

Report of Cllr Elissa Swinglehurst

Representing Bridstow, Peterstow, Marstow, Sellack, Llangarron and Welsh Newton/Llanrothal

July 2024

The Election

The calling of a general election means that although the council continues with 'business as usual' there can be a hiatus in the engagement of government organisations or any activity that can be seen as political within the operations of the council. Consequently certain meetings had to be rescheduled for the post election period. The election has not impacted the political composition of the council.

The newly elected Labour government has signalled a clear intention to reform planning in order to deliver the 1.5m houses they are promising to build. The Chancellor Rachel Reeves set out the government's intentions in a speech on 8 July. She said her intention was "to agree the urgent action needed to fix our planning system" and to set out changes to the National Planning Policy Framework by the end of July 2024 which will have a direct impact on the shape of Local Plans going forward.

Since the emerging Herefordshire local plan has just passed reg 18 this may mean that we have to go back and incorporate significant changes but we won't know until the detail is published.

I would like to congratulate both of our MPs, Ellie Chowns (Green. North Herefordshire) and Jesse Norman (Conservative. Hereford and South Herefordshire), on winning their seats and look forward to working with them both to deliver the best for Herefordshire.

Parish Summit

This month saw the first of a new series of parish summits for parish councillors to come along and speak with the council officers and cabinet members. It was well attended with 90 delegates from parish councils in the meeting. A Market place of Council services had been setup in the atrium where those present could talk with Council officers on the many stands displaying what the Council offers to Herefordshire residents. This was followed by presentations by the Leader and Cabinet colleagues and the Chief Executive on the Council Plan 24-28 and delivery plan for this current year. Followed by a presentation on the Public Realm contract.

The principle items on the agenda were the council plan (our strategic overview) and the delivery plan. I think of these two plans as 'where we are going' and 'how we are going to get there'. Without doubt the delivery plan is ambitious but that is deliberate. We are not afraid of coming up short if we know we have stretched our limits.

The Four year Council plan is based on "Delivering the best for Herefordshire in everything we do" with 4 themes People, Place, Growth and Transformation. To read the policies follow this link to the Council website [About Herefordshire Council – Herefordshire Council](#)

The delivery plan looks at what the Council will achieve this financial year with quarterly reporting on how each project is delivering. This is an ambitious and long list of services with a clear intent to achieve actions as set out. To view our intentions click the following link

[Herefordshire Council Delivery Plan 2024/25](#)

There will be delivery plans each year for the duration of the Council Plan.

Judging from the feedback I have received from the parishes that attended this was a good effort and appreciated by them. There will be ways in which we can refine and improve the summits and I would be more than happy to pass any detailed comments on to the leader. I am very grateful to those parish councillors who gave up their precious time to attend on behalf of their parishes and I hope that the event was useful.

Public Realm Contract

As I have mentioned before the Public Realm contract that Balfour Beattie Living Places operates as the contractor has been terminated to cease on 31st May 2026.

We are defining the Future operating model as below for the new contract and then go through procurement of new contractor.

Contracted Services

The contractor will deliver these “core services” under a new contract from 1 June 2026:

- Network resilience & civil emergencies services
- Winter service
- Reactive maintenance (potholes & patching)
- Carriageway & footway maintenance programmes
- Drainage (gully cleansing & land drainage)
- Street lighting
- Structures (maintenance of bridges and culverts)
- Street cleaning (bin emptying, fly tipping & road sweeping)
- Fleet management and mechanical workshop (TBC)
- Parks and open spaces (highways verges and trees)
- Cemeteries & burials (TBC)
- Projects up to £100K **may** be delivered in the contract
-

The new contract will:

- Focus performance on the core services
- Resolve historic service & operational challenges
- Larger projects will be delivered from the council’s framework
- Focus on council’s current requirement and future priorities

Council Services

Council services will be restructured to include the following technical services from BBLP

- Asset Management Team
- Network Management
- Locality Stewards (incl Highway Inspections)
- Design / Project Management / Quantity Surveying (part)
- Customer Services (enquiries and complaints)
- Communications Lead (communications management including social media)
- Fleet (part)
- Health & Safety / CDM (part)

This will enhance the council’s:

- Capacity
- Resilience

- Technical knowledge and expertise
- Ability to manage the contractor
- Assurance over works (check & challenge)

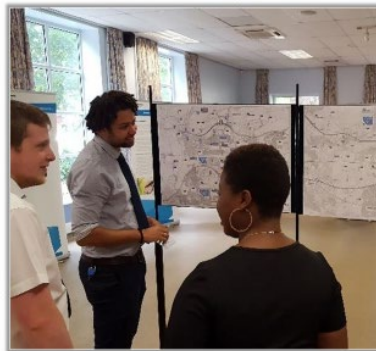
Works in the area.

Hopefully you will have noticed road works both planned and current in the area. This will necessitate some inconvenience but – as we all know – it is work that needs to be done!

A40 I have been attending a series of meetings on the landslip at Leys Bend. There will be a series of public information events to help keep everyone informed as the work progresses.

Public information events

Council Chamber, Shire Hall	25 July 2024	11am to 7pm
Council Chamber, Shire Hall	26 July 2024	10am to 4pm
Monnow Bridge, Monnow Street	27 July 2024	10am to 2pm



Here is the proposed timetable

Construction programme

Installation of traffic management and construction of contraflow crossover points	September 2024
Installation of traffic management into contraflow on the westbound carriageway	October 2024
Removal of the rockfall debris and surveying to enable the design of the required remediation.	November/December 2024
Traffic management installed to return to two lanes westbound and one lane eastbound while detailed design for the permanent solution takes place.	December 2024
Construction of remediation works.	2025



And here are the proposed diversion routes – this will not prevent local rat running which is likely to impact Llangarron, Llangrove and Welsh Newton.

Diversion routes

- Notice of any closures will be provided on our website, by post and on social media.
- No daytime closures planned. Diversion routes will only be used overnight.
- All HGV and long-distance traffic diverted via the M5 and M4.
- Local traffic diverted on A465 and A49.



There is the opportunity for local parish councils (Marstow in particular) to apply for a social value project as part of the delivery of the scheme. This might be something to enhance the environment, community wellbeing, equality and inclusion. We don't know the scale of the project at the moment so my advice is to think about schemes for all sizes – small, medium and large – and I will put them forward to see if we can get any support.

For parishes further afield from the rockfall – National Highways have a social value policy [social value plan](#). and there may well be opportunities to ask them for help with projects that align with their priorities. I have already asked for improvements to the bus stop opposite Everstone Rise and am hopeful that this will be achievable.

As ever, if you have any issues that you need to raise with me or if I can help in anyway please get in touch.

Elissa.swinglehurst@herefordshire.gov.uk