

**Council****Thursday, 10 November 2016, County Hall, Worcester - 10.00 am****Minutes****Present:**

Mr A P Miller (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 P J Bridle, Mr J P Champion, Mr S C Cross, Mrs P E Davey, Mr P Denham, Mr N Desmond, Mrs E A Eyre, Ms L R Duffy, Mr A Fry, Mr S E Geraghty, 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 T A Muir, Mrs F M Oborski, Dr K A Pollock, Mr D W Prodger, 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, Mr T A L Wells and Mr G C Yarranton

**Available Papers**

The Members had before them:

- A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated).
- B. 16 questions submitted to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (previously circulated).
- C. The Minutes of the Council held on 15 September 2016 (previously circulated electronically).

**1829 Apologies and Declaration of Interests (Agenda item 1)**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr C J Bloore, Mr S J M Clee, Mr W P Gretton, Mr S R Peters, Prof J W Raine and Mr R P Tomlinson.

Interests were declared by:

Mr L C R Mallett - declared a DPI in respect of Agenda item 8, Notice of Motion 2 as he worked for a Charity involved in this area and would withdraw for that Item.

Mr A C Roberts - declared an interest in Agenda item 10, Question 8 as his sister-in-law participated in 'Trade Nepal' that made use of County Hall.

**1830 Public**

Four people participated during this part of the meeting.

**Participation  
(Agenda item 2)**

Dr Roy Richardson's representative read a statement about the effects of Brexit and the work local business leaders and the County Council could do to mitigate the negative effects when the UK left the European Union.

Mr Steve Williams presented a petition about the parking restrictions on Foregate Street adjacent to the City Museum and Art Gallery and a request to revise waiting times from 45 minutes to 90 minutes.

Mrs Jane Moorhouse presented a petition (in the form of individual letters) from residents of the Arboretum area of Worcester requesting that the area be allocated a residents parking scheme.

Ms Nicki Laight asked a question about the Musketts Way pedestrian footbridge in Redditch.

**1831 Minutes  
(Agenda item 3)**

**RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

**1832 Chairman's  
Announcements  
(Agenda item 4)**

The Chairman drew members' attention to the printed announcements and also made reference to the achievement of Ms Rochelle Clarke, a Worcester Valkyries Rugby Team player, in being one of the most capped England players. The Chairman promised to write with the Council's congratulations.

**1833 Visit of the West  
Mercia Police  
and Crime  
Commissioner  
(Agenda item 5)**

The Chairman welcomed Mr John Campion, the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner to the meeting. The Chairman also welcomed and introduced Mr Anthony Bangham, the Chief Constable of West Mercia Police, to the meeting.

Both the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable gave a brief presentation of their respective roles, their vision for the future and the current state of policing in Worcestershire. The Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable then answered a wide range of questions posed by members.

The Chairman thanked Mr Campion and Mr Bangham for their attendance.

**1834 Fire and Rescue  
Authority  
(Agenda item 6)**

The Chairman welcomed Mr Nathan Travis, the Chief Fire Officer, to the meeting. The Chairman of the Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority, Mr D W Prodger, presented his report to the Council and he and Mr Travis answered questions asked by members of the Council.

**1835 Reports of Cabinet - Matters which require a decision by Council - Corporate Plan Refresh - 'Shaping Worcestershire's Future' (2017-2022) (Agenda item 7(a)(i))**

The Council had before it a report on the 'refresh' of the Corporate Plan and a commentary of the revisions and updates. All members had also received a copy of the draft Plan.

Members spoke in favour of adopting the refreshed Plan and the priorities contained therein. It was emphasised that the Plan was to provide strategic vision, not detailed implementation plans. Other members raised various criticisms of the process, the Council's direction of travel and of the draft Plan itself.

During the course of debate it was moved as an amendment and seconded that:

*"The Plan includes reference to the end of Austerity and improvement of the lifestyles of its residents and the economy of the county."*

**Following debate of this amendment it was put to the meeting and on a named vote was lost.**

Those voting in favour of the amendment:

Ms P Agar, Mr J Baker, Mr P Denham, Mr A Fry, Ms P A Hill, Mr L C R Mallett, Mr P M McDonald, Mr R M Udall, Mr G J Vickery. (9)

Those voting against the amendment:

Mr A A J Adams, Mr R C Adams, Mr A T Amos, Mr R W Banks, Mr M L Bayliss, Mr A N Blagg, Mrs S L Blagg, Mr P J Bridle, Mr S C Cross, Mrs P E Davey, Ms L R Duffy, Mrs E A Eyre, Mr S E Geraghty, Mrs J L M A Griffiths, Mr P Grove, Mr A I Hardman, Mr M J Hart, Mrs A T Hingley, Mrs L C Hodgson, Mr C G Holt, Mr I Hopwood, Mr A P Miller, Mr T A Muir, Dr K A Pollock, Mr D W Prodger, Mr A C Roberts, Mr J H Smith, Mr C B Taylor, Mr J W R Thomas and Mr G C Yarranton. (30)

Abstained - Mrs S Askin, Mr M E Jenkins, Ms R E Jenkins, Mrs F M Oborski, Mr R J Sutton and Mrs E B Tucker. (6)

The Council then debated the substantive motion and

**RESOLVED that the refreshed Corporate Plan -**

<p><b>1836 Reports of Cabinet - Matters which require a decision by Council - Energy Efficiency Spend to Save Fund (Agenda item 7(a)(ii))</b></p>	<p><b>'Shaping Worcestershire's Future (2017-2022) be approved and adopted from 1 January 2017.</b></p> <p>The Council had before it a report which recommended the addition of £0.7m to the Energy Efficiency Spend to Save Fund following the success of earlier elements of the strategy. Members spoke generally in favour of the recommended course of action.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED that the Energy Efficiency Spend to Save Fund increase to the Capital Programme be approved and the capital budget cash limits be updated accordingly.</b></p>
<p><b>1837 Reports of Cabinet - Matters which require a decision by Council - Phase 2 of the development of In-house Post 16 Supported Living Accommodation and Residential Facilities within Children's Services (Agenda item 7(a)(iii))</b></p>	<p>The Council had before it a report which recommended the addition of £2m to the Capital Programme for Phase 2 of the development of in-house Post-16 Supported Living Accommodation and residential facilities within Children's Services. Members were supportive of the report and recommendation before the Council.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families promised a written response to the local member on why the Pershore Short Breaks Unit was included in the heading to one of the paragraphs but not in the subsequent text.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED that the addition of £2m to the Capital Programme for Phase 2 of the development of in-house Post-16 Supported Living Accommodation and residential facilities within Children's Services be approved to be funded by revenue savings from the projects.</b></p>
<p><b>1838 Reports of Cabinet - Matters which require a decision by Council - Eastham Bridge, Tenbury</b></p>	<p>The Council had before it a report on the funding for the replacement of the Eastham Bridge near Tenbury Wells which has collapsed earlier in the year. An addition to the Council's Capital Programme had been recommended.</p> <p>A debate ensued during which the following principal points were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the timing of the scheme</li> </ul>

**Wells  
(Agenda item  
7(a)(iv))**

- the cost of the scheme and the extent of works required
- comparative costs of other bridge works.

**RESOLVED that the addition to the Capital Programme of the Eastham Bridge scheme be approved and that the capital cash limits be updated accordingly.**

**1839 Reports of  
Cabinet -  
Matters which  
require a  
decision by  
Council -  
Acquisition of  
Wildwood  
Office,  
Worcester  
(Agenda item  
7(a)(v))**

The Council had before it a report setting out the case to acquire the Wildwood Office in Worcester. The report contained details of the current leasehold arrangements, financial and non-financial benefits and the legal, financial and human resources implications. Members of the Council had also been sent Appendix 4 to the report which was a detailed financial appraisal of the proposal which because of the sensitive commercial information contained in it had been classified as 'Exempt Information'. During the course of the debate members were reassured that the proposal would only proceed if it was contained within the financial envelope described and provided value for money for the County Council.

**RESOLVED that the addition to the Capital Programme of the scheme to acquire Wildwood Office, Worcester as set out in the exempt finance report at Appendix 4 to the report be approved and the capital cash limits be updated accordingly in due course to reflect the actual cost of acquisition.**

**1840 Reports of  
Council -  
Summary of  
Decisions  
Taken  
(Agenda item  
7(b))**

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

- Equality in Schools - Notice of Motion
- Council policy on responding to Change of Age Range requests from Community Maintained Schools or Change of Age requests from other types of school
- West Midlands Rail Devolution
- Worcestershire Local Aggregates Assessment
- Winter Service Policy 2016
- Resources Report
  - Revenue Budget Monitoring 2016/17 - Outturn Forecast as at 31 August 2016
  - Future Fit Programme Update
  - Capital Programme Budget Monitoring - 2016/17 Forecast
  - 100% Business Rates Retention - Consultation
  - Fair Funding Review: Call for Evidence on

**1841 Notices of Motion - Notice of Motion 1 - Footway Crossings (Agenda item 8)**

- Needs and Redistribution. Discussion paper
- Annual Statutory Financial Statements 2015/16.

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

*"Council is concerned about the cost of footway crossings (dropped kerbs) and that our contractor, Ringway is the only approved provider for such work. Council calls upon the Cabinet Member with Responsibility to consider ways he can open up the market to greater competition, with an approved list of contractors and mechanisms where consumers can have options of different payment methods."*

The Notice of Motion was moved by Mr R M Udall and seconded by Mr R C Lunn who both spoke in favour of it.

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

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

- the monopoly position of Ringway acted against the interests of residents
- high costs charged by Ringway for dropped kerbs meant that residents were acting illegally in parking on their own property but driving over ordinary unmodified kerbs
- real hardship was being caused by delays and high prices and that hardship was being felt by the most vulnerable in the community
- a list of approved contractors would serve the interest of both the Council and residents.

Other members suggested:

- that alternative provision had been tried in the past and had not proved workable in terms of quality or cost
- payment by instalments was not a viable way forward and if residents needed a dropped kerb they needed to plan the expenditure in advance

- the suggestion being made would lead to higher costs due to the administration and bureaucracy involved.

**On a named vote the Motion was lost.**

Those voting in favour:

Ms P Agar, Mrs S Askin, Mr J Baker, Mr P J Bridle, Mr S C Cross, Mr P Denham, Mr A Fry, Ms P A Hill, Mr M E Jenkins, Mr R C Lunn, Mr L C R Mallett, Mr P M McDonald, Mrs F M Oborski, Mrs E B Tucker, Mr R M Udall and Mr G J Vickery. (16)

Those voting against:

Mr A A J Adams, Mr R C Adams, Mr A T Amos, Mr R W Banks, Mr M L Bayliss, Mr A N Blagg, Mrs S L Blagg, Mrs P E Davey, Mr N Desmond, Mrs E A Eyre, Ms L R Duffy, Mr S E Geraghty, Mrs J L M A Griffiths, Mr P Grove, Mr M J Hart, Mrs A T Hingley, Mrs L C Hodgson, Mr C G Holt, Mr I Hopwood, Mr A P Miller, Mr T A Muir, Dr K A Pollock, Mr D W Prodger, Mr A C Roberts, Mr J H Smith, Mr C B Taylor and Mr P A Tuthill, (27)

**1842 Notices of Motion - Notice of Motion 2 - Services for Children and Young People (Agenda item 8)**

The Council had before it a Notice of Motion standing in the names of Mr G J Vickery, Mr P M McDonald, Mr P Denham, Mr R M Udall, Mr A Fry and Ms P Agar:

*"Our services are designed to give children and young people the best possible start in life" – "Shaping Worcestershire's Future" page 6.*

*"We are fully committed to child protection and do everything we can to keep children safe and stable" – "Shaping Worcestershire's Future" page 7.*

*There will be "changes to the current job plans for Health Visitors, staff skill mix, a reduced number of clinics and home visits. Health promotion and preventions will be delivered through a targeted approach." – Integrated Public Health Nursing Service Review Paper from Worcestershire Health & Care Trust, October 2016.*

*Worcestershire County Council's Public Health role is to provide and ensure a universal service of preventative health care, to benefit the long-term wellbeing of the population and reduce the costly burden on the NHS and Council of acute, mental and social health and care. We*

*therefore call upon the Cabinet Member with Responsibility to ensure that identification of needs is provided through an undifferentiated and universal strategy which encourages the uptake of needed services and appropriate health and parenting information, and creates opportunities for parents who may otherwise have remained unaware of, or unwilling to engage in, such provision."*

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

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

A debate ensued during which the following principal points were made. Those speaking in favour:

- stressed that certain services should be universal and the areas highlighted in the Motion should be protected
- highlighted these were special service areas and formed an integral part of the Council's health promotion ambitions
- suggested some targeting of services might be considered legitimate but in this area it would be ill advised and short-sighted
- insisted that the Council should continue to provide the most vulnerable with the best start in life and ensure long term success in other areas notably education.

Other members commented:

- that statutory health checks would still be carried out at the appropriate intervals
- if members chose to maintain services across a wide spectrum of provision at some point it would be necessary to identify where additional resources could be obtained. This was the dilemma - services in one area, reductions in others and those speaking in favour of the Motion had no answer to it
- the Motion was a simplistic attempt to reallocate resources from an already over committed budget.

**On being put to the Meeting the Motion was lost.**



**1843 Notices of Motion - Notice of Motion 3 - The Living Wage (Agenda item 8)**

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

*"We call upon the Cabinet Member with Responsibility to support the introduction of a Living Wage to all directly-engaged staff and*

- (a) to undertake investigations into the cost of fully implementing the Living Wage including the number of staff currently paid below the Living Wage, by how much and in what roles they work*
- (b) will adopt a policy of supporting the Living Wage in procurement on a case-by-case basis*
- (c) in addition will seek accreditation as a Living Wage Employer through the Living Wage Foundation."*

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

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

Members speaking in favour of the Motion:

- suggested that simple justice dictated that a fair day's work deserved a fair day's pay
- that the County Council should be seen as a leader in the county and set an example for other employers to follow
- that being a low-pay employer was not compatible with the ambition to be a World Class local authority and county and would mean the Council could not attract or retain the highest calibre of staff.

Those speaking against the Motion:

- said there was confusion between the minimum wage and the living wage and that the Council's aspirations had always been clear
- the Council had to be prudent with Council Tax payers' money and would not be thanked for paying above market rates or local conditions
- the suggestion had been rejected before because it eroded the differentials of higher paid staff

- the movers of the Motion needed to have regard to the implications of higher spending and identify sources of funding.

**On a named vote the Motion was lost.**

Those voting in favour:

Ms P Agar, Mrs S Askin, Mr P Denham, Ms P A Hill, Mr M E Jenkins, Mr R C Lunn, Mr L C R Mallett, Mr P M McDonald, Mrs F M Oborski, Mrs E B Tucker, Mr R M Udall and Mr G J Vickery. (12)

Those voting against:

Mr A A J Adams, Mr R C Adams, Mr A T Amos, Mr R W Banks, Mr M L Bayliss, Mr A N Blagg, Mrs S L Blagg, Mrs P E Davey, Mr N Desmond, Ms L R Duffy, Mrs E A Eyre, Mr S E Geraghty, Mrs J L M A Griffiths, Mr M J Hart, Mrs A T Hingley, Mrs L C Hodgson, Mr C G Holt, Mr I Hopwood, Mr A P Miller, Mr T A Muir, Dr K A Pollock, Mr D W Prodger, Mr A C Roberts, Mr J H Smith, Mr C B Taylor and Mr P A Tuthill, (26)

**1844 Notices of Motion - Notice of Motion 4 - Resident Parking Scheme Policy (Agenda item 8)**

The Council had before it a Notice of Motion standing in the names of Mrs E B Tucker, Professor J Raine, Mrs S Askin, Mr M E Jenkins and Mrs F M Oborski:

*"Issues surrounding parking are frequently raised by residents, particularly those in urban areas with limited off-road parking where residents are in competition with commuters. Following a visit to the Arboretum in Worcester to see the problems that this area faces, the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways, Marcus Hart, said that he intends over the coming year to look again at the whole of the Council's resident parking scheme policy and potentially review it.*

*In order to assist the Cabinet Member to reach the best outcome of any review, we call for a cross-party scrutiny task group to be set up that looks at all aspects of resident parking, for instance by considering examples of resident parking schemes from elsewhere in the country and also whether a one-size-fits-all policy can adequately address the varying nature of parking problems throughout the county*

*The results of this scrutiny can then inform the Cabinet Member in the formation of a new and improved resident parking policy."*

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

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

An amendment was then suggested by Mr M J Hart and adopted as an alteration to the Motion by the Mover and Secunder.

The motion as altered received general support and the Council **RESOLVED:**

**"Council notes that:**

***"Issues surrounding parking are frequently raised by residents, particularly those in urban areas with limited off-road parking where residents are in competition with commuters. Following a visit to the Arboretum in Worcester to see the problems that this area faces, the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways, Marcus Hart, said that he intends over the coming year to look again at the whole of the Council's resident parking scheme policy and potentially review it.***

**Council agrees that:**

***In order to assist the Cabinet Member to reach the best outcome of any review, we call for a Member Advisory Group (MAG) to be set up that looks at all aspects of resident parking, for instance by considering examples of resident parking schemes for elsewhere in the country and also whether a one-size fits-all policy can adequately address the varying nature of the parking problems throughout the county.***

***The results of this MAG can then inform the Cabinet Member in the formation on any future resident parking policy."***

**1845 Notices of Motion - Notice of Motion 5 - Post 16-19 Transport Policy**

The Council had before it a Notice of Motion standing in the names of Mrs E B Tucker, Mrs F M Oborski, Mr M E Jenkins and Mrs S Askin:

***"This Council strongly supports initiatives to develop the skills and qualifications of its young people as part of the general drive to improve the jobs and salary levels***

**(Agenda item 8)**

*available to them and the planned growth of the economy of the county.*

*We are concerned that our current policy for post 16-19 transport is limited to full-time students in Further Education and only to the nearest school or college irrespective of whether it provides the appropriate course for the student concerned.*

*We ask the Cabinet to reconsider this policy which works against our overall objectives."*

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 agreed to consider and deal with the Motion on the day.

A debate ensued during which the following principal points were made. Those speaking in favour:

- the Council's current transport policy did not give all young people an equal chance of achieving their full potential
- the Council's current transport policy worked against some of the Council's other aspirations relating to education, training and learning opportunities
- at a time when the Council was seeking to strengthen the county's economy, opportunities for young people should be enhanced not reduced.

Those speaking against the Motion:

- drew attention to drain on resources posed by home to school transport and education transport generally
- posed the argument that for every increase in service provision in one area there had to be a compensating reduction in another area. The mover and seconder of the Motion were asked from which budget heading the resources would be taken
- that some institutions operated a bursary scheme to help students with travel costs and there had to be some onus on students to help themselves.

**1846 Reports of  
Cabinet  
Members with  
Responsibility -  
Highways  
(Agenda item 9)**

**On being put to the meeting the Motion was lost.**

The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways presented his report which covered a number of overarching issues:

- Highways Budget
- Depots
- Fixing roads
- Pavements/footways
- Winter maintenance
- Eastham Bridge
- 'Driving Home'
- Parish Lengthmans Scheme
- Street Lighting
- Hoobrook Link Road (Silverwoods Way)
- Public transport
- Transport technology
- Community transport
- Highways liaison
- Traffic Regulation Orders
- Small Works Scheme
- Bus stop improvements
- Improvements for the mobility impaired.

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

- a clarification on the total budget for 'Driving Home'
- request for a dedicated bus service for Silverwoods Way in Kidderminster
- street lighting policy and the number of lights turned off at night as part of on-going economy measures
- the nature, extent and funding for real-time bus service information systems
- whether there were any plans to reconsider the amount of subsidy available for bus services
- the scope and future operations of Fleet Services
- revision to the Highway Liaison Officer role
- the role and functions of Highways Forums.

Other actions were promised as follows:

- to clarify whether zig zag road markings near school entrances were covered by Traffic Regulation Orders or not

- to clarify what offences are involved in obstructing or driving over dropped kerbs and whether this applies to both ingress and egress
- in relation to paragraph 51 of the report - why had it taken seven years to complete the closure of the Brickfields Walk crossing from Astwood Road to King George V playing fields?

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

**1847 Question Time  
(Agenda item  
10)**

Sixteen questions had been received by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and had been circulated before the meeting. Nine were asked at the meeting during the thirty minutes allocated. (All answers are enclosed with these Minutes.)

**1848 Reports of  
Committees -  
Summary of  
decisions taken  
by the Pensions  
Committee  
(Agenda item  
11(a))**

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

**1849 Reports of  
Committees -  
Summary of  
decisions taken  
by the Planning  
and Regulatory  
Committee  
(Agenda item  
11(b))**

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

The meeting adjourned between 1.00p.m. and 1.45p.m. for luncheon.  
The meeting ended at 5.02p.m.

Chairman .....

## **COUNCIL 10 NOVEMBER 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 at the meeting the written response is also included below.***

**QUESTION 1** – Mr P M McDonald asked Mr A C Roberts:

*"Would the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Transformation and Commissioning please inform me of the cost to this Council of workers suspended on full pay over the last two years?"*

### **Answer given**

The cost to the Council of workers suspended on full pay over the last two years is £165,000.

### **Supplementary Question**

In response to a supplementary question about actions being taken to reduce this figure the Cabinet Member with Responsibility outlined that the percentage of the total cost of suspensions against the pay bill in 2014/15 was 0.01% but officers were still trying to reduce this at every opportunity.

**QUESTION 2** – Mr P M McDonald's printed question asked Mr S E Geraghty:

*"Would the Leader of the Council agree with me that the Government should pull back from reducing the number of MP's, which is causing confusion throughout the county because of the likelihood that residents in the county of Worcestershire could find that their MP is from a neighbouring authority, district or metropolitan area. Would the Leader of the Council also agree with me that to save money the number of unelected peers should be reduced instead of elected Members of Parliament?"*

### **Written Answer**

Firstly, can I thank Peter for his question.

As the member highlights in his question a Parliamentary boundary review is now underway and initial proposals have been published setting out plans to reduce the number of MP's from 650 to 600 and to ensure that all Parliamentary constituencies have an electorate within 5% of the "electoral quota" of 74,769.

The Government is clearly committed to this review – a manifesto commitment - and legislation has already been passed to enable the review. It also must be right that the significant variations in the size of constituencies across the UK are addressed.

Given these factors it is inevitable that at least one constituency boundary will cross our county boundary and whilst local government boundaries were something the commission considered when formulating the proposals, it hasn't been possible for them to be coterminous with our county boundary. The initial proposals do however see Worcestershire retain the same number of Parliamentary constituencies as at present, although no constituencies retain their current boundary.

The initial consultation period is currently underway and will last until 5 December 2016. Representations may be made to the Boundary Commission for England either in writing or in person at a public hearing. So it is quite possible for any member or political group to comment should they wish to do so.

On the subject of the Lords, peers are now able to retire and I believe 50 have done so since the end of 2014 and the cost of the Lords has fallen by 14% since 2010.

**QUESTION 3** – Mr R C Lunn asked Mr M L Bayliss:

*"Can the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families ask the officers to reconsider the date on which the school summer term ends in 2018? Most families take holidays from Saturday to Saturday, so ending the term on Friday 20 July 2018 is preferable to the current plan of Tuesday 24 July 2018? Would he agree that such a change is likely to improve school attendance because parents are less likely to remove their children from school?"*

**Answer given**

The Council in advance sets dates for the school term for some maintained schools (that is community, voluntary controlled and community special schools). Those independent of local authority control, e.g. academies, are able to set their own term dates. The Governing Bodies of foundation and voluntary aided schools are also able to set their own term dates.

We have found, however, that each year so far all schools have stayed in line with the dates proposed by the Council. Each year this is a result of consultation with schools and trade unions regarding preferred dates, and consideration of dates set by neighbouring authorities. Considering all of the factors, the published dates were those chosen. It is often necessary with the number of school holiday days, the timing of Easter, and the falling Christmas on different days of the week each year, to set 'split week' holidays. We do not have evidence that this has impacted negatively upon overall attendance figures. Schools also have some flexibility in being able to set some of the own training days at the beginning or end of a school term.

**Supplementary Question**

In response to a supplementary question about the possibility of Friday being the 'default day' for the end of term in future the Cabinet Member with Responsibility said he was happy to raise the matter with officers.

**QUESTION 4** – Mr R C Lunn's printed question asked Mr M L Bayliss:

*"Can Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families confirm that £300,000 was taken out of the Learning Support Budget in 2016-17 due to a legal dispute about the*



*original contract between the Directorate and Babcock? How is taking £300,000 away from this budget going to improve "outcomes" for children assisted by the service?"*

### **Written Answer**

It is not correct to assert that this sum of money was removed from the Learning Support budget in 2016-17. Babcock has been commissioned by the Council to deliver many education services on its behalf. The value of the contract was agreed in advance of its commencement, and no change has been made to this agreed value. Within the overall allocation, it is for Babcock to determine how their resources are allocated in order to meet the Key Performance Indicators agreed with the Council. The Council, however, retains the overall responsibility for outcomes and so remains in close contact with Babcock concerning the development of its service. We can confirm that money was not taken from the Learning Support budget in 2016-17.

### **QUESTION 5** – Mrs F M Oborski asked Mr A C Roberts:

*"As part of its Local Plan Review Wyre Forest District Council Local Plans Review Panel, which I chair, is assessing the Five-Year Housing Land Supply in the District. Worcestershire County Council owns several sites in the District which would appear to be suitable for some housing provision, but which are currently not being released. Three within Kidderminster are: the former Stourminster School site on Comberton Road; the former Sladen School site on Hurcott Road and the now unused Naylor's Sports field off Rifle Range Road.*

*Every house which can be built within Kidderminster is one less house which has to be provided on greenfield sites outside existing settlement boundaries. Will the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Transformation and Commissioning please tell me, for each of the above sites why there is a delay in releasing them for development, what constraints if any apply to each site and when they will be released?"*

### **Answer given**

The sites at the former Stourminster School site on Comberton Road and the former Sladen School site on Hurcott Road are identified for disposal for residential purposes under the Property Asset Strategy approved in March 2016.

Consent is being sought from the Department of Education to enable the disposal of the former Stourminster site. Marketing will commence on receipt of the approval with the expectation that the land will be sold in 2017/18. The Former Sladen School site has been identified for potential Extra Care and/or supporting living which is being explored prior to offering the sites for open marketing housing. The development of our own land to support long term demand in social care was a key aspect of the strategy signed off by cabinet. The sale of the site is subject to negotiations to lift restrictive covenants with the original owners of the land. The expectation is that the site will available for disposal in 2017/18.

Naylor's Field site has previously been promoted by the County Council for potential future residential development. The Council would welcome its inclusion in any future revision of the 5-year housing supply. There are a number of unauthorised residential accesses on the field which will require resolving prior to disposal.

**QUESTION 6** – Mr R M Udall's printed question asked Mr M J Hart:

*"Does the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways have any plans to visit my Worcester - St John Division?"*

**Written Answer**

I have no plans to visit your Division at the present time.

**QUESTION 7** – Mr R M Udall asked Mr A C Roberts:

*"Can the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Transformation and Commissioning please confirm details of the gender pay gap for employees of the County Council and for the county as a whole?"*

**Answer given**

In the absence of an established or recognised industry standard calculation for gender pay gap analysis the County Council does not report information on gender pay gap. The Government has been consulting at a national level on proposed regulations in respect of monitoring the gender pay gap, and we are awaiting publication of these regulations. There is also no data available in respect of the gender pay gap for the county as a whole.

The Council responded to a Freedom of Information (FOI) request earlier this year which requested: "the mean and median hourly earnings (excluding overtime) for full-time and part-time male employees and full-time and part time female employees", but the professional advice is that based on the variables in the data, length of service and sample size, there is no statistical significant difference between the pay of male and female employees at the Council.

FULL TIME EMPLOYEES		
Gender	Hourly Earnings	
	Mean	Median
Male	£15.26	£14.06
Female	£14.13	£13.63

PART-TIME TIME EMPLOYEES		
Gender	Hourly Earnings	
	Mean	Median
Male	£12.32	£10.23
Female	£11.31	£10.23

Supplementary Question

In response to a supplementary question about national levels of the pay gap the Cabinet Member with Responsibility said the County Council would monitor levels.

**QUESTION 8** – Mr P Denham asked Mr A C Roberts:

*"What is this Council's policy on allowing charities to raise funds in council buildings and do charities who sell items behind Reception in County Hall rent the space or is it free?"*

**Answer given**

The County Council does not have a formal policy for allowing charities to raise money at Council Premises. At County Hall each case is treated individually and approved by the Facilities Manager or Site Officer in charge, in conjunction with advice from Place Partnership. At other Council buildings such as Libraries we charge what is termed a 'community rate' for charities and community organisations. This rate is considerably less than our normal charge. Such an approach is common practice at Local Authorities across the country.

### Supplementary Question

In response to a specific question about the alleged refusal by a Council establishment to support a particular charity the Cabinet Member with Responsibility gave clarification of the details.

### **QUESTION 9** – Mr P A Tuthill asked Mrs L C Hodgson:

*"As part of the modernisation/digital update of library services the majority of magazines are now made available on line. What action is being taken to make users aware of this and guide them in access procedures, either at libraries or at home? Could the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Localism and Communities also explain to Council how the choice of on-line magazines was made and has she any recommendations for covering any gaps for specialist/minority groups?"*

### **Answer given**

Worcestershire Libraries' e-magazine collection has been put together to reflect community interests. The collection is reviewed each year to identify levels of usage for each title and Library Managers are given the opportunity to review the collection and propose new titles for which demand has been identified at their library. The next review date is December 2016.

Raising public awareness and participation in the libraries e-offer (including e-books and e-magazines) is an on-going service objective and a number of initiatives have been undertaken during 2016/17 to encourage and support increased usage of these services. Press releases and social media campaigns have been run throughout the year to highlight libraries' e-book and e-magazine offer and encourage the public to visit libraries for help getting online. Libraries & Learning web pages have also been updated to improve visibility and links to e-books and e-magazines. A service wide promotional campaign is planned for early 2017 following the award of a new e-books contract in January.

All libraries conduct an annual survey of their customers which tracks customer awareness and use of e-book and e magazines. Library Managers have implemented local promotions to raise profile in response to survey findings. These promotions include engagement with customers, displays of e-book resources and shelf markers which indicate books that are available as e-books. Children who took part in the Summer Reading Challenge at The Hive were sent email reminders that the books they read for the challenge could include e-books.

As part of the recent Get Online week in October a media and social media campaign was run to encourage the public to visit libraries to get online help. The Hive, Droitwich Library and Redditch Library all ran sessions specifically to help customers access libraries e-Books and e-Magazines collection.

In addition to these initiatives, Library staff have received supplier training to ensure that they are confident supporting customers to access e magazines and further training is planned for November/December 2016. Library staff have also received Society of Chief Libraries approved digital training to ensure that they are confident supporting customers to access digital services.

**QUESTION 10** – Mr P A Tuthill's printed question asked Dr K A Pollock:

"Putting on my anorak I went and had a look around the new Bromsgrove Railway Station. It looks as if there is a track still to be installed and at the easterly platform face - is this waiting electrification and what are the latest timescales?"

There has also been some publicity that the new station has to be closed for further work, can this be clarified please?"

### **Written Answer**

Bromsgrove Station reopened as planned on Monday (7 November) following scheduled works; all planned track work is now complete. The work was carried out as part of Network Rail's electrification programme and was extensively promoted to rail users for some time beforehand. Replacement buses were provided by London Midland during the 'blockade'.

Work to electrify the line between Bromsgrove and Barnt Green (therefore completing electrification between Bromsgrove and Birmingham) is due for completion in September 2017 enabling additional services to be introduced in May 2018. The new station was an essential precursor to the electrification of the line and we can be proud of the enabling role the County Council has played in providing this world-class facility.

**QUESTION 11** – Mrs F M Oborski's printed question asked Mr M L Bayliss:

*"Could the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families please tell the Council how many young, unaccompanied asylum-seeking young persons are now in the care of Worcestershire Social Services following the passing of the Dubs Amendment that allows unaccompanied refugee children from across Europe to have safe refuge in the UK under the care of local authorities?"*

*If there are no such unaccompanied refugee children in Worcestershire yet, would he tell us what the plans are for Worcestershire County Council to play its part in this on-going tragedy; how many he intends this Council to accept, and when?"*

*Could he also give us an update on the number of Syrian refugees now resettled in Worcestershire and what future plans are for hosting further families locally?"*

### **Written Answer**

As of the 6 November 2016, Worcestershire has 32 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children (UASC), who currently make up 4.5% of our total Looked After Children. We currently have not yet accepted or agreed to take any UASC as a direct result of the Dubs Amendment. We continue to take responsibility for any UASC who are found in our area and whom we have a duty to accommodate under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989. We have also been part of the Syrian Resettlement Programme to ensure Worcestershire plays

an important role in supporting refugee children and their families. In response to the second strand of your question:

***"If there are no such unaccompanied refugee children in Worcestershire yet, would he tell us what the plans are for Worcestershire County Council to play its part in this on-going tragedy; how many he intends this Council to accept, and when?"***

***Could he also give us an update on the number of Syrian refugees now resettled in Worcestershire and what future plans are for hosting further families locally?"***

Worcestershire has played an important role within the refugee crisis and has been part of the Syrian Resettlement Programme. 38 adult and child refugees have been resettled in Kidderminster, Redditch and Worcester since the end of June 2016.

The number of Syrian Refugees resettled by Worcestershire will total 50 following the acceptance of a further three families for arrival at the end of November. This fulfils the commitment that Worcestershire Leaders made back in January.

With regards to the National Transfer Scheme for UASC we are currently in discussions with the West Midlands Strategic Partnership, who are coordinating the regional response on behalf of the Home Office, about what support Worcestershire can provide to UASC through this scheme. We currently are not signed up to the scheme but continue to review our position in Worcestershire.

Outside the formal schemes Worcestershire has experienced a 160% increase in unscheduled unaccompanied asylum seeking and refugee children arriving in our area in the last 12 months. We remain committed to working with the Home Office and continue to play our part in supporting refugees.

**QUESTION 12** – Mr M E Jenkins asked Mr A N Blagg:

*"The Government is increasing the funding for local air quality management in England with £3m funding via the air quality grant for 2016/17 (after recent years of cuts). Will the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Environment tell me if we applied for some of this funding? If so, how much have we asked for? How much have we asked for over previous years?"*

**Answer given**

The Government has indeed increased the funding to support air quality improvements. This funding goes to Worcestershire Regulatory Services, who operate on behalf of the Districts to monitor and report on air quality. The County Council therefore have not bid for or received funding through this Grant, but we do of course work closely with our colleagues in Worcestershire Regulatory Services to develop schemes to mitigate poor air quality. In addition, tackling air quality issues will feature very strongly in our refresh of the current Local Transport Plan which will be consulted on later this year.

**Supplementary Question**

In response to a supplementary question the Cabinet Member with Responsibility promised a written response on how much Worcestershire Regulatory Services had applied for and how much of that money had been used for the purposes of clean air zones.

**QUESTION 13** – Mr M E Jenkins' printed question asked Mr M J Hart:

*"An amendment to the Bus Services Bill allowing all councils to gain franchising powers without central government approval was passed by the House of Lords recently, but the Bill will now have to pass through the Commons. Does the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways support local councils, such as ours, potentially having a greater say over how bus services are run? If so, will he ask the Government to accept this amendment?"*

**Written Answer**

Worcestershire County Council supports Transport Authorities having a greater say over the operation of bus services and would seek to do this through one of the partnership arrangements outlined in the Bill, for example the Enhanced Partnership. This would enable the Council to have a greater say on routes, timetables and ticketing arrangements and avoids the commercial risks associated with franchising, for example TUPE and profit and loss.

As Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways, I will support the amendment (the amendment simplifies the process for the franchising route) but I am mindful that there are significant commercial risks in a rural county like Worcestershire if the decision is made to opt for franchising. At this stage, the preferred option is the Enhanced Partnership.

Worcestershire County Council cannot make a definitive decision until the final Bill has been passed and the Secretary of State has issued guidance and regulations.

**QUESTION 14** – Mrs E B Tucker asked Mr M L Bayliss:

*"Now that the Babcock's contract has been in place for a full year, would the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families please describe their approach and performance on school improvement in that time and the feedback received from schools so far?"*

**Answer given**

Babcock Prime has been working with Worcestershire schools to improve educational outcomes. The Council monitors this through an agreed set of Key Performance Indicators which are discussed, monitored and challenged on a monthly and quarterly basis.

I can confirm that 90% of Worcestershire schools are judged by Ofsted to be either 'Good' or 'Outstanding'. This is the highest percentage we have had.

Only four Worcestershire schools currently have an 'inadequate' rating and recent monitoring visits to these schools by Babcock have reported that they are making effective progress.

There has been improvement in 2016 in the number of schools below the government's floor standards, with only eight schools at Key Stage 2 and none at Key Stage 4.

Babcock has an 'Aiming for Outstanding' process in place and provides the following to maintained schools:

- Tailoring and brokering support for priority schools
- Monitoring the impact of support and progress to good
- Support for OFSTED inspection for priority schools
- Headteacher recruitment
- Moderation and Governor training

We recognise that Key Stage 2 results this summer have been disappointing and as such, Babcock is currently implementing an Improvement Plan to address these issues.

#### Supplementary Question

In response to a supplementary question on feedback from schools and why the contract with Babcock in Worcestershire varied from those in Surrey and Devon the Cabinet Member with Responsibility promised a written response.

#### **QUESTION 15** – Mr G J Vickery asked Mr J H Smith:

*“Will the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Health and Well-Being deplore the secrecy with which the Sustainability and Transformation Plan for Health and Social Care is being developed and urge NHS England to make public the full state of development of the plan for Herefordshire and Worcestershire, as has been done for the residents of Shropshire and Birmingham?”*

#### **Answer given**

Thank you Cllr Vickery for your question. As I am sure you are aware this is a NHS plan not a County Council one. As Chairman of the Health and Well-being Board I have made sure regular discussions have taken place as the draft plan developed. The Board last discussed this at a public session last week which you attended. I also invited District Council representatives to the meeting and the draft Sustainability and Transformation Plan has now been submitted to NHS England for consideration. NHS communication and engagement will follow in due course and the County Council will support this as appropriate using our own communication channels.

#### Supplementary Question

In response to a supplementary question about whether the County Council should have seen the Plan the Cabinet Member with Responsibility reiterated that this was an NHS Plan and the County Council had no control over its progress.

#### **QUESTION 16** – Ms P Agar's printed question asked Mr J H Smith:

*“It is my understanding that it can and is taking 25 months for adults with Asperger’s Syndrome to receive a diagnosis. Could the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Health and Well-Being tell Council why this is?”*

#### **Written Answer**

The responsibility for commissioning diagnosis services, including Asperger's, rests with the NHS and the Clinical Commissioning Groups, and not with the Council. I am not therefore able to answer the specific question Ms Agar asks.

I would say however that the Council remains committed to improving the lives of people with autistic spectrum disorders, as set out in the "All Age Autism Strategy" agreed by the Health and Wellbeing Board.