

Hereford Area Plan Consultation April/May 2017

Frequently Asked Questions...

Why does Hereford need an Area Plan (HAP)?

Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011-2031 (The Core Strategy) was adopted in October 2015 following an examination in public. The Core Strategy provides the framework of planning policies for the county.

At the examination the Inspector confirmed that a series of more detailed plans, including a Hereford Area Plan are required to provide specific topic or locational detail. These will be adopted by Herefordshire Council, once they have been properly prepared and consulted upon.

What will the adopted Hereford Area Plan include?

The Hereford Area Plan will set out detailed proposals that will include policies for new housing, employment and urban regeneration. It will identify where the majority of this new development will take place. The plan will also protect and enhance Hereford's valued built and natural environment, in a way which allows for still meeting its current and future community needs through growth and regeneration.

How long will the plan last for?

Once adopted by the council, it will provide planning guidance for Hereford up to 2031, which will be periodically reviewed and refreshed to make sure it responds to changing demands and keeps the City economically and socially productive.

How many new homes does the plan need to find locations for?

The council is required by government to deliver sufficient housing to accommodate the growing population of the county. Hereford has an allocated minimum 6,500 new homes to deliver. The location of 3,300 homes is set out in the Core Strategy on three large strategic sites. However, the location of the remaining 3,200 homes will be delivered by the Hereford Area Plan. Of those 3,200 homes, approximately 800 have been completed with approximately 600 gaining planning permission. Meaning that approximately 2000 will need to be identified in the Hereford Area Plan.

How do new sites get identified?

'Call for Sites' are made frequently which are an opportunity for potential development sites to be suggested. The most recent sites put forward for Hereford can be found in the Hereford Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA). The Hereford HELAA is one of several evidence base documents that underpin the Hereford Area Plan. The HELAA is a high level assessment of sites which have the potential to contribute towards the supply of land for housing and economic development. The area of search for the HELAA is confined to the main city of Hereford and land immediately adjoining its boundary.

Sites are assessed using a number of criteria including:

- Availability;
- accessibility;
- previous use and whether this could have caused the ground to become contaminated;
- existing features on the site;
- conservation issues;
- access to utilities.

Assessment of employment land includes additional factors, such as location, existing use and policy context.

The total number of sites assessed through the recent HELAA was 126. Over half the sites were found to be potentially suitable. However, further assessment of these sites will be required to determine their actual suitability as housing allocation sites. Public consultation on the sites will take place as the Hereford Area Plan progresses.

Are more sites suitable for housing required?

Whilst much of the land around the city has been included in the HELAA for potential housing, this land is greenfield. More previously developed land is actively being sought as there is a lack of these sites coming forward for assessment. Therefore the Council is carrying out another 'call for sites' to help identify further previously developed land that could be considered for allocation in the Hereford Area Plan. All sites would be subject to a technical assessment.

A call for sites form can be downloaded from the Council's website:-
www.herefordshire.gov.uk

Forms are also available at the consultation exhibition.

What size sites are considered a suitable minimum size to identify for housing?

The council is suggesting that a site size of 0.4 hectares is a suitable minimum size to allocate housing sites. For ease of recognition, you can think of this as being roughly the same area as the paved area in Hightown stretching from Starbucks to the HSBC bank on the corner. The expectation is that an area of land this size could accommodate 10 dwellings. It will be dependent on housing requirements and market conditions as to the type of housing that could be accommodated; therefore a scheme with apartments or flats would provide a greater number of dwellings on the same site.

Does the plan cover any areas undertaking a neighbourhood plan?

Yes, Belmont Rural, Lower Bullingham, Dinedor and Holmer and Shelwick Parish Councils are producing neighbourhood plans and either all or part of their neighbourhood plan areas fall within the Hereford Area Plan boundary. However the intention is that the neighbourhood plans and the Hereford Area Plan will complement each other. Representatives from these parishes will be invited to engage with the Hereford Area Plan Reference Group.

What is the Hereford Area Plan Reference Group?

The reference group is made up of stakeholders representing economic, social and environmental interests. The group also includes elected councillors from Herefordshire Council, Hereford City Council and parish councils within the plan area. The reference group is not a decision making body but its recommendations will be among considerations taken into account when formal decisions are made upon the progress of the plan.

Will those adjacent parish areas with adopted neighbourhood plans be affected by the plan?

No, with the exception of the four parish areas which are within the Hereford Area Plan boundary, all other neighbourhood plans outside of the plan boundary will remain the primary plan for local policies.

How does the Hereford Transport Package relate to the Hereford Area Plan?

Together these documents will provide detailed strategy to support the growth of Hereford and the surrounding area.

The Hereford Area Plan focusses on a broad range of topics including:

- Employment, housing, open space, retail, heritage and environmental protection.
- The transport and movement part of the Plan focuses on car parking, improvements to the railway station, Travel Plans and freight movement throughout the city.

The Hereford Transport Package specifically focuses on the following transport and movement matters:

- The delivery of a Hereford Bypass
- Measures to allow more active travelling such as walking, cycling and bus use for short-distance journeys and healthier and more attractive public spaces

Because these two plans are so closely related they are being consulted upon together, this will enable the Council to deliver a better transport network for the city to support its growth.

What happens once this consultation has finished?

This is the first stage of a series of consultations on the Hereford Area Plan. Comments received during the 7 week Issues and Options consultation stage will be considered and further evidence gathered to help inform the next stage in the process.

How will I know if my opinions have been considered?

We will prepare a report where we will include a summary of all the comments received and will respond to them.