

Council**Thursday, 12 September 2019, County Hall, Worcester -
10.00 am****Minutes****Present:**

Mr R P Tomlinson (Chairman), Mr A A J Adams, Mr R C Adams, Ms P Agar, Mr A T Amos, Mr T Baker-Price, Mr R M Bennett, Mr G R Brookes, Mrs J A Brunner, Mr B Clayton, Mr P Denham, Ms R L Dent, Mr N Desmond, Mrs E A Eyre, Mr A Fry, Mr S E Geraghty, Mr P Grove, Mr I D Hardiman, Mr A I Hardman, Mr P B Harrison, Mr M J Hart, Ms P A Hill, Mrs L C Hodgson, Dr C Hotham, Mr M E Jenkins, Mr A D Kent, Mr R C Lunn, Mr P M McDonald, Mr S J Mackay, Mr L C R Mallett, Ms K J May, Mr P Middlebrough, Mr A P Miller, Mr R J Morris, Mrs F M Oborski, Ms T L Onslow, Dr K A Pollock, Mrs J A Potter, Mrs M A Rayner, Mr A C Roberts, Mr C Rogers, Mr J H Smith, Mr A Stafford, Ms C M Stalker, Mrs E B Tucker, Mr P A Tuthill, Mr R M Udall, Mrs R Vale, Ms S A Webb and Mr T A L Wells

Available papers

The members had before them:

- A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated);
- B. 8 questions submitted to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (previously circulated); and
- C. The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2019 (previously circulated).

**2123 Apologies and
Declaration of
Interests
(Agenda item 1)**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr R W Banks, Mrs A T Hingley, Dr A J Hopkins, Mr J A D O'Donnell, Prof J W Raine, and Mr C B Taylor.

It was noted that Mr C J Bloore had resigned as a councillor earlier the same day.

**2124 Public
Participation
(Agenda item 2)**

Mrs L Denham presented a petition requesting Worcestershire County Council to ensure properly funded bus services to address social isolation, environmental issues, equality of access to employment and public services and congestion.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Denham for her petition and

		said she would receive a written response from the relevant Cabinet Member.
2125	Minutes (Agenda item 3)	RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
2126	Chairman's Announcements (Agenda item 4)	Noted.
2127	Reports of Cabinet - Matters which require a decision - Organisational Redesign Programme (Agenda item 5)	<p>The Council considered the Organisational Redesign Programme.</p> <p>In the ensuing debate, the following points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Leader of the Council introduced the report and commented that the organisational redesign provided an opportunity to re-examine and re-evaluate the way the Council worked including its use of ICT, assets, buildings and total reward to create a sustainable organisation for the future and provide financial savings over the next two years. Staff had been engaged through seven thematic groups. The redesign was being led by the Strategic Leadership Team, overseen by the Chief Executive. C.Co had been engaged to provide external challenge and an understanding of best practice across the country. Following three rounds of challenge, a three Directorate model had been determined which included Directors of Economy and Infrastructure, People and Commercial and Change. Children's Services would operate as a separate company within the Council. The three tiers would comprise of the Chief Executive, Strategic Directors and Assistant Directors. This would stream-line the existing arrangements and allow Strategic Directors to focus on strategy and the future direction of the Council. Assistant Directors would focus on service delivery and operational matters. Human Resources and Finance would report directly to the Chief Executive. This proposal was phase one of the wider redesign and transformation process. If agreed, the aim was to get the top structure in place by next year • The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Social Care paid tribute to the work of the staff involved in the seven thematic groups. The redesign was not overly radical, blending the old

with the new to provide a clear understanding of Directorate responsibilities. The biggest change was the creation of the new People Directorate

- There should not be any compulsory redundancies as a result of the redesign
- It was important to have the right people in the right positions in the Council. The roles of the Cabinet members would need to be realigned to reflect these changes. It was not clear how these changes would bring about savings of £3m. It was important that the new arrangements were implemented consistently across the organisation
- It would be helpful to receive an explanation of the lessons learned from best practice across the country
- The proposals for the redesign or aspects of it should be referred to the Corporate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel
- The job title of Assistant Director did not seem to reflect the level of responsibility of the role. There should be specific job descriptions underpinning the generic job descriptions. There remained a considerable amount of savings to be achieved annually through the redesign which would be painful to accomplish
- It was disappointing that the redesign had been County Council focused and had not included a review of the relationship with the district councils
- Concern was expressed about the wide range of service strands and heads of service under the responsibility of the Director of People
- the relationship between Cabinet Members with Responsibility and the Assistant Directors was unclear in the report. The potential for increased delegation to Cabinet Members was a concern
- How was the Council going to comply with legislation relating to health as well as the increased pressures on that service now that public health had been deemed to be a 3rd tier responsibility?

The following amendment to the recommendation was moved by Mr L C R Mallett and seconded by Mr R C Lunn:

“h) given continuing austerity Council recommends that the Appointments Panel should give regard to the proposed Tier 1 to 3 posts being established at no more than the same level of pay/pay point and remuneration package as those post holders currently receive”.

The Leader of the Council indicated that he would be prepared to accept the amendment if the word “austerity” was replaced with the words “financial pressures” The mover and seconder accepted this alteration to the wording of the amendment. Council then debated the amendment as altered.

In the ensuing debate, the following principal points were raised:

- In a period of austerity, it was important that the redesign of tiers 1 – 3 did not result in an increase in the overall salary package. Cost control and savings should start at the top of the organisation. The Appointments etc Panel should be aware of this consideration
- It was not possible at this stage to make changes to remuneration levels given the lack of information regarding the assigned levels of responsibility particularly for tier three posts
- The proposed amendment could create a salary cap across the whole organisation
- The amendment sent an important message to staff and local residents about remuneration levels at the top of the organisation
- The Leader of the Council commented that the overall financial cost of posts at tiers 1 – 3 of the organisation was reducing. It was important to give the Appointments Panel a degree of flexibility where appropriate within the overall budget whilst reminding the Panel of the financial restrictions facing the Council.

At the conclusion of the debate, the amendment as altered was carried and became the substantive motion.

On being put to the vote, the substantive motion was agreed.

RESOLVED: that

- a) the Chief Executive’s proposed revised Directorate structure be approved and statutory posts be designated of as set out in the report and at Appendix 3;**
- b) the proposals for the Chief Officer structure for Tiers 2 and 3 (as defined in paragraph 7) be supported as set out in the report and Appendix 3, subject to (e);**

- c) the Chief Executive be authorised to carry out all necessary staff consultations in relation to the proposed changes;
- d) the Chief Executive be authorised, in consultation with the Leader, to finalise the detail of the management structure for Tier 2 and Tier 3 officers including the job and person specifications in accordance with the above Directorate structure;
- e) the Appointments Etc Panel be authorised to take all appropriate decisions in relation to the proposals for Tier 2 and 3 posts to support the new Directorate structure (including any deletion of existing posts, creation of new posts and appointments to them, and designation of statutory posts), and reviewing them in the future as appropriate;
- f) the current Directorate of Children, Families and Communities will cease to exist on 1 October 2019, and the Chief Executive be authorised to make interim arrangements for any functions of that Directorate not transferring to Worcestershire Children First;
- g) the indicative timescale in Appendix 4 of the report be noted and the remaining Directorate restructure will take effect from 1 January 2020 or such other date as the Chief Executive may determine having regard to the above processes; and
- h) given continuing financial pressures Council recommends that the Appointments Panel should give regard to the proposed Tier 1 to 3 posts being established at no more than the same level of pay/pay point and remuneration package as those post holders currently receive.

2128 Reports of Cabinet - Summary of decisions taken (Agenda item 5)

The Leader of the Council reported the following topics and questions were answered on them:

- Adult Services – Care and Support Services – Direction of Travel
- Libraries Re- modelling
- Recommissioning the Council’s Customer Services

2129 Constitutional Matter - Appointment of the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board (Agenda item 6)

- Balanced Scorecard and Corporate Risk Update – Quarter 4
- Quality of Utility Works on the Public Highway – Notice of Motion.

The Council considered the appointment of the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board.

In the ensuing debate, the following points were raised:

- The Leader of the Labour Group proposed Mr R M Udall as his Group’s nomination as Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board. Mr L C R Mallett seconded the nomination
- The Leader of the Council indicated that given the late and unexpected circumstances surrounding the resignation of the Chairman of the Board, he proposed that consideration of the appointment of a successor be deferred until the November Council to allow members time to reflect on the situation. This deferral was seconded by Mr A I Hardman
- This was an important appointment made by Council and in the circumstances, it was appropriate to defer consideration. The Vice-Chairman had been and could continue to chair Board meetings in the interim without compromising the work programme
- Concern was expressed that the Labour Group’s nominee would unnecessarily focus on local issues in his role
- The administration should respect convention and accept the valid nomination from the Labour Group
- Any delay was unnecessary and would leave the Board without a Chairman and begged the question whether the Board was able to continue in these circumstances.

RESOLVED that the appointment of the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board be deferred until the Council meeting on 7 November 2019.

2130 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2019/20 (Agenda item 7)

The Council considered the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2019/20.

In the ensuing debate, the following points were raised:

- The Vice-Chairman of the Board introduced the

report which had received cross-party support and commended the programme to Council. She gave an assurance that during this interim period, she would act in a collegiate manner to ensure that scrutiny continued to work effectively

- The Board would be considering some very important issues in the next few months particularly in relation to Children's Services and the creation of Worcestershire Children First.

RESOLVED that the 2019/20 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme be endorsed.

2131 Notices of Motion - Notice of Motion 1 - Public Footways (Agenda item 8)

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

The motion was moved by Mrs E B Tucker and seconded by Mr M E Jenkins who both spoke in favour of it, and Council agreed to deal with it on the day.

In the ensuing debate, the following points were made:

- The footways budget was inadequate, did not reflect the policy priority and did not allow footways to be maintained to the required standard. In particular, standards were not being enforced on developers. The importance of safe footways for the social welfare of elderly and disabled people should not be under-estimated. The intervention criteria that determined when maintenance work could begin was very high. As a result, footways were not conducive to safe walking with, in many instances, undulating footways and footpaths sloping towards the kerb
- The quality of footways was a public health issue as well as a highways issue and it was important to ensure that the criteria for maintenance work was set at an appropriate level
- The Cabinet Member for Highways indicated that he was happy to accept the motion on behalf of the administration. He recognised the importance of tackling social isolation and encouraging children to cycle and walk to school. Spending on footways had increased from £1.8m in 2014/15 to £5m in 2019/20 and as a percentage of the highways budget from 6.2% to 14% and had risen every year. The Government's Incentive Fund of £6m had enabled the Council to repair 50 miles of pavement, improving quality and quantity.

Members also received an additional £43k annually for highways repairs. The criteria for repairing highways defects was in line with Government Policy. A number of factors were taken into account including condition surveys and public enquiries so that the footways in most need were attended to. There were detailed specifications for developers creating footways on new estates or undertaking work on existing highways. All these matters would be included in his report to Cabinet

- The Department for Transport's displacement criterion for repairing damaged footways was extraordinary high and the Council should intervene before that level was reached
- It was disappointing that officers were unwilling to consider undertaking the maintenance of long stretches of footways along roads in rural areas
- It was requested that the Cabinet Member establish in his report whether the Council had the capacity to undertake the work for which funding had been allocated
- Parking on pavements was a particular problem, causing damage to pavements and obstructing pedestrians. The Department for Transport should be lobbied to introduce a ban. In response, it was commented that this was a grey area and there were occasions where it was necessary for motorists to park on the pavement
- It was important for people with sight issues that tactile footplates were monitored and replaced where damaged
- The quality of the footway reinstatement work carried out by officers was high. Unfortunately, developers were not installing footpaths to the same standard and this needed to be addressed by district councils at the planning stage
- The criteria for repairing damaged footpaths should not just take account of the scale of the damage but also its current and future use. The local councillor was well-placed to inform that consideration
- A more strategic approach to siding out rural footways along A roads was needed
- The prevention of cycling and the creation of barriers in alleyways alongside houses where there was no road in urban areas needed further attention
- The Leader of the Council highlighted the Council's commitment to providing top quality

pavements with top quartile performance. A significant amount of funding was now available to local councillors to address footway issues. He emphasised the importance of the availability of the Future High Streets Fund and the Towns Fund in improving the public realm

- The Cabinet Member's report should make reference to the findings of the scrutiny task and finish group on this matter
- The growth of weeds and grass had an impact on the quality of pavements and therefore local councillors should consider providing funds to kill weeds
- The Cabinet Member might wish to give consideration in his report to the obstruction of access to the footway for example through overgrown hedges/brambles from adjacent private/public land.

On being put to the vote, the motion was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: “This Council understands the important contribution that walking makes to people’s health – even just getting out of the house and walking to the shop, walking the dog, or a short walk in the fresh air can make all the difference.

For people with weak ankles, walking disabilities or frailties of aging, it is particularly important that roadside paths are in a safe and level state.

Council asks for the Cabinet Member for Highways to take a report to Cabinet setting out the current criteria that trigger maintenance work on footways and what changes to those standards are required for safe walking by less able or less confident walkers. This should include equalities advice plus input from outside organisations and include the safety of people using buggies.

We also ask that the report reviews the construction specifications for housebuilders where they affect the public footway. Pedestrian safety and the convenience of flat and level paths should take precedence over the desire of householders to reduce the gradient of their driveways.”

2132 Notices of Motion - Notice

The Council had before it a Notice of Motion set out in the agenda papers standing in the names of Mrs E B Tucker, Prof J W Raine, Mr M E Jenkins and Mrs F M

**of Motion 2 -
Road Verge
Biomass
Harvesting
(Agenda item 8)**

Oborski.

The motion was moved by Mr M E Jenkins and seconded by Mrs F M Oborski who both spoke in favour of it, and Council agreed to deal with it on the day.

In the ensuing debate, the following points were made:

- It was acknowledged that the Council was doing a lot to improve the biodiversity of verges. This motion sought to establish what more could be done and whether anything could be learned from the approach taken by Lincolnshire County Council in using grass cuttings to generate energy albeit recognising that circumstances might be different in this county. This motion was also in line with the Council's pollinator-friendly approach
- An assurance was sought that the policy of cutting road verges at least one metre from the highway would continue
- There should be more planting of wildflowers on roadside verges in the county
- The Cabinet Member for Environment indicated that the Council was already undertaking the proposed measures. The topography in Lincolnshire was different and allowed the machinery to be used in a way that reduced the carbon footprint which might not be possible in this county. He gave an assurance that view splays would continue to be cut back in line with Council policy. The Council was looking at other ways of reducing grass growth for example by introducing other plant species. It was important that there was no increase in carbon emissions whatever approach was adopted. He encouraged members to make use of the Natural Network Programme
- As a pollinator-friendly Council, the Council undertook to cut as little of the verge as possible
- There was a lack of information regarding the cost and carbon emissions involved in the approach adopted by Lincolnshire County Council. The impact of the cut and cart approach on soil fertility levels also needed to be considered
- Lincolnshire County Council had adopted the right approach by cutting the grass in order to improve the biodiversity of the verge. However different approaches should be considered that might be more appropriate to this county
- There were also good examples of wildflower planting on grass verges in urban areas eg.

Rotherham Council

- A concern was expressed about the impact on grazing animals of allowing grass verges to grow where ragwort was present.

On being put to the vote, the motion was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: “Lincolnshire County Council is letting its grass verges grow wild over summer in order to encourage pollinators such as butterflies and bees instead of mowing them. At the end of the summer, the grass will be cut and the long cuttings sent to be used as biofuel. The money made from the scheme will be put back into maintaining the verges for next year.

The Council has produced a “tool kit” for other interested councils, so others could trial this energy production technique, and charities the RHS and Plantlife have endorsed such schemes.

See <https://www.lincstrust.org.uk/wildlife/wildlife-gardening/wildflower-hub/verges-faq> for more information.

This is a great idea that Worcestershire County Council should investigate. Council asks for the Cabinet Member with Responsibility to commission a report into the feasibility of implementing a similar scheme in Worcestershire."

2133 Notices of Motion - Notice of Motion 3 - Preparations for Brexit (Agenda item 8)

The Council had before it a Notice of Motion set out in the agenda papers standing in the names of Prof J W Raine, Mrs E B Tucker and Mr M E Jenkins.

The motion was moved by Mrs F M Oborski and seconded by Mr M E Jenkins who both spoke in favour of it. The motion was altered by the mover and seconder based on information received from the LEP so that the motion read “25,000 jobs” rather than “Number of jobs”. Council agreed to deal with the motion on the day.

In the ensuing debate, the following points were made:

- The figure of 25k jobs at risk was provided by Worcestershire LEP. The Government’s Yellowhammer report had highlighted issues with high tariffs, delays for HGVs at ports and the disproportionate impact on low income families as a result of fuel/food price increases. In particular

the number of jobs at risk was a major concern. This Council should be aware of the steps it was able to take to support local employers in this scenario

- A point of order was raised whether a motion could be proposed by a councillor who was not a signatory to it. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised that being a signatory to a motion and speaking to it at Council were separate matters. The constitution required at least three signatories to get a motion on the agenda for Council but there was no requirement for them to attend or speak on it. Although Moving and seconding the motion was normally undertaken by the signatories it did not need to be where another was put forward.

The following amendment to the motion was moved by Dr K A Pollock:

“A number of jobs in the county may be at risk after BREXIT. What preparations are being made by the Council?”

Many jobs within Worcestershire may be at risk when the UK leaves the European Union, and some people believe that even more may be affected, if the departure is effected without a deal.

This Council asks for a report to Cabinet on its own preparations to support the local economy and residents of Worcestershire throughout this challenging time, and on the mechanisms in place to co-ordinate with other organisations such as the Local Enterprise Partnership, Worcestershire Business Central, the Chamber of Commerce for Herefordshire and Worcestershire and the six District Councils.”

The mover and seconder accepted the proposed amendment as an alteration to the motion. Council then debated the substantive motion as altered.

In the debate, the following principal points were raised:

- The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Economy and Infrastructure explained that the amendment placed emphasis on the role of business partners rather than the Local Resilience Forum which had responsibility for major emergencies for example flooding. Although the matter was taken seriously, this amendment did

not assume the worst-case scenario

- The impact of Brexit on the rural economy of the county would be significant given the potential additional EU tariffs on produce and the availability of workers to pick crops
- Although the negative impact of Brexit was recognised, local companies were taking a positive approach to address potential gaps in the market whilst reducing transportation costs and boosting the local economy
- There was no evidence that the EU would not invoke Article 24 of the World Trade Organisation which would allow zero tariffs whilst negotiations on a trade deal continued. It should also be noted that the German car industry was struggling and that the EU was close to recession
- In association with Worcestershire Business Central and the LEP, the Council was developing a business readiness programme which included access to funds, advice packs, courses and webinars
- The public would wish to understand how the Council intended addressing the issues associated with Brexit. It was therefore important to have a coherent and easily understandable plan. Although Brexit might impact on certain aspects of European life, it would impact on all aspects of UK life
- The Government had provided funding to the County and district councils to address issues associated with Brexit. Trading Standards were working with Public Health to look at ways to mitigate the impact on local businesses
- The impact of Brexit was a particular concern in relation to the supply of insulin for diabetes patients and isotopes for cancer treatment.

On being put to the vote, the substantive motion as altered was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: “A number of jobs in the county may be at risk after BREXIT. What preparations are being made by the Council?”

Many jobs within Worcestershire may be at risk when the UK leaves the European Union, and some people believe that even more may be affected, if the departure is effected without a deal.

This Council asks for a report to Cabinet on its own

		<p>preparations to support the local economy and residents of Worcestershire throughout this challenging time, and on the mechanisms in place to co-ordinate with other organisations such as the Local Enterprise Partnership, Worcestershire Business Central, the Chamber of Commerce for Herefordshire and Worcestershire and the six District Councils.”</p>
2134	<p>Notices of Motion - Notice of Motion 4 - Employment agencies (Agenda item 8)</p>	<p>There was insufficient time to consider this motion within the allotted 90 minute time limit for the consideration of Notices of Motion.</p>
2135	<p>Notices of Motion - Notice of Motion 5 - Bewdley Fire Station (Agenda item 8)</p>	<p>There was insufficient time to consider this motion within the allotted 90 minute time limit for the consideration of Notices of Motion.</p>
2136	<p>Notices of Motion - Notice of Motion 6 - Royal Mail and Post Office Services (Agenda item 8)</p>	<p>There was insufficient time to consider this motion within the allotted 90 minute time limit for the consideration of Notices of Motion.</p>
2137	<p>Report of the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Health and Well-being (Agenda item 9)</p>	<p>The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Health and Well-being presented his report.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member then answered a broad range of questions from members.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member for his report.</p>
2138	<p>Question Time (Agenda item 10)</p>	<p>Eight questions had been received by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The answers to all the questions are attached in the Appendix.</p>
2139	<p>Reports of</p>	<p>The Chairman of the Committee introduced the report</p>

**Committees -
Audit and
Governance
Committee
(Agenda item
11)**

and commented that two years ago the Council had failed to sign off the Accounts on time. A significant amount of work had taken place since then and he was now pleased to report that the Accounts for 2018/19 (not 2017/18 as referred to in the report) had been signed off on time with an unqualified opinion by the external auditor. A number of significant outstanding issues had been addressed and he thanked members of the Committee for their contribution and congratulated the Chief Financial Officer and his team for their tireless efforts to get to this point. 40% of local authorities nationally had failed to sign off the accounts on time. It was excellent news that this Council had completed its Accounts on time.

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

The meeting was adjourned from 1.20pm to 2.00pm and ended at 2.30pm.

Chairman

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COUNCIL 12 SEPTEMBER 2019 - AGENDA ITEM 10 – QUESTION TIME

Questions and written responses provided below.

QUESTION 1 – Mr T Baker-Price will ask Lucy Hodgson:

"Could the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Communities please update this Council on the progress of the members advisory group for archives?"

Answer

Thank you for the question from Mr Baker-Price. I would take the opportunity to thank him and the other members of the Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service (WAAS) Member Advisory Group (MAG) for their continued support and insight.

The Group has now met three times and is considering a range of issues, including:

- The ability to deliver increased income targets
- Other local authority archive business models
- Existing archive operations and the ability to recover cost / charge fees to existing and new clients
- Examine the pricing / fee structure of existing arrangements and services
- Identification of potential new markets
- Identify the HR, IT and Financial support required to support increasing complex, dynamic activity associated with County Council trading services

MAG, working with relevant officers of WAAS has looked at the re-structure of the organisation after the reduction of the budget from 2019 /20 and considered the scope of activity offered by WAAS and understand the very real opportunities and challenges the service faces.

MAG have discussed and advised on proposals for increasing income from the existing archive and suggested that charging appropriate external bodies for the storage of their archives is a priority.

MAG have supported the procurement and ongoing negotiations with a marketing leading organisation looking to commercialise part of the historic archive, activity intended to greatly increase the presence of Worcestershire archives in the digital archive market on the best commercial terms. I will happily comment further once commercial negotiations have concluded. Importantly the MAG is increasingly confident that Worcestershire will be able to retain Archive Accreditation status when this is reviewed in 2019/20.

There is one issue though, I did write to Group Leaders inviting members to join the MAG. Mr Lunn is a member of the MAG but there has been no interest from the other parties. There is still work to be done and I would welcome any new members who come forward from these Groups.

QUESTION 2 – Mr P Middlebrough will ask Tony Miller:

"At Upton upon Severn Town Council meeting on 20 July, Town Council members expressed concern at the number of vehicles running their engines when stationary in the town and even when offloading material at the recycling centre in Hanley Road carpark, on the grounds that it produces unnecessary carbon emissions.

In the spirit of this council's pledge made this May, to work with partners across the county, such as town and parish councils to make Worcestershire County Council in all areas where it is directly responsible, carbon neutral by 2050, will the Cabinet Member heed these important suggestions by:

- *Introducing signs at recycling centres asking drivers to switch off their engines when offloading;*
- *Consider signage along the main streets in Upton upon Severn asking drivers to switch off their engines when stationary, as a forerunner to schemes elsewhere in the county."*

Answer

Mr Middleborough's suggestion has been discussed with our Household Recycling Centre contractors and, rather than 'clutter' the relatively small site further with additional signage which may not be heeded, the contractor has agreed to ask their staff to approach site users who leave their engines running whilst offloading their vehicle, to request that they turn their engine off. They have agreed to try this, not just at Upton, but across all of Worcestershire and Herefordshire's seventeen Household Recycling Centres. This approach will be monitored.

Regarding installing signage along main roads in Upton; as Upton upon Severn centre is a Conservation Area, street clutter from lines, signs, bollards etc. is required to be kept to an absolute minimum. Additional signage warning drivers about idling would contribute to visual street clutter, as these signs would need to be fixed to new poles in the streetscape. It is suggested instead that, as queuing traffic in Upton is often associated with events, it may be appropriate to request event management companies to place temporary signs on the highway approaches to Upton when the town is hosting events, to encourage visiting traffic not to idle when queuing to access/egress the festival sites.

It was an offence to leave a parked vehicle with the engine running and therefore they are breaking the law by doing that but that did not always stop them. He would be pleased to speak to Upton Town Council if so requested.

Supplementary question

Mr Middlebrough emphasised the importance of responding enthusiastically to requests from partner organisations such as town councils to reduce carbon emissions. He would arrange a meeting with representatives of Upton Town Council accordingly.

QUESTION 3 – Mrs F M Oborski will ask Tony Miller:

"Could the relevant Cabinet Member inform me what steps the County Council takes to ensure that all recycled materials received by WCC and the companies who receive these materials "further down the line":

- 1.treat all such products in an ecologically and environmentally appropriate manner; and*
- 2.avoid export of these products to 3rd World Countries?"*

Answer

In 2018/19 Worcestershire's residents placed more than 58,000 tonnes of paper, glass, metal and plastics in their recycling bins, which were sent to the Council's sorting facility (EnviroSort) at Norton. The treatment of recyclables separated at Norton, as with any other product, is subject to market conditions. Currently all of this material is either sent to Material Reclamation Facilities (MRFs) for further sorting or to facilities for cleaning and processing into a form that is suitable for selling on to a company to make a new product. Currently all of these facilities, directly supplied with material from EnviroSort are located within the United Kingdom (UK). Staff from the Council have visited EnviroSort, the MRFs and these other processing facilities directly supplied with material from EnviroSort, to

ensure that they have the relevant permissions and licences in place. Where materials are sent from these facilities is monitored by the Environment Agency (EA).

We audit all the materials we collect after we have followed that material to its final destination that we deal with. The material is then continued to be monitored by the EA so it is not only ourselves that monitor the path of the material we collect. I can confirm that this County Council does not send anything that we collect to any other countries, to any illegal processing plants. Unfortunately there are collection companies that do not follow and are not registered. These companies are very difficult to track down. We do have, at the moment, a case going through the courts which will be dealt with appropriately. As far as the County Council is concerned we do follow and we do track materials that we pick up and we follow that and it all goes to licenced premises where it can be dealt with in the appropriate manner. We should be responsible for what we collect but we must also tell our residents that when they have anything collected from their house that they should make that person collecting the waste is registered and the waste goes to an appropriate plant.

Supplementary question

In response to a concern about the collection of household waste by unregistered private collection companies, the Cabinet Member emphasised that the collection of waste was the responsibility of district councils. He would check whether the guidance leaflet provided to district councils for circulation to households included advice about the use of private waste operators.

QUESTION 4 – Mr A D Kent will ask John Smith:

“The MMR vaccine is a combined vaccine which prevents against Measles Mumps and Rubella diseases.

Many parents have stopped their children being vaccinated with MMR which has seen a significant and dangerous increase in mumps and measles cases in England.

Can I ask the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Health and Well-Being what steps can be taken in Worcestershire to ensure all those who have not been vaccinated receive information on how to access the vaccine and the clear benefits?”

Answer

Thank you Mr Kent for your question, to which I am pleased to respond.

Vaccination is one of the best Public Health interventions to avoid disease and to prevent harm. The MMR vaccination is as you mention a combined vaccination which is given in 2 doses - the first dose at 12-13 months, and the second dose at 3 years and 4 months as part of the universal childhood vaccination programme.

Since the introduction of the measles vaccine in 1968 it is estimated that 20 million cases and 4,500 deaths have been averted in the UK. To achieve and maintain elimination the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends aiming for 95% uptake with two doses of MMR by 5 years of age. Current UK performance for the second dose is sub-optimal at 88%.

In Worcestershire we have maintained good uptake rates for MMR vaccination well above the England average, with coverage for the first dose having increased significantly since 2012/13 and remaining stable over the last 2 years with current uptake of 97.3%. This is significantly better than the England average and is above the target of 95%. The uptake for 2 doses has increased significantly since 2012/13 and has remained stable over the last 2 years with current uptake of 92.2%. This is significantly better than England but is below the target of 95%.

Steps that can be taken

MMR vaccination is part of the standard child health immunisation programme. Parents receive direct reminders when these vaccinations are due, and it is recorded in the health visitors log book (red book). Health visitors do 5 universal visits for all children in Worcestershire and check and promote vaccination at all visits.

Anyone who has not had two MMR vaccinations can present themselves to their general practice to receive these vaccinations. This is particularly important for people travelling to Europe who have not been fully vaccinated due to a large ongoing outbreak there. It is also important for university students who may not have had their universal vaccinations due to the observed decline in vaccinations post the publication of the discredited Andrew Wakefield study in 1998.

QUESTION 5 – Mr R C Lunn will ask Alan Amos:

"Can the Cabinet Member with Responsibility explain why Gloucestershire County Council require a higher quality of tar from Ringway than we do to resurface the counties roads?"

Answer

I thank Mr Lunn for his question.

I can advise him that the use of tar has been outlawed for many years in Highway Maintenance and current maintenance processes have to manage the existing layers of previously laid tar-bound materials very carefully.

The specification of modern, mainly bitumen based, materials is governed by various design manuals and the type of site in question.

I can confirm that County Highways officers ensure that all their maintenance schemes utilise only permitted materials.

I am not aware of Gloucestershire doing anything fundamentally different to us except that, traditionally, they don't do as much surface dressing as us, which is one reason why our roads are so much better than theirs.

Supplementary question

Had the Council considered the use of alternative environmentally-friendly road surface dressing materials? The Cabinet Member responded that he would welcome and investigate any suggestions that were forthcoming.

QUESTION 6 – Mr R M Udall will ask Simon Geraghty:

"The Leader will be aware that the Ministry of Defence have commissioned five new Type 31 Frigates. Worcester has a proud tradition of supporting the Royal Navy, the first HMS Worcester was launched in 1651. Others were launched in 1698, 1735, 1769, 1843 and 1919. The last HMS Worcester was decommissioned in 1945. Will he use his influence with county members of parliament and the Ministry of Defence in order to campaign for one of the new frigates to be named HMS Worcester?"

Answer

Thank you, Richard, for your question.

I'm glad to see you are an avid follower of the Deputy Leader's twitter feed and support Adrian's suggestion that we use our influence to encourage our County MPs to lobby for

one of the new Frigates to be named after Worcester or Worcestershire. I have already followed this up with Robin Walker, MP for Worcester, and will raise it with our other County MPs later in the month. Good to hear you are fully supportive of the suggestion.

Supplementary question

In response to a query, the Leader of the Council commented that he would support the naming of a ship whether it was HMS Worcester or HMS Worcestershire. It was likely that the next fleet of ships had already been named. However, further enquiries were being made and he would make appropriate arrangements to lobby the Government to request that a ship be named accordingly in the future.

QUESTION 7 – Mrs F M Oborski will ask Simon Geraghty:

"Every Local Authority has been required to appoint a Brexit Lead. Could the Leader tell me:

- 1. The name of the County Council Brexit Lead; and*
- 2. Given that University of Birmingham estimates that 25,000 jobs in Worcestershire are at direct risk from a No Deal Brexit can the Leader tell me what advice this Council is giving to local employers whose businesses and employees may now be at risk?"*

Answer

Firstly, can I thank Fran for her question in relation to Brexit and our work with businesses to prepare. We had a good debate on this on the Notice of Motion.

Following the request from the Government to identify a lead Brexit officer, this Council has nominated Andrew Spice, our Director of Commercial & Commissioning as the lead officer to manage the authority's response to leaving the EU. There are a lot of issues that the Council was involved in, not just the civil contingency and the Resilience Forum but also in relation to the economic issues. All those issues will be brought out in the Cabinet report.

QUESTION 8 – Mr R C Lunn will ask Alan Amos:

"Does the Cabinet Member with Responsibility agree with me that an 80% yes vote by those voting on top of 50% +1 of all available houses being in favour, makes it unrealistically difficult for any road to implement a residents parking scheme? Surely the 50% plus 1 house and a simple majority of those voting should be enough? Will he recommend revising the policy?"

Answer

I thank Mr Lunn for his question.

I can advise Council that the current policy was adopted in January 2018 after full consultation with a cross-party working group of local Members. The working group considered the situation in detail and recommended a number of changes to the existing scheme, which were implemented. These included removing some qualifying criteria that featured in the old policy and which actually did prevent some requests going ahead. In particular, garages no longer count as parking spaces; and there is no longer a requirement that there should be sufficient kerbside space to accommodate at least a 0.8 space per household.

With regard to local support, the old policy required 80% of households to vote in favour of a scheme. That meant that in order for a scheme of 100 households to qualify, at least 80 had to respond, and all of those had to be in favour. The current policy retains the 80% requirement but now includes a response rate threshold so that 50% of households must

respond for the ballot to be valid. This means that a 100-household scheme would qualify as long as at least 50 households voted and 40 of those votes are favourable. That, of course, equates to only 40% of households having to be in support of a scheme for it to go ahead and I don't think that is excessive for something that will affect all households.

It is important to bear in mind that implementation of a residents' parking scheme means that residents have to obtain and pay for annual permits allowing them to park where previously they were able to do so on the highway free of charge. Consequently, there is an imperative to ensure that there is a substantial level of local support before proceeding, otherwise there is a strong risk of objections to the supporting Traffic Regulation Orders or calls for schemes to be removed post implementation, a situation that has happened in Redditch. I have heard of schemes failing to go ahead once residents realize that they will now have to pay to park, that there is no guarantee of a space, and that their visitors will also be subject to the regulations.

Ultimately, the aim of a scheme is to displace extraneous parking but no scheme can guarantee a space for all residents so they must consider all the pros and cons and vote accordingly.

Given this context, I will ask officers to keep the position under review and evaluate the impact of the current policy early in 2020, that being two years after its implementation, and consider any appropriate changes.

And could I just add one more thing. I am acutely aware of the sensitive nature of parking and the constant battle to provide enough of it, so I have reviewed the Streetscape Design Guide to require developers to provide more off-street on-site parking spaces and have significantly tightened up on HMOs and City centre developments by also requiring more off-street parking from them too. It is, therefore, more than irritating that members of other Parties opposed these measures when I introduced them so I would say that if we want more room for more parking, then you need to work with me and support my initiatives rather than going to planning committees and opposing them.

Supplementary question

The ceiling of 80% of residents voting in favour of a parking scheme was too high and should be based on a simple majority of those voting. The Cabinet Member responded that an 80% vote in favour on a 50% turnout would mean that only 40% of those voting in favour of the scheme was required. It was vital for the success of a scheme to get public support. The current scheme only required 40% of households to go out and vote in favour of it. Any less than that and you would end up with schemes voted in on a smaller minority vote which could subsequently prove unpopular.