

**1. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR ROLLINS TO COUNCILLOR BLAMIRE**

In view of the proposed programme of railway electrification in the North West what efforts have been made by the Council to have the short stretch of track between the West Coast Main Line and Morecambe included in the programme?

Councillor Blamire replied that the County Council was the Local Transport Authority for the area and would be expected to respond as the principal consultee on this issue.

The City Council had not, as yet, responded to the consultation but would remind the County Council that one of the impediments to improving connectivity between Lancaster and Morecambe, highlighted in the Faber Maunsell study commissioned by the County Council, was the poor frequency of the rail service between the two towns.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Rollins asked whether a working group could be established to look at this issue.

Councillor Blamire responded that she would discuss that possibility with the Head of Regeneration and Policy, although she could not guarantee that a working group would be established.

**2. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR COATES TO COUNCILLOR HANSON**

Can the Cabinet member explain the reason for the proposed removal of a mature tree in Market Square in Lancaster?

In the absence of Councillor Coates, Councillor Hanson supplied the following written answer:

The 2010-2011 Corporate Plan identifies Square Routes under the Economic Regeneration Priority. A first phase of improvements for Market Square is being readied for implementation this autumn. It is in work in the last few months to prepare detailed works specifications that an issue arose of how to implement the project design for Market Square prepared after much consultation and previously approved by Cabinet and adhere in full to the requirement set to retain all the trees. The issue being that it is not possible to provide sufficient clearance between the works site and one tree (tree D by the entrance to Marketgate) to enable service and other vehicles to still travel up Market Street.

The report to Cabinet presented a range of options to members and officers briefed very fully at the meeting. Options included for both retaining the tree D and removing it. The option to retain tree D had disadvantages that would compromise and restrict how Market Square could be used for different uses. It would mean that the re-design of the square was less accommodating and beneficial for the outdoor market than it should be, was restricting for the staging of events and less advantageous for general pedestrian circulation and enjoyment than sought. After due consideration, Cabinet authorised officers to implement the first phase works in Market Square and that Tree D be removed and a replacement planted following the completion of the works. Cabinet also decided that maintenance be continued to raise the crown of trees. It should be noted that Cabinet declined to remove one further tree (tree H) at

this stage regards which officers took the opportunity in the reporting to raise some issues.

Subject to the outcome of tender processes works should commence in October and complete and give benefits in time for the Christmas period. Given the general economic situation this period is especially critical this year.