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## Local Development Framework – Shaping Our Place 2026

### Minutes of Task Group Meeting

28<sup>th</sup> July 2010

TSG Building, Plough Lane, Hereford

#### Attendees:

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

Councillor B Wilcox: Cabinet Member for Transportation

Councillor R Matthews, Chair of the Environment Scrutiny Committee

Councillor P Andrews

#### Herefordshire Partnership

M July: Deputy Chair, Herefordshire Environmental Partnership

P Lydford: Partnership Officer

C Gooding: Community Led Planning Co-ordinating and Commissioning Officer

#### Officers present:

A Ashcroft: Head of Planning and Transportation

P J Yates: Planning Policy Manager

J Reeves: Senior Planning Officer

V Eaton: Senior Planning Officer

S Riddle: Senior Planning Officer

G Dyke: Senior Planning Officer

B Watts: Senior Transportation Planning Officer

**Apologies:** Councillors Blackshaw and Edwards

#### 1. Introductions

- 1.1 Councillor Jarvis welcomed those present to the meeting and noted apologies. The group expressed its condolences to Councillor Edwards.

#### 2. Notes of the Last Meeting

- 2.1 Were agreed. Various updates were discussed including the now approved and revised Local Development Scheme. Other items are covered in the notes below.

#### 3. Revocation of the Regional Strategy (formerly Regional Spatial Strategy)

- 3.1 The revocation of the regional level policies had removed the legal requirement for compliance with the policies – but it was noted that it had not reduced the quality of the evidence behind it, for example the evidence of housing need. The overall housing targets can still be justified (especially as they were tested at the RSS Examination in Public last year). Furthermore, the Council resolution of 13<sup>th</sup> November 2009 had effectively re-affirmed the overall policy direction at a strategic level. The Council does, however, have wider discrimination over the detailed distribution of new housing in the County.
- 3.2 The revocation of regional policies also meant that more policies now need to be “Written down” into the Core Strategy otherwise key policy principles will be lost. Separate work was going on anyway in certain topic areas which had been covered by regional policies including renewable energy and affordable housing.

#### **4 Reports back on analysis of Place Shaping Paper Response.**

- 4.1 The meeting received two detailed reports which has been prepared by the Research Team and which summarised the “Free-write responses” respectively. A number of issues arose, in particular, the uneven age-distribution of respondents notwithstanding the strenuous effort that had been undertaken to reach the “Hard to reach” groups. Typically, younger age groups were more in favour of growth. A breakdown of results by places was not possible because of the large number of anonymous submissions (especially the on-line submissions).
- 4.2 The various reports on the consultation response are now posted on the website

#### **5 Preferred Options.**

- 5.1 The meeting had presentations on each of Bromyard, Ledbury and Ross in turn – explaining the rationale behind a single preferred option in each case based on the emerging evidence base and the responses to the Place Shaping Paper. A brief report was made on the issues that had been raised by Ward Members and at the public meetings which had been held in Ledbury on 15<sup>th</sup> July, Bromyard on 22<sup>nd</sup> July and Ross on 26<sup>th</sup> July. It was explained that similar meetings were not planned for Leominster or Kington because in neither case was there a range of options to choose between – the overall strategy option in the Place Shaping Paper had received broad support for those two Market Towns anyway. Hereford, it was noted, will be the subject of a separate consultation programme starting at the end of September and, for the rural areas, an event was planned for the Parish Councillors on 1<sup>st</sup> September. It was suggested that the Market Towns Forum be contacted to see if they would like a presentation at one of their meetings.
- 5.2 The meeting also received a presentation on the policies for rural areas, explaining the extent to which these too had been influenced by evidence from the parish councils themselves and the responses to the Place Shaping Paper. The proposed policy was to retain a top tier of Rural Service Centres with, below that, a criteria based policy. There was some discussion about the risks inherent in a criteria based approach and the basis for assessing those criteria namely the inflexibility of using a matrix based on existing services. The links to the Council's own “Localities” programme were still uncertain as there is a possibility of a different categorisation of settlements/village emerging from that work which was going on independently.
- 5.3 The importance of affordable housing was raised and the rationale behind having different thresholds and percentages for different areas in the County was queried and defended. It was agreed that a separate briefing session for members on this one topic was appropriate.
- 5.4 It was suggested that the term “Regeneration” in the rural context may be taken to mean that some places were run-down in the first place. Alternative expressions were discussed.
- 5.5 Confirmation was sought and provided that cross-border issues had been fully considered especially in the light of the emerging Local Economic Partnership (LEP) which was being introduced by government following the loss of the regional tier. It was noted that Herefordshire works closely with Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin as part of the emerging LEP, and with those two authorities and Powys in respect of Gypsies and Travellers. Herefordshire also continues to be linked to Worcestershire for waste management purposes through the joint municipal waste strategy.
- 5.6 Concern was raised at the presentation of the housing numbers as a twenty year figure when we were already four years into that plan period. However, that approach had been

established from the beginning of the LDF process and it was perhaps more a case of presentation of the data than any change in policy.

- 5.7 The meeting then received a presentation on the Hereford elements of the strategy – noting that the Amey Study was not yet complete and is intended to underwrite a decision on the preferred route for a relief road. That report is expected to be finalised in August and reported to Cabinet on 16<sup>th</sup> September to seek agreement for a dedicated programme of public consultation on the Hereford issues generally. The Place Shaping Paper results had shown a preference for “Option 4” i.e. a dispersed approach to the strategic housing sites. A key principle to appreciate is that neither the relief road on its own, nor the sustainable transport measures on their own, will provide a complete solution to the transport needs of Hereford – it requires both.
- 5.8 The report commissioned by Natural England had been passed on to the Transportation Team for consideration as part of their overall evaluation of transport needs.
- 5.9 It was noted that the overriding need (by way of process) was for the plan to be found “Sound” at the anticipated Public Examination (following submission of the Core Strategy) – it was important, therefore, that any decision on the growth of Hereford, including the relief road, had to be seen to be made on a rational basis.

## **6 Updates on Policy Progress**

- 6.1 The meeting heard details of the current outstanding work on the following evidence areas:
- The DaSTS study – which was now published on the Council website
  - Updated retail and employment land surveys – reports expected in August for the Retail report and September for Employment
  - Renewable Energy Study – expected in September
  - Economic Viability Study – expected in October
  - Green Infrastructure Strategy – awaiting finalisation with the Conservation Team
  - Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Implementation Plan – in progress.

## **7 Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment**

- 7.1 Work is progressing on these on a stage by stage basis as each element of policy comes forward. This is an iterative process which has so far resulted in some adjustments to policy but has not raised issues with the overall strategy for the market towns or rural areas so far.

## **8 Next Meeting**

- 8.1 It was agreed that the next meeting of this Group would probably not be required until November and an appropriate date and venue would be arranged nearer the time.

P.J.Yates  
Planning Policy Manager  
28<sup>th</sup> July 2010