that the Council will have a reduced reliability on alternative disposal routes and therefore the implications of any associated costs, which could be a benefit to the Council in terms of the business case. What is more difficult to determine is the consequences of separating and disposing of the non-recyclable plastics and any associated cost implications that this work may have.

QUESTION 7 – Mrs F M Oborski had given notice that she wished to ask Mr J H Smith:

"In view of continuing problems with Diamond Bus what steps are being taken to ensure that bus services across the county, and in particular in the Wyre Forest area are provided by a competent, reliable and responsible company?"

In light of the discussion on this subject under Minute Number 1750 Mrs Oborski withdrew her question.

QUESTION 8 – Professor J W Raine asked the Leader of the Council:

"It has been a full year in coming, but it was wonderful news last week to learn that the Worcestershire Leaders have at last agreed to go ahead with a formal bid to the Home Office to relocate Syrian refugees across the county. Indeed, it is pleasing that negotiations

are set to begin this month with the Home Office and West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership to host up to 50 people in Worcestershire by the end of 2016.

But can I emphasise to the Leader that this whole initiative began in Malvern with the local Amnesty group who have worked tirelessly on this issue to keep the momentum going, in compiling an ever growing database of voluntary offers of assistance from the community – including from many professionals with highly relevant expertise and experience to ensure a successful relocation, rehabilitation and recovery process for the arriving Syrian families after so much tragedy and trauma in their lives.

While being delighted that our councils of Worcestershire will be providing leadership and expertise in the process, it is equally important that local community and voluntary organisations in our county are also empowered and welcomed as key partners with the statutory bodies on this initiative, and that we tap into the fund of enthusiasm, energy and expertise that volunteers have will bring to the process of providing help and support to Syrian families relocating in the County. Particularly in these austere financial times for local government, when money is so tight, it would indeed be opportunity lost were councils to fail to take full advantage of the voluntary contributions on offer. In Malvern, for example, the group which started it all - Malvern Welcomes Syrian Refugees – is in the process of establishing a Charity specifically to spearhead the work of planning, co-ordinating and delivering support to families when they arrive. So will the Leader please therefore give his assurance that groups like 'Malvern Welcomes...' will indeed be invited to play their part alongside this and the other councils in ensuring the success of this initiative?"

Answer given

Firstly I would like to thank John Raine for his question. As he will know, Worcestershire Leaders met last week and I chaired that meeting. We agreed to make an application to accommodate up to 50 Syrian refugees in the next year across Worcestershire. Whilst it is entirely right that we seek to play our part as local authorities, I agree that we should seek to utilise the help and support that community groups and individuals have offered to contribute.

I hope this assures Councillor Raine that collectively we will be looking to work with community groups, including Malvern Welcomes Syrian Refugees as the plan moves forward.

QUESTION 9 – Mr C J Bloore asked the Leader of the Council:

"Could the Leader of the Council tell me when he intends to meet with Greg Clark to discuss this Council's funding settlement from the Government?"

Answer given

I would like to thank Chris Bloore for his question and the opportunity it gives me to update Council in relation to both the Devolution Deal and our response to the funding settlement. I and other partners to the Devolution Deal were due to meet the Secretary of State yesterday to discuss our proposed deal. However, unfortunately the meeting needed to be rearranged at short notice due to the Secretary of State being required to attend a Select Committee. We are, therefore, seeking to arrange this meeting to discuss our Devolution Deal at the earliest opportunity. Our Devolution Deal is linked to the ability of the Council to reform services and boost economic growth, which increases our income base, and therefore is linked to the financial sustainability of the Council and the services we deliver. We are also intending to submit a full response to the Government settlement as part of their consultation, in order to ensure the Government is fully aware of the impact of the settlement on this Council.

Supplementary Question

In response to a supplementary question about the Council's response Mr Geraghty reiterated that this would full and detailed.