

Minutes of Meeting of LDF Task Group
19th July 2007

Group Members Present:

Cllr. J. Jarvis (Chairman) – Cabinet Member, Environment & Strategic Housing
Brian Atherton (Vice Chairman) – Herefordshire Partnership
Cllr Brian Wilcox – Cabinet Member, Highways & Transportation
Cllr Adrian Blackshaw – Cabinet Member, Economic Development & Community Services
Mark July – Herefordshire Partnership.
W. Coombey – Herefordshire Partnership

Officers Present:

D. Nicholson – Forward Planning
K. Singleton – Forward Planning
T. Watton – Forward Planning
P. Lydford – Herefordshire Partnership

1. It was explained that the group were meeting to continue the discussions started at the previous meeting on the 25th June. He introduced the Core Strategy key issues and the key issues document and explained that examples set out in the table distributed to members were only included to promote debate and should not be considered to be finalised.

2. Prior to the discussion of the issues in detail all present were asked if there were any general concerns before starting? There was some concern that the key issues document comes across more as a wish list than policies. And that the list should be shortened to about a list of 6 not 14 as some should be consolidated. Other concerns related to the use of single word issues which needed rephrasing / explaining. The response to the concerns was that these matters would be addressed as part of the next stage in the process – how to address the issues and look to 2026. The meeting then began to address each of the 14 suggested issues in turn following a short introduction by Officers on each issue.

3. Climate Change

There was debate around the topics that should be considered within the scope of the climate change issue as it was so cross cutting and impinged on most if not all of the other issues. For example it was suggested that the issue of flooding should be included within climate change rather than water and that the plan needed holistic and integrative statement dealing with climate proofing, implementing the Council's strategies and carbon emission offsetting.

4. An Ageing Population and the Loss of Young People

It was considered that employment is a key issue to young people leaving. Culture and leisure essential but employment key. The point was also made that the further people go the less likely they are to return – Herefordshire loses 450 young people per year. Holistic approach is needed not just employment. A way of addressing the issue was through live-work properties which would encourage entrepreneurs to start businesses in Herefordshire. It was also indicated that demographic change is unstoppable but the skills and experience of the older generation could be harnessed, for example the voluntary sector at the moment relies on the older

generation. It was acknowledged that the older population provides significant services for example in childcare.

Considered that there was a need to entice the age group 40 – 55 who want a work – life balance. There were 360 sports clubs in Herefordshire who have a lot to offer. There was a need to consider people who live, worked and have grown old here – not just active people. Important relationship with Health Services – changing demographics will affect type of healthcare needed. It was noted that 1 in 4 people above 85 has dementia. Consider sustainability of rural communities – keep the ageing population in communities not homes.

5. Learning & Skills

There was a thought that this issue was less about Higher Education facilities and more about skills. Should be encouragement for more vocational work and harnessing home grown skills. Looking at alternatives to university. This should be an area for investment and bold ambitions. Also considered that we need to further exploit areas of niche areas of education e.g. farriery and engineering. There should be encouragement of courses like Sustainable Land Management at Holme Lacy and make it a Centre of Excellence. Indication we have a lack of traditional skills yet a huge stockpile of materials.

Thought that people will commute for employment and that we may need to recruit outside county. Indication that such issues were repeated outside county – people commute from Worcester to Birmingham for work. Considered there was a need to encourage tourism and agriculture and then look at education in these areas. There was an ongoing requirement for retraining and upskilling the workforce – will current skills still be relevant in 20 years?

6. Housing Provision

Need to provide right houses for Herefordshire's population. Affordable Housing experiencing problems due to nimbysism. Infrastructure needs to be in place e.g. water, transport, health service etc before we can accept housing growth. Needs to be a document explaining the entire infrastructure for new development – not just roads. Vision needs to be bolder – make a development commitment. Where people work should affect where houses go – live-work units or houses near to where people work should be promoted. Thought that there was a need to consider design of houses. Pressure is increasing to build more houses and Herefordshire's assets could be destroyed. Cross border issues are important – We can't ignore bordering counties.

7. Air Quality

Edgar Street and Leominster Bargates areas were identified as specific areas of concern. Transport measure such as Park & Ride and outer distributor road needed to be considered. There were wider implications of this issue as air quality affects natural environment. Emphasised the links to the work on the Local Transport Plan.

8. Waste

Increased housing will obviously result in an increase in waste – part of the issue is how do we deal with this increase? It was recognised that there will be a need to look at waste to energy initiatives and possibility of taking other peoples waste. Also

there should be attempts to attract businesses who use waste as their raw materials and we should prevent waste from being produced.

9. Water

This issue includes supply, quality and flooding. Can we create new flood zones? Sustainable water usage is integral issue and management of flood plains is essential. The point was made that links to mains water suppliers essential – new houses must be on the mains.

10. Environmental Assets

All designated sites need to meet the objectives of their designation. Land management is important. Need for sustainable ways of nurturing land rather than a constant drip feed from Government. Tourism rather than farming may be important. Built environment should be seen as environmental assets. Include word Heritage in this issue rather than with tourism.

11. Access to Services and Facilities

Need to minimise the need to travel in to the city from rural areas. Improve rural services. Better use could be made of existing buildings – encourage development of dual / multi use sites e.g. community centres, schools, play areas etc. Study needed of alternates to road transport. Links with surrounding areas and authorities should not be forgotten e.g. Wales to help develop A49 as goes through Hereford. Parish Plans need to be considered and communities consulted. The autumn consultation exercise will consult with parishes.

12. Regeneration of Herefordshire

Need to look at Market Towns not only Hereford and have an entire County approach. Ensure ESG is not a detriment to Market Towns. Need to define role and function for future of rural towns. Also need for versatility e.g. livestock market. Demise of high street will mean diversity and viability of retailing is important. Livestock market could be dual use site e.g. by including a conference centre or making it a centre of excellence for food and drink.

13. Sport and Recreation

It was reported that we have beaten Birmingham for the blind world football championships. There are big assets we need to encourage and grow health is an obvious link. Need to use existing resources better and encourage dual / multi use facilities. It was suggested that users should be contributing with a modest levy to upkeep of facilities.

14. Transportation and Accessibility

Need to dovetail the Core Strategy with the Local Transport Plan. Indication that need to tackle root causes of peak time traffic – causes not effects. Also thought that there was a need to include voluntary and community transport.

15. Local Economy

Diversifying is key. A holistic approach is required. There is a need to build on skills, facilities and specialisms within County. Build on strengths of County and foster

business support. Impact of fuel prices. Need for groups of landowners diversifying with a joint vision.

16. Tourism and Culture

Feeling that there was a need to increase bed stay within County rather than people visiting yet staying in bordering counties – tourists don't understand boundaries. Need for clearer and better signage. Need economic payback from environmental assets for maintenance and upkeep of assets. Needs are unmet for protection of heritage.

Get tourists young so that they return to the County. Lack of facilities large enough to hold events / courses where bed space on site. The County is losing out economically as large events have to go out of the County. Exploit as well as promote. Use environmental assets for tourism e.g. outdoor activities.

Next Meeting: Wednesday 12th December 2007, 9am – 1pm, Three Counties Hotel