

January 2022 update from Cllr Elissa Swinglehurst

### **IMPORTANT SPATIAL OPTIONS CONSULTATION**

I know this doesn't sound thrilling but it is important. The spatial options are the first steps to shaping the new core strategy. There is an overall need for new housing assessed at 17,000 between now and the end of the plan period (2041) – this is equivalent to 850 houses a year. The spatial options are considering where in the county these houses should go. Clearly there will be housing everywhere but the numbers are different so, for instance, should there be a greater emphasis on Hereford and the market towns? On just some of the market towns? On the rural areas? Market towns and rural areas? Or should we consider building a new town?

I strongly advise all parishes and individuals to respond to this consultation – have your say to shape the place where you live. The consultation ends on the 28<sup>th</sup> February although parish councils can arrange an extension if they are between meetings.

[Local Plan 2021 - 2041 – Herefordshire Council](#)

### **Funding for local drainage works.**

Good News for the parish lengthsman scheme. The council will be bringing forward grant funding of £250,000 in support of drainage schemes that parish councils bid for to be undertaken by the lengthsman.

Grants will be available for drainage schemes on unmetalled PROW routes, U and C class roads where works can be carried out locally by the lengthsman.

The grant is to aid parishes who have retained their lengthsman in 2020/21.

The grant is only available to parishes who have retained and self-funded their lengthman in 2020/21.

### **Nutrient Management Board**

Another packed agenda with presentations from a company with technical solutions to phosphate and an alarming presentation from Natural England on the environmental impact of ammonia and nitrogen deposition. We tend to focus so much on the phosphate that we have not really taken account of the dramatic increase in ammonia and nitrogen which will also be having an impact on the wider ecology of the catchment.

There is an increase of activity across the board with additional funding providing a more robust enforcement regime and more farm advisers. The gapping between English and Welsh regulations does make life more complicated. The board voted to ask the EA/NRW to try to resolve this by applying to the secretary of state and the Welsh Government for a catchment wide water protection zone. The vote was carried by a majority with the agencies abstaining along with most of the councils and the NFU and CLA opposed.

If you have 3 hours to spare the meeting is on You Tube.

### **Full Council**

There were two motions on notice that were debated. The first echoed the NMB decision on WPZ for the Wye and was carried unanimously – this has already produced a letter to the minister to urge for greater action. The second was about firework displays on council owned land and whether they

should be prohibited if they are not using 'silent' fireworks. I proposed a change to encourage the use of low noise rather than prohibit the use of 'normal' (partly bearing in mind the difficulty of enforcing any of this). The wording was altered and softened so that the end result was a more discretionary power with 'low noise' being the desired outcome. It is difficult to get the balance right, there are many fireworks displays that are well managed, considerate, enjoyed by all and raise funds for local and national charity – on the other hand there is a danger to animals, including livestock, that cannot be ignored. It was pointed out that there is a need for an information campaign to emphasise the existing regulations and government guidance (as well as the very serious penalties for non-compliance).

I questioned the Leader on the steps being taken by Herefordshire Council to support those households that have been dropped from the Gigaclear contract. It is great that the council is willing to fund the capital cost of interim solutions but it is also adding a frustrating delay. I have had a survey and can achieve an amazing 80mbps download, 27mgps upload but I'm still struggling with less than 2mbps waiting for the council to organise the grant. I have asked if the grant can be spent retrospectively and the leader promised to look into it. My guess is that by the time that has happened they will have released the grant anyway and those residents who, due to work, have had to install in the interim will lose out. I will keep pushing on this issue.

#### **Llanrothal Road.**

The long running saga of the hole in the road to Llanrothal has finally been concluded. Local residents will be very relieved not to have to make the long detour. In recognition of the level of inconvenience that has been caused BBLP are considering a number of requests for social value works in the area. I met with the contractors on the day that the road was reopened and hope that some good will come of this in the end.

#### **Treibble Lane U71214**

Works will be taking place under a full road closure, from Monday 14<sup>th</sup> February to (and including) Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> February. The road will be closed from 9am until 5pm each day.

#### **The Great Collaboration - Llangarron**

I'm very pleased to support the launch of the Archenfield Community Environment Group on the 26<sup>th</sup> March 2022 in Llangrove Village Hall. There will be children's activities, community conversations, an ideas area with stalls from local businesses and advisors including Herefordshire Wildlife Trust, Wye Usk Foundation, Herefordshire Green Network, Caplor Energy and many others. It's a great initiative and I am super proud that it is happening in my ward – well done everyone concerned!

Due to the budget setting at the next full council in February I will do a short update to this report in a couple of weeks.