
Local Development Framework – Shaping Our Place 2026

Minutes of Task Group Meeting

11th May 2009

The Kindle Centre, Hereford

Attendees:

Councillor J Jarvis (Chair): Cabinet Member for Environment and Strategic Housing

Councillor B Wilcox: Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation

Councillor A Blackshaw: Cabinet Member for Economic Development

Wendy Coombey: Herefordshire Community Partnership

Mark July: Herefordshire Environmental Partnership

Jane Jones: Herefordshire Partnership

Officers present:

Andrew Ashcroft: Head of Planning and Transportation

Peter Yates: Planning Policy Manager

Kevin Singleton: Team Leader - Strategic Planning

Chris Botwright: Team Leader - Local Planning

Samantha Banks: Senior Planning Officer

Jane Reeves: Senior Planning Officer

Emma Lawrence: LDF Community Involvement Officer

Guests:

John Staniland: Acting Director of Environment and Planning, Redditch Borough Council

Ruth Bamford: Acting Head of Planning and Building Control, Redditch Borough Council

Councillor C Macmillan, Local Environment Planning and Transport Portfolio Holder, Redditch Borough Council

Louise Brockett: Planning Assistant, Redditch Borough Council

Clare Bridges: IdeA

Apologies: Gary Woodman, Chamber of Commerce

1. Introductions

1.1 Councillor Jarvis welcomed guests to the group.

2. Notes of Last Meeting

2.1 Were agreed with one correction – paragraph 3.5 to be deleted. Matters arising were covered in the main agenda below. It was agreed to continue the practice of publishing the minutes on the Council's website.

3. Core Strategy

3a Spatial Strategy

3.1 This paper explained the basis of the preferred spatial strategy chosen for the Core Strategy. It explained the four options A-D that were considered in the Developing Options Paper and how they had been assessed to date. The assessment was based on a consideration of national and regional guidance, the outcomes of public engagement, the findings of the Sustainability Appraisal and the Habitat Regulations Assessment and the findings of the

emerging evidence base. A preferred option based on a combination of Options A, B and C was discussed. A preferred strategy was set out for Hereford, the market towns and the rural areas. This involved an amended settlement hierarchy (amended from the approach taken by the UDP). This was explained further in the paper on Settlement Hierarchy (see below).

- 3.2 There was some debate over rural employment patterns and concerns expressed that this needed to be reflected in the strategy. . The view was also expressed that villages must be allowed to grow “organically” where possible in order to support rural services and maintain vitality in communities. However, it was accepted that maintaining settlement boundaries will be appropriate in some cases
- 3.3 The debate moved on to issues affecting the Market Towns, in particular the types of employment and the “Economic footprint” of the market towns, with specific reference to Ross and Ledbury. The role of Live/work units was discussed as appropriate to Market Towns and rural areas generally. It was considered more development should be distributed to Ross to acknowledge its location near the M50/A40 and the employment allocation at Model Farm.
- 3.4 The rationale behind rejecting Option D (from the Developing Options paper) It was reported that the Sustainability Appraisal of the Developing Options stage had favoured B and C over A. . It was explained that more background work was needed to justify the overall approach, with more explanation of the three options individually, and that the Sustainability Appraisal should influence the final choices. It was commented that a Sustainability Appraisal was programmed in for feeding in and informing the overall strategy once the options were fully developed..
- 3.5 Difficulties encountered with Welsh Water were noted: their lack of co-operation and late comment to the effect that there is not enough spare capacity for water treatment for around 5,500 of the total of 8,300 houses for Hereford. This issue remains unresolved. Their lack of co-operation was also holding up the water cycle study. Mark July offered to help with supplying contacts for Welsh Water. An issue regarding the late availability of different aspects of the evidence base was mentioned and the risk that held in meeting the Place Shaping consultation in the summer.

3b Settlement Hierarchy

- 3.6 The proposed new Settlement Hierarchy and “Points scoring” scheme was explained, and the relative roles of Rural Service Centre as opposed to Main Villages. The role of Parish Plans was discussed and how they could inform the Core Strategy. Concern was expressed that the Green Infrastructure Strategy (GIS) should be used to inform the process. It was noted that the GIS was not yet finalised. It was also suggested that AONB designation should not be seen as a total block on development. Development could take place within AONBs provided that it was consistent with the relevant AONB management plan.
- 3.7 Concern was expressed that the introduction of a fourth tier into the hierarchy may be adding complication to the original UDP categorisation without adding any value. Is a strict settlement hierarchy needed, and are settlement boundaries themselves too inflexible? The issue of having and not having settlement boundaries was discussed briefly and it was suggested that they were a useful planning tool for development control purposes. The debate went on to cover the importance of understanding transport links and ensuring that the planning policies sit comfortably with highways policies. The meeting was reminded that the purpose of this paper is to establish a settlement hierarchy in principle rather than define any sites or boundaries.
- 3.8 The links between sustainable growth of villages and the continuation of service provision and rural regeneration was also discussed, along with the concept of the “Organic growth” of

villages including local, small scale employment opportunities of types suitable to rural areas. Herefordshire should be seen as an “Aspirational County” in this regard.

3c Place Shaping Options

- 3.9 A paper was introduced to explain how the spatial strategy will impact on the places within Herefordshire and to provide a guide to the work carried out so far on developing place shaping options.
- 3.10 It was explained that the Place Shaping Paper would include not only the place based options for the Core Strategy but also the issues stages of the Hereford Area Plan and the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan.
- 3.10 The definition of a strategic site for the purposes of the Core Strategy was outlined as 500 new homes in Hereford and 100 new homes in the market towns. An explanation was also given of how the amount of new homes required on strategic sites had been arrived at from the overall strategic distribution figures.
- 3.12 It was highlighted that at this stage due to final reports of the evidence base not being available, the drafted options did not include employment, retail, green infrastructure or other services and facilities. Options were therefore subject to change and additional options appear prior to the public consultation.
- 3.13 Four options were proposed for Hereford and have been use for purposes of testing the Multi Modal Model – this should result in a technical preference for one of the options for Hereford:
1. Distributions with no Outer Distributor Road (ODR),
 2. North south focus with an eastern ODR,
 3. North west focus with a western ODR and
 4. South west focus with a western ODR.
- It was highlighted that all the options above would include ESG proposals, 1000 new homes at the urban village and university facilities.
- 3.14 The choice of sites for testing in the Model were explained, The “Northern Loop” of the ODR on some of the diagrams was questioned – albeit the diagrams shown were not policy statements, merely a range of possibilities for testing in the Multi Modal Model.
- 3.15 Similar diagrams and potential options were shown for each of the Market Towns. No strategic housing sites were proposed for Kington at this stage as no sites exist in the current SHLAA with a capacity of over 100 homes.
- 3.16 For the rural areas, it was highlighted that the intention at this stage was for the Core Strategy to give a list of Rural Service Centres and larger villages and give a global figure for the distribution of new homes within each category. It was also indicated that employment and retail issues will be dealt with either within the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan or by a general policy within the Core Strategy.

3d General Policy Directions

- 3.17 The likely other areas of policy content were discussed briefly. It was highlighted that the Place Shaping Paper would only include policy directions rather than the full policy wording. Internal and external groups with technical knowledge of the subjects would be set up to assist in policy formulation. There was a discussion over the need to involve Members and the involvement of the LSP.
- 3.18 The draft timetable was noted.

3e Consultation Arrangements

3.19 The current proposals were explained and noted.

4 Vision and Objectives Paper – results of consultation

4.1 The results of consultations were noted. The latest version is a “Best fit” with the comments made but it was not possible to satisfy everyone. The final version had yet to be considered by Planning Committee and Cabinet.

5 Update on Climate Change Background Paper

5.1 Current progress was noted. The intention was that this would lead to a specific planning policy theme but would not form the climate change policy for the whole Council.

6. Update on evidence base

6.1 A report on the current position with the various evidence studies in preparation was given. The SHLAA was of particular interest. It was hoped to get the SHLAA for Hereford and the Market Towns published on the Council's website before the consultation in the Summer. The Evidence Base “Tracker Sheet” is to be circulated to Task Group members.

7. Update on Regional Spatial Strategy

7.1 The current position with the Examination In Public of the RSS Phase 2 proposals, and the imminent publication of RSS Phase 3 Options was noted.

8. Update on Local Development Scheme

8.1 It was noted that this was signed off by GOWM and is now on the Council's website.

9 UDP saved Policies

9.1 The meeting was reminded that an item on this was going to Planning Committee on 15th May and would subsequently be reported to Cabinet for comment in June and full Council in Jul for decision. The proposed list of policies to be saved would then need to be submitted to the GOWM before September for consideration by the Secretary of State.

10 Any Other Business

10.1 It was agreed that there was no objection within the Task Group to inviting representatives of the other political Groups on the Council to join the Task Group.

10.2 The recommendations of the report “Living Working Countryside” by Matthew Taylor MP (July 2008) were circulated for information.

10.3 The next meeting of this group was **provisionally** agreed for **20th October 2009 at 2.00 pm at the Bishop's Palace.**

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