
Local Development Framework – Shaping our Place 2026

Minutes of Task Group Meeting

3rd November 2009

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

Councillor R Matthews, Chair of the Environment Scrutiny Committee

Councillor P Edwards

Councillor P Andrews

Herefordshire Partnership

M July

J L Jones

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

C Rawlings: Senior Planning Officer

B Watts: Transportation Officer

Apologies: G Woodman, W Coombey, P Lydford – representing Herefordshire Partnership,

1. Introductions

1.1 Councillor Jarvis welcomed those present to the meeting and noted apologies

2. Notes of the Last Meeting

2.1 Were agreed.

3. Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)

3.1 The meeting heard a presentation by the officers who had been working on the SHLAA. The report itself had been published on the website – with appendices and maps to follow over the next few days.

3.2 In summary:

- SHLAA is a technical piece of evidence gathering to inform future development plan documents – it is not a policy as such. It is needed to identify a range of potential sites which could be drawn upon to meet future housing land requirements arising from the RSS (and its future replacement(s)).
- CLG issued guidance in 2007 which sets out the basic methodology to be followed, and is an essential part of the plan making process, albeit adapted to Herefordshire's predominantly rural circumstances.

- The study has concentrated on Hereford itself, the five Market Towns and the 48 Main Villages identified (with settlement boundaries) in the UDP.
- It has a base date of 2009, and has looked at only sites for 5 or more dwellings.
- An important feature has been working with a panel of potential developers, the “Housing Market Partnership” and other stakeholders to assist in realistic assessments of which sites are actually “deliverable”.
- The sites assessed fall into two groups: those already in the planning process (sites allocated in the UDP, sites with planning permission and sites under construction), and those not currently in the planning process – these have been identified from:
 - Urban Capacity Study
 - NLUD
 - Council owned land
 - UDP housing representation sites
 - Vacant property register
 - Townscape characterisation studies
 - “Call for sites”
 - officer identifies sites
 - employment sites identified as “poor” or “moderate” in the employment land studies
 - other safeguarded land
- The survey work has included “Desk top” studies and technical appraisals of site suitability, viability and availability
- The definition of “Deliverable sites” used was: sites which are available now, are in suitable locations and there is a reasonable prospect of them being delivered in the next 5 years, including planning permissions, allocations and sites under construction – a total of 3,395 potential dwellings were identified on such sites
- The definition of “Developable sites” includes those which are likely to become available for housing development and are considered to be suitable, available and achievable – a total of 22,083 potential dwellings could be achieved on these sites.
- The “Deliverable” and “Developable” sites between them thus add up to 25,478 dwellings which is more than the required 18,000 dwellings in the anticipated RSS Phase 2 requirements – and thus there will be a choice of sites available for allocation in the forthcoming Development Plan Documents.
- The table (appended at the end of these minutes) summarises the numbers set out by place and by 5 year period leading up to 2026 and beyond.
- A “Trajectory” graph was also presented to show how the phasing could work over the period of the Core Strategy
- In conclusion:
 - The RSS Panel Report (September 2009) identified that Herefordshire will be required to accommodate 18,000 houses between 2006 and 2026 of which 8,500 are to be provided in Hereford itself
 - Between 2006 and 2009 a total of 2,180 were built leaving 15,820 still to be provided
 - SHLAA has identified sufficient land to meet the current 5 year land supply requirement
 - SHLAA has identified sites for 22,083 dwellings between 2009 and 2026 on **developable** sites
 - SHLAA has also identified **deliverable** sites which take that total up to 25,478
 - The **developable** sites can be divided into those with low constraints (9,036) and those with significant constraints (13,047) – this latter group will require different forms of mitigation (depending on the nature of the constraint) before they can be developed – and hence have been placed towards the later stages of the plan period in the suggested trajectory.
 - Whilst there is sufficient land identified to meet RSS targets some sites with significant constraints will be required to be developed.

In the discussion which followed the following points were made:

- What assumptions about site density have been made? – answer: the UDP policies were used as guidelines adapted as appropriate in discussions with stakeholders
- Have assumptions been made about infrastructure? – answer: that was covered, in part at least, by testing through the Developer Panel to see what they thought was viable and achievable
- If/when policies change can this document be reviewed? – answer: yes – it will be subject to periodic review, possibly annually, to ensure that it is up-to-date as part of the evidence base for policy making
- In the County’s rural areas does it allow for enough development to keep schools open? – answer: this study has looked at sites of only 5 dwellings and above – we know that in many rural areas most house completions come on sites smaller than that – and so the eventual totals of houses developed will not be constrained by this piece of technical, evidence based work. Instead Children’s Services will have to base the schools policies on wide considerations of which planning policies are one. Officers of the two directorates are working together on this. It is also important to appreciate the large number of houses needed to justify changes to schools provision thus, for example, primary schools need to draw on catchments of many hundreds of houses – a small development of, say, five houses in one village will not, by itself, make a significant difference.
- Does this study take account of settlement boundaries in Parish Plans, and could a criteria based approach be used instead? Answer: settlement boundaries were relevant to identifying some of the sites in the study – but the study included other sites outside UDP settlement boundaries anyway. A criteria based approach to future housing policies in villages is going to be included in the Place Shaping Paper consultation and further work is expected on that specific issue.
- There is concern that the UDP policies were too constrained anyway – will emerging policies allow for certain villages with good services to be able to grow? – answer: the key here is the soundness of the policy. This piece of work (SHLAA) is a very sound piece of work and will help to inform whatever policy emerges – but it is not, itself, a policy.
- What definitions of “Constrained” and “Unconstrained” have been used? Can the constraints be quantified? Answer: it has varied from site to site – in some cases it might be water supply and/or treatment capacity, in others it was landscape, conservation or biodiversity constraints. In the supporting documentation (which will all be published) there is a site-by-site analysis to show the constraints which applied in each case. These are all based on technical assessments and thus form evidence – not policy.
- Have access and movement issues been taken into account? Answer: indirectly through assessment with the Developer Panel in looking at viability and deliverability of sites.
- Is all the documentation now available? Answer: not yet – the report and some of the appendices are already on the website – site schedules and maps are to follow soon.

4. Proposed Place Shaping Paper

- 4.1 The meeting then went through the working draft of the Place Shaping Paper, focussing in particular on sections 5 and 6 which set out the overall strategy (section 5) and the place-by-place options (section 6).
- 4.2 The Spatial Strategy had been adjusted but not changed significantly from the version presented to the previous Task Group Meeting, although the housing numbers had been adjusted to those in the RSS Inspectors’ Panel Report. The increase in the employment allocation to 148 hectares was not seen as too critical provided that the “Rolling 5 year reserve” of 37 hectares could be maintained, and current indications were that this will be achievable. Questions were raised with respect to the role of certain sites in and around

Hereford and such constraints as the capacity of the Sewage Works. Attention was drawn to the investment which has taken place and is still taking place, however, the lack of co-operation of Welsh Water in particular in releasing data and information was a matter of concern. There was a discussion on how to take this up at various Member and officer meetings with GO-WM and other bodies/people. The need for a wide range of adequate infrastructure was noted including Broadband issues.

- 4.3 The part of section 6 dealing with Hereford was discussed including various aspects of the expansion of the City Centre including reference to improving the Higher Education offer of the City and the inclusion of the canal basin in the ESG project. The paper in its new form separates out elements of the consultation so that the highways section, in particular, is re-focused on sustainable transport issues generally rather than focussing in on the Outer Distributor Road. There was a debate over whether the label "Outer Distributor Road" was still appropriate and it was noted that the Inspector's Panel Report referred to it as a "Relief Road" – this was considered to be a more appropriate title and needed to be reflected in the document. The transportation section was also doubling as a preliminary consultation on LTP3 and would thereby help directly with rolling forward the Council's transportation policies.
- 4.4 The proposed housing options for Hereford were explained, along with a section which then drew together the relationship between the strategic housing sites and the possible east/west options for the road to present appropriate choices as part of the consultation.
- 4.5 The discussion on the Market Towns focussed on particular issues of mitigation of known constraints including landscape, biodiversity, water supply and water treatment. The issue of "Water neutrality" was raised in respect of Ledbury – this will need to be addressed as raised and identified in the Water Cycle Study.
- 4.6 In the Rural Areas the issues of farm diversification were raised with examples of where, from modest beginnings, significant exporting companies could be developed in Herefordshire with a beneficial impact on the rural economy. It is important that emerging policies should continue to facilitate that process. A further issue for the rural areas was the co-ordination of recent and planned infrastructure with growth so that, for example, where there had been recent investment in new school buildings then that should influence the choice of settlements/villages for growth. Rural transport issues were also raised in the context of facilitating movement of people and services and how that could influence new development.
- 4.7 There was also a discussion on the policy options for Gypsy and Traveller sites given the anticipated "Policy Statement" which is likely to be issued from GO-WM following the consultation on Phase 3 of the RSS last summer.
- 4.8 Finally, the anticipated timetable of Member Briefings was explained prior to the document being presented to Cabinet on 26th November for approval for consultation purposes only. The consultation period was now planned for 18th January to 12th March 2010 with analysis of results and further work to be undertaken before the proposed "Submission" copy of the Core Strategy would be presented to Cabinet and then full Council for consideration later in 2010.

5 **Next Meeting**

- 5.1 It was agreed that the next meeting of this Group would probably not be required until after the consultation closes in March and so an appropriate date and venue would be arranged nearer the time.

Appendix

Table 8 from Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

Summary of potential capacity on developable and deliverable sites in the 17 years period 2009-2026 for Hereford, the Market Towns and the Rural Areas

Location	Years 1-5 2009–2014	Years 6–10 2014– 2019	Years 11-15 2019–2024	Years 16-17 2024–2026	Total 2009- 2026	Post 2026
	Low constraints		Significant constraints			
Hereford City	2,249	2,710	3,182	3,281	11,422	4,921
Bromyard	182	39	x	28	249	42
Kington	182	10	x	12	204	18
Ledbury	249	551	x	716	1,516	1,074
Leominster	996	862	433	1,321	3,612	1,980
Ross-on-Wye	509	420	350	504	1,783	756
Rural Areas	1,959	1,513	2,300	920	6,692	1,380
Total	6,326	6,105	6,265	6,782	25,478	10,171
Panel Report indicative average annual rate (five year periods)	3,445 (2x530pa + 3x795pa)	4,845 (2x795pa + 3x1,085pa)	5,740 (2x1085pa + 3x1,190pa)	2,380 (2x1,190)		

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