
Local Development Framework – Shaping Our Place 2026

Minutes of Task Group Meeting

14th September 2009

Bishop's Palace, 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

Councillor R Matthews, Chair of the Environment Scrutiny Committee

Councillor P Edwards, Independent Member

Herefordshire Partnership

G Woodman

P Lydford

Officers present:

A Ashcroft: Head of Planning and Transportation

P J Yates: Planning Policy Manager

K Singleton: Team Leader Strategic Planning

C Botwright: Team leader Local Planning

S Banks: Senior Planning Officer

J Reeves: Senior Planning Officer

S Burgess: Transportation Manager

B Watts: Transportation Officer

Guests:

M. Prothero: student

Apologies: Mark July, Wendy Coombey – both representing Herefordshire Partnership,
Councillor P Andrews

1. Introductions

1.1 Councillor Jarvis welcomed new members and the guest to the group

2. Notes of the Last Meeting

2.1 Were agreed with one correction – paragraph 3.8 to be expanded in respect of the potential for “organic growth” of villages. 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, although they should be approved in draft by the Chairman and, subject to a brief confirmation with attendees, be uploaded to the website as soon as practicable rather than waiting for the next meeting.

3. Revised Terms of Reference

3.1 These had been circulated in advance. The final bullet point needed to be amended to reflect the new proposals for dealing with the minutes.

3.2 The question of the representation of the Herefordshire Partnership was raised because the structure of the Partnership has been revised such that there were now no longer any

individual members of the Board on the LDF Task Group. It was suggested that the Board confirm its representatives on the Task Group at the next Board Meeting on 19th October.

4. Proposed Place Shaping Paper

4.1 Timetable

4.1.1 A new timetable was circulated based on the revisions made following the last Task Group Meeting. The new timetable envisages approval of the "Place Shaping Paper" consultation at Cabinet on 26th November to enable the final round of public consultation to take place in January, February and March 2010, with a view to further analysis of results, testing of proposals through Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Appraisal, leading to the proposed submission copy of the Core Strategy being considered by full Council in September/October 2010 prior to submission to GO-WM. This still retains the prospect of adoption in 2011.

4.1.2 The principal reasons for the revision to the timetable were related to the various studies under way and the lateness of key elements of the evidence base. In particular the "Water infrastructure" evidence was delayed pending publication of plans and assessments by the Environment Agency and Welsh Water and the Multi Modal Model had been delayed.

4.1.3 Officers had recently met officials of the Government Office for the West Midlands who had expressed concern at the delay by comparison with the timetable set out in the Local Development Scheme. Further communication with GO-WM will be required and any further delay will be regarded as a serious matter. The Government is particularly concerned to ensure that Hereford's status as a Growth Point is not jeopardised by the revised timetable and, consequently, the Government is taking a keen interest in progress.

4.1.4 The new timetable was accepted.

4.2 Preferred Spatial Strategy

4.2.1 The proposed Preferred Strategy was to be based on a combination of Options A, B and C from the Developing Options Paper of 2008. The fourth option, Option D – a new settlement – had not been supported to any significant degree and was not compatible with the emerging RSS policies.

4.2.2 The overall distribution of strategic housing numbers was set out for Hereford, the Market Towns and the "Lower tier" of Settlements including Rural Service Centres and Hubs. Below that tier there may be Local Service Centres for limited development but elsewhere other typical rural development policies would apply.

4.2.3 The overall purpose of the strategy was described in the following terms:

- more affordable and better mix of new homes
- conservation/enhancement of environmental assets
- regeneration of Hereford and our market towns
- tackling congestion in Hereford and pollution problems in Leominster
- reducing CO₂ emissions across the County
- diversifying employment
- promoting rural employment opportunities
- improving accessibility to services
- supporting rural communities

4.2.4 Outside the market Towns the Rural Settlement Hierarchy had yet to be finalised (following the consultation with Parish Councils in June, July and August) but the overall methodology had received broad support.

- 4.2.5 The specific targets for *strategic sites* was set out based upon the RSS Strategy, i.e. a total of 16,600 houses for the County for the period 2006 to 2026, with half of them going to Hereford itself. After allowing for completions and commitments as of April 2009) that left around 5,250 houses to be allocated to strategic sites around Hereford. (The definition of “Strategic” in this context was explained). A further allocation of 5,200 was targeted at the Market Towns (of which 3,250 would be on strategic sites) with a further 3,200 for other rural areas. This was based on the need to provide for the Market Towns in particular to support their rural hinterlands. It was also noted that the revised RSS figures may well provide a further 1,200 houses – but this would not be known until the Inspectors’ report into the RSS Phase 2 Examination in Public was published (expected before the end of September).
- 4.2.6 In order to achieve these overall targets it was noted that land with significant landscape and environmental constraints would be required to be developed in Bromyard, Ledbury and Ross, and that much of this development would have to be on Greenfield sites (owing to the shortage of suitable brownfield sites remaining).
- 4.2.7 Members of the Task Group sought confirmation of various points including:
- the extent to which community needs had been considered
 - the size of the proposed allocation to Ross
 - the reasons for Leominster to have a significantly larger allocation than the other market towns – and the potential benefit a Southern Bypass could bring especially with regard to the AQMA in the Bargates locality. (Leominster is significantly less constrained environmentally than other Market Towns although for landscape purposes it would be important to avoid development in the Cockcroft Hill area)
 - the role of smaller sites, such as Barn Conversions, and how they would be monitored through the SHLAA process
 - The use of Growth Point money to bring forward relevant studies
 - The desirability of developing Ross and Ledbury in particular for economic development purposes
 - The delivery of Affordable Housing – including consideration of thresholds (which might be different in different parts of the County), viability and deliverability issues.
- 4.2.8 Options which had been rejected at this stage were explained – it was felt that they might be better presented as “Not preferred” rather than outright “Rejected”.
- 4.2.9 The basis for Affordable Housing options was set out along with the possibility of revised thresholds and different targets in different areas – the evidence base for this was currently being researched through a viability study which was due to report in October.
- 4.2.10 The basis for the employment and retail strategies was set out with the headline target figures.
- 4.2.11 There was a discussion on the infrastructure provided especially with regard to the Outer Distributor Road. The meeting was advised of the headline conclusions of the recent Multi Modal Model (which is awaiting clearance from the Highways Agency before being uploaded onto the LDF website): in essence the addition of the intended Growth Point and RSS housing, employment and retail allocations are of such a scale that an Outer Distributor Road will be required in order to manage congestion back down to today’s levels. However, this requires much more than simple road building – it needs to be accompanied by a full package of sustainable transport choices – and whilst the Multi Modal study showed a preference for the Eastern alignment of the ODR, the Western alignment could “work” in traffic terms too. In consequence the Place shaping Consultation in January would proceed on the basis that the “No road” option can be rejected as not practicable, but there is still a choice to be made between east and west.

- 4.2.12 Other infrastructure issues were raised in particular water infrastructure, which could limit development potential in Hereford (water supply and treatment) Ross (water supply) and Bromyard (water treatment) and Green Infrastructure – particularly the need for a Country Park or similar to serve Hereford.
- 4.2.13 Finally, in terms of the overarching strategy, mention was made of the importance of the Sustainability Appraisal and the legal significance of the Habitats Regulations Assessment. In this latter case there is some difficulty at this stage due to the delayed publication of the “Review of Consents” by the Environment Agency as this may well highlight particular environmental constraints especially with regard to the River Wye. The “Review of Consents” was not expected to be made public until March 2010 at the earliest.

4.3 Proposed Place Shaping options.

- 4.3.1 A presentation was given to explain how the spatial strategy will affect Hereford, the market towns and the rural areas in a set of Place Shaping Options. A number of options were highlighted for each place.
- 4.3.2 Hereford – The possible strategic locations identified within SHLAA were highlighted and how these could be presented into 3 possible options including an ODR and employment land. A discussion followed regarding how the ODR should be represented on the option maps.
- 4.3.3 Market Towns – The possible options for Leominster, Bromyard, Ledbury and Ross were discussed. It was pointed out that in some towns had decisions would have to be made regarding the location of growth as there were a number of constraints in many areas. It was highlighted that that would not be a strategic site in Kington, its housing requirements would be allocated within the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan at a later date.
- 4.3.4 Rural Areas – It was highlighted that there would be no strategic sites in the rural areas within the Core Strategy. A global figure would be contained and the settlement hierarchy would indicate where housing would be targeted, but any allocations would be made in the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan.

4.4 General Policy Directions Overview

- 4.4.1 It was explained that this section of the Place Shaping Paper will contain a number of general policy directions. These were not discussed at the meeting but would be sent to the Task Group for comment following the meeting. The Group was reminded that the full policy wording would not appear until the pre-submission document.

4.5 Consultation Arrangements

- 4.5.1 The Place Shaping Paper consultation arrangements were highlighted including launch event, roadshows and various ways of targeting younger people. The consultation is also anticipated to form the first stage of consultation on the two allocations DPDs for Hereford and for the Market Towns and Rural Areas. The Group highlighted the importance of involving Members and Parish Councils in any arrangements and the publicity of them.

5 Community Infrastructure Levy and the need for Implementation Planning

- 5.1 The meeting received a brief update on the current consultation on the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which the Government intends to bring into operation through the publication of new regulations in April 2010. That is likely to be accompanied by a two year transition period after which the Council’s current SPD for Planning Obligations could no longer be used. The CIL as currently proposed would be based on a charge per square metre of new building – which would not be directly related to the infrastructure needed for

that particular project and thus would be very different from the current system of Section 106 agreements. It was noted that Herefordshire Council had yet to take a position on whether it intended to make use of the CIL provisions.

- 5.2 Related to the infrastructure issue is the need for a formal process of Infrastructure Planning. There was not time to discuss this in detail.

6. Update on Regional Spatial Strategy

- 6.1 A briefing note had been circulated – in summary the Inspector's report into the Phase 2 revision was expected by the end of September, and the Phase 3 policies are now expected to be subsumed within work for the new Single Regional Strategy (work will start on this during 2010).

7 UDP saved Policies

- 7.1 The meeting was reminded that the list of policies had been submitted to the GOWM before September for consideration by the Secretary of State. A decision was not expected until the New Year.

8 Refresh of the Sustainable Community Strategy

- 8.1 The meeting was advised of the key dates with regard to the refresh of the Sustainable Community Strategy, and the importance of its relationship to the Local Development Framework.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of this group was provisionally agreed for Monday **2nd November 2009 at 2.00 pm at a venue to be agreed**

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15 September 2009
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