

## **Hereford Area Plan Reference Group Meeting**

Date: 14<sup>th</sup> September 2016

Venue: Committee Room, Town Hall Hereford

### **Draft Meeting notes**

#### **Present**

Cllr Price, Chair, Herefordshire Council (HC)

Cllr Andrews (HC)

Cllr Lloyd-Hayes (HCC)

Steve Kerry (HCC)

John Jones, Hereford BID

Georgia Smith (HC)

Kevin Singleton HC

Victoria Eaton (HC)

Nick Webster (HC)

#### **Apologies**

Apologies were received from:

Richard Gabb, HC

Cllr Round (HC)

Cllr McEvelly, (HC)

Rob Garner (HNP)

Gareth Blackett (HVOSS)

Mark Millmore (HSPC)

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1. Apologies for absence and round table introductions.
  2. Minutes of the last meeting were agreed.
  3. Nick Webster (NW) (Economic Development Manager, HC) gave a PowerPoint presentation on the forthcoming *Economic Masterplan* for Herefordshire. This will replace the previous *Economic Development Strategy* and refine it in the light of less funding from central government and the EU and the need to capture new funding from other sources. In particular HC will be looking at pitching to the investment and private sectors. The *Economic Masterplan* will be used as both a driver to source new funding and to promote the county of Herefordshire. It will constitute a facilitation document and a lobbying tool. It has a 15 year plan period, matching that of the Core Strategy.

The presentation followed, the slides of which will be disseminated to the Reference Group members separately.

4. Steve Kerry (SK) suggested that rather than consulting representatives from Hereford and the market towns in the traditional way on the Economic Masterplan, perhaps positive engagement with them may prove more effective.
5. Cllr Andrews (PA) suggested that the number of projects in the Economic Masterplan is too large and diffuse and wondered if promoting more specific concentrated ideas may be a better way forward. Nick Webster pointed out that the Economic Masterplan was attempting to bring all the possible projects together.
6. Georgia Smith (GS) said that if there are no long term projects in the vision for the county, they will never happen and queried how investors will be attracted. Nick Webster said that there are 25 specific projects set out in a separate document which can be passed on to potential investors. HC need to set out detailed aspirations and the criteria required for a scheme to be included in the Masterplan. GS suggested that high level networking could be helpful.
7. Cllr Lloyd-Hayes (MLH) said that the timetable for the projects to be completed by was tight and that bottom-up investment will be imperative. Consideration should be given to Brexit. Some of the ideas in the Masterplan have been around for a very long time already e.g. opening up the river.
8. GS: One of the difficulties in securing finance for such projects is the high amount paid in business rates. There is a need to provide potential investors with detailed projects which will link into the wider vision for the county.
9. PA: there is a need for involvement and investment from local businesses e.g. Cargill.
10. Cllr Price (PP): policies and plans for economic growth are essential for new money to be allocated to the county from Government.
11. John Jones (JJ): the Government like to fund projects which bring results on the ground quickly. Having this visionary and aspirational plan is therefore essential to the area.
12. Kevin Singleton (KS): the *Hereford Area Plan* should not sterilise parts of the city whilst we are waiting for some of the economic projects to come to fruition. There needs to be flexible enough policies to protect, but not to sterilise.
13. NW: *the Economic Masterplan* is not about land use allocations and it is recognised that changes to its aspirations may happen. So long as the development proposed is generally acceptable then why should that change to the original vision not be permitted?
14. KS: Engagement between those drawing up the projects in the *Economic Masterplan* and the *Hereford Area Plan* is necessary, as is adherence to the policies and proposals contained in the adopted *Core Strategy*.
15. SK: Rather than have the proposed consultation on the *Economic Masterplan*, he would like to seek to have a meeting between HC and HCC members to get both

input into and agreement on the process. How will the proposed university be funded? NW said that the detail on funding streams has not yet been conformed and that he will take the engagement suggestion to members for their opinion. MLH added that engagement with HCC members on the *Economic Masterplan* is essential.

16. Item 3 on the agenda – *Hereford Area Plan* process. KS: the first meeting of the HAP Reference Group was held on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2016. The *HAP* was described and its possible boundary discussed, including the query as to whether or not Holmer & Shelwick Parish Council area would be included within it. As yet no decision has been made on the final boundary around the Holmer area although it was understood that the parish council were discussing the matter and would get back to HC as soon as they had taken a vote on the issue. The approximate timetable for the HAP's production is two years. A draft HAP should be ready within 12 months, then it will need to go before the Secretary of State and undergo a formal public Examination process with hearing sessions held by an independent Planning Inspector as to the soundness of the plan's contents.

The HAP is likely to concentrate on the main issues of housing, employment and retail, with potentially other suggested topics such as the university and traffic management issues.

17. The HAP Reference Group is collaborative in nature and it has been set up with a variety of members to ensure that the wider perspective is represented and to ensure a rounded input into the HAP's policies and proposals.

Duty to Cooperate: this is an essential requirement during a DPD's production. A key indicator demonstrating this duty is the Reference Group. MLH stressed that cooperation is the key to a successful HAP document.

18. There will be a need for new and/or updated evidence base documents to ensure the HAP policies are robust and justifiable.

(i) Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA): A level 1 update has been commissioned. The HAP will have to find a way of balancing the competing interests of land use development and flood risk management. PA: a 1 in 100 year flood seems to be happening more frequently. PP: the more common type of flooding appears to be more localised in nature, rather than spread across the whole county. The HAP needs to consider drainage issues. KS: a level 2 SFRA will need to be carried out subsequently. This will look in more detail at flooding and it is this evidence which will guide development allocations and policies.

19. Two sheets were handed out on Economic Land Surveys and Retail evidence bases which will be required for the HAP. This work needs to be carried out fairly swiftly. GS: a robust evidence base on tourism and visitors to the county is essential, so please can work on this be included in the evidence base studies. PP queried the Hereford Economic and Housing Land Availability Study (HELAA), KS explained it. MLH discussed the opportunities which may arise from the sale of HC owned land and the potential use of these sites and the possibility of including them in the HAP.

KS: policies in the HAP should be flexible and not so prescriptive that they stifle potential development opportunities. GS: queried A and B class office uses. KS provided an overview of the Use Classes Order definitions.

20. KS asked for feedback on the things which should be included in the evidence base work. PP queried the evidence base requirements and KS stressed that reviews and updates of those already produced for the Core Strategy are needed, rather than it all being brand new work. PP: the University should be a key new feature in any forthcoming evidence base studies. KS: there will need to be a certain outcome on the University before it can be included in the HAP. PP: before it gets the formal go-ahead, would the HAP be a good place to suggest where such associated development would go, especially in terms of the accommodation units which will be required? KS: (ACTION) Ask the University representatives to attend a meeting of the Reference Group. PA suggested that now that Sanctuary Housing no longer wants to develop on the Urban Village, perhaps this might be a possible site for University accommodation. PP: as a group, we should be driving the detail of the new university project. The first impression future students have of the city is critical. We need to ensure a positive start to get the university development right. SK and PP agreed that it would be a positive step to ask representative along to a HAP Reference Group meeting, even if their plans have not been decided for certain. GS added that the area around Bath Street may provide opportunities for a more campus-like university, rather than a dispersed set of buildings in different parts of the city. PP stressed that there is a need to identify potential sites early, before the university development goes ahead. We need to understand their thinking. MLH: some of the trading estates are not full. Could any of these be used for university related development? PA: the Portland Street area contains some potentially useful derelict land. PP: we need to make use of the vast local knowledge around the HAP Reference Group table.
21. KS: an invitation will be extended to the University representatives and their architects to attend the next HAP Reference Group meetings. PP requested that a particular invitation should be extended to the designers – Architype.
22. PP: an integrated future development of the city is essential to the future of Herefordshire and for future generations. MLH: the Magistrate's Court and the Police Station may not be in their current location in a few years' time. Could this part of the city be redeveloped, guided through the HAP? JJ: the Franklin House and local area could be used for university development. There needs to be more detailed discussion of the different zones of the city where there is potential. PA: we need answers to the question of where the university intends to accommodate the students. SK: and an HMO policy is needed before the students come to the city.
23. Sustainability Appraisal/Habitat Regulations Assessment (SA/HRA):  
  
KS outlined the SA/HRA requirements; economic, environmental and social impacts of the HAP need to be considered. There is a need for the HAP to find a balance between competing elements, their impacts and sustainability. LUC are the retained consultants of Herefordshire Council and worked on the Core Strategy. A meeting

has recently been held with them and they were commissioned the week before this HAP meeting. The first element of work required is the Scoping Report, and then later the HAP policies and proposals will be overlaid.

24. PA: The definition of 'affordable housing' is unclear. The HAP should look at different ways of looking at affordable housing for the future and its design should be assisted through the HAP. KS: the NPPF formally defines 'affordable housing' and that is the definition that the HAP will have to use. (ACTION) KS suggested that the strategic housing team from HC could be asked to speak at the HAP Reference Group and provide guidance on how we can develop affordable housing policies through the HAP. PA: can we develop the affordable housing position through the HAP? KS: this may be difficult through the HAP, as we are limited by the NPPF's guidance on affordable housing standards. Building Regulations control specific standards in affordable housing design.
25. PP, PA and MLH: central government's position on the five year housing land supply situation is broken.
26. MLH: talked about Passivehaus. In the USA they build homes with moveable internal walls, so that the house can develop and change as lifestyles do. Perhaps the HAP policies could include something on this. KS: this may be possible through the development of a Design Code SPD instead of the HAP. It was pointed out that broadband technology needs to be a priority issue to be dealt with in the HAP.
27. HAP Boundary  

Holmer and Shelwick Parish Council had said that they would send a representative to this meeting of the HAP Reference Group; however this is not the case. It would be illogical not to include the Holmer and Shelwick areas in the HAP boundary as there is already so much housing development already built there. SK: could we suggest that Holmer & Shelwick PC should remain in the HAP boundary unless and until they decide they would prefer to be out. KS: they may want to produce a Neighbourhood Development Plan, but they do realise that the pressure from large developers is likely to become apparent during this process. The working assumption for the HAP is that they are within the formal boundary.
28. AOB  

SK: HCC are now free to attend meetings on Wednesday evenings due to a change in their other commitments.

SK: has concerns about enforcement matters. Richard Gabb (RG) of HC has emailed a reply to SK on these issues, outlining that the HAP is not the appropriate document through which these matters should be dealt with. Relevant enforcement officers will need to meet with the City Council to discuss these concerns in more detail.

MLH: commented that today's HAP Reference Group Meeting was very positive.

Notes taken by V Eaton  
(HC)