

Hereford Area Plan Reference Group Meeting

Notes of Meeting

Date: 1st November 2017

Time: 15:00

Venue: Hereford City Council Offices, Town Hall, Hereford

Attendees:

Cllr P Price (Chair), Herefordshire Council – (PP)

Tracy Morris, Hereford City Council (Deputy Clerk) and Youth Council - (TM)

Georgia Smith, HBID – (GS)

Cllr M Lloyd-Hayes, Herefordshire Council – (MLH)

Cllr P Andrews, Herefordshire Council – (PA)

Barbara Frankham – Lower Bullingham Parish Council - (BF)

Richard Gabb, Herefordshire Council – (RG)

Bill Bloxsome, Herefordshire Local Nature Partnership – (BB)

David Sheppard, NMiTE – (DS)

John Phipps, Holmer & Shelwick NDP Group – (JP)

David Cooper, Holmer & Shelwick NDP Group – (DC)

Siobhan Riddle, Herefordshire Council – (SR)

Victoria Eaton, Herefordshire Council – (VE)

Apologies:

John Bothamley, Hereford Civic Society – (JB)

John Jones, HBID – (JJ)

Kevin Singleton, Herefordshire Council – (KS)

Joy Harvey, HVOSS – (JH)

1.0 Welcome, introduction and apologies

1.1 PP began by expressing his concern that the group must ensure that it comes to some firm conclusions/actions on the points discussed so that the Reference Group provides direction on the production of the HAP.

2.0 Minutes of the previous meeting

2.1 Correction at para. 2.1. Otherwise agreed as a true record.

2.2 MLH was not able to attend the September meetings and raised the following points: coach parking – could the top Plough Lane car park be used for visiting coaches during the evening and weekends, for free? PP: this option would only be a temporary measure for alleviating the lack of coach parking. Instead, as long term solution needs to be found. MLH: Plough Lane car park would, however, provide a benefit in the interim. PP: agreed that it may be a temporary solution.

2.3 PP expressed a preference for electric buses over trams for Hereford.

2.4 MLH is concerned that park and ride is not viable economically.

3.0 Site Options Consultation: Siobhan Riddle (Senior Planning Officer, Herefordshire Council)

3.1 A presentation was given on the housing site options work being undertaken for the HAP. A copy of this is to be circulated with these minutes for information. This began by setting out the context of the work: the Core Strategy and the three primary sources of evidence on housing: (Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), Hereford Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) and the Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA).

3.2 The HAP boundary map was displayed and SR went through the three stages of identifying housing sites of over 10 dwellings through the HAP, including the site selection process, through to consultation and final Plan adoption.

3.3 Issues raised by members of the Reference Group included:

- Site size threshold of 0.4ha or 10 dwellings. How many such sites are there? Can these smaller sites be investigated further as part of the study? SR said these are listed in the appendix to the study but it is not intended to look into them in more detail as part of this work. PP asked if their location and potential housing numbers could be set out. This is particularly pertinent as the university may begin to move quickly to acquire plots of land and the HAP and the university would like to work closely.
- Sites where availability is not known are ruled out of the study. MLH said that these sites may be important and could be available and should be investigated further. Local councillors should be asked if they have any information on the owners of such sites, as this might prove helpful.
- Sites are ruled out where there has been a dismissed appeal. PP requested that these be checked to see if there have been any changes to policy in the interim, which may result in the site being suitable for development.
- Site assessments. BB asked what criteria will be used. In addition to the constraints of sites, will the potential benefits be considered too? For example, opportunities to provide additional green space or infrastructure? SR said that the sustainability process will help in identifying these, but that yes potential benefits will be considered.
- MLH raised the point that some of the work being done to assess the sites has probably already been undertaken previously. Has this been checked, so that duplication can be avoided?
- There was discussion of the potential for land on the city side of the bypass being considered for new housing. BB pointed out that sites on its outer edges could be identified so that there could be holistic planning to create quality usable green spaces and links or other uses, rather than just fitting new houses tightly between the bypass and existing housing estates.
- PC said that the bigger picture of what can be done with the land bounding the bypass and the potential benefits that could be gained from its development will be considered at the review stage of the Core Strategy as well as in the HAP. However, it is considered that there is sufficient land on the inside of the HAP

boundary to provide the opportunities for all the required housing to be accommodated.

- BB: should the housing site options study also be considering extensions to the strategic housing sites identified in the Core Strategy? SR said that many of the housing sites being considered are located adjacent to strategic sites.
- PP: there needs to be a consideration of the numbers of homes coming forward on the smaller windfall sites. SR: an allowance for these has been built in to housing calculations.
- PP: the HAP should contain policies for the change of use of various land types to alternative uses; residential, leisure, employment etc.
- PP: at the consultation stage, there needs to be sufficient land identified to provide for all the housing need and some spare too. There has to be a consideration that some sites may be lost to competing uses such as the university, green infrastructure etc.
- MLH: the HAP needs to take account of the needs of the hospital. Their input is needed to understand their future plans. PP said that the CCG should be invited to a Reference Group meeting to outline these.
- TM asked if there has been consideration of the use of some of the smaller city car parks for housing development. SR said yes, these and other brownfield sites are being considered.
- PP: Brownfield land development – policies need to come forward through the HAP for the development on various land use types in the city for new alternative uses.
- PP: evidence of different car park pricing regimes and locations is required. All day parking by commuters close to the centre brings increased footfall and spend to the commercial area. The identification of an appropriate site for a multi-story car park should come through the HAP.
- DS provided figures on the potential number of staff and other employees of the university who would need both permanent and temporary living accommodation for sale and rent (500 peak). PP: the Core Strategy housing requirement figure for Hereford does not include accommodation for students or specifically for staff of the university. RG: an additional 500 homes could be accommodated in the existing growth figures, but above and beyond that would require a revision to policy.

4.0 Accessible Natural Green Space/Infrastructure: Bill Bloxsome (LNP)

4.1 BB gave a presentation on the potential for building on the city's green spaces and how they can provide multiple benefits to the local community in many ways; social, economic and environmental.

- Green infrastructure should be seen as a multi-functional service to the city
- Should the HAP set out standards for accessible natural green space, which all new developments would be expected to achieve?
- New greenspaces should be accessible and increase the quality of the environment for all social groups
- If the amount and type of greenspaces is not sufficient or suitable then there will be unintended costs. For example; to flooding, wild species diversity, water quality, climate change and health.

4.2 Shropshire LNP have been working with Shropshire Council to identify areas of the city where access to natural greenspace is poor. This can provide evidence to support future planning policies and proposals. Perhaps such a study could be carried out for Hereford. PP: agreed that we should have a firm basis for any HAP green space proposals. Should it set out amounts of green space per household for particular sizes of development? Do we know how much such spaces are needed in the city? Planning policies need to be in place to deliver any such objectives.

4.3 TM: London is a good example of a densely developed city where accessible natural greenspaces have been very successfully incorporated. Apart from Belmont and Haywood Country Park, there are few such greenspaces in Hereford.

4.4 BF: It is essential that the greenspaces that we do have are protected (e.g. Moor Park, Castle Green, Bishop's Meadow), but there is also a need for more natural areas. Business should be encouraged to promote green areas in new developments in addition to housebuilders.

4.5 RG: There is a need to both improve access to Hereford's greenspaces and to enhance them. The Historic England's Urban Panel Report is awaited and is due very soon. (DS to update the group when there is any news on this). One example of what they considered is the potential that exists for making more of the city walls. We are underusing many of Hereford's spaces, even the edges of cycleways could provide opportunities for creating natural/ wild areas.

4.6 PP: there are a large number of homes which are located some considerable distance from green spaces. Careful planning and building needs to happen to look after the environment better, guided through policies in the HAP. RG: sustainable urban drainage schemes within developments is one way of introducing greenspaces, and make the most of opportunities that these can bring for both wildlife and public access.

4.7 MLH: The HAP should ensure that development in the area of the former Canal Basin should assist in bringing this feature back. This would provide good opportunities for more natural greenspace and for becoming a key part of the canal restoration project. Also see Ledbury, where there has been much recent residential development, but where natural greenspaces have been successfully incorporated. Greening the city is important. Of the tourists who come to Hereford, the great majority come to enjoy the countryside and the rural aspects of the county. This should extend into the city too.

4.8 The HAP should introduce a set of standards which new developments should be expected to incorporate or contribute towards, for the future needs of residents. BB: the LNP is happy to work with Herefordshire Council to develop this work further. Would there be funding available for this? The costs need to be investigated. RG: happy for HC to have a conversation with then LNP to further this. PP: when the standards are being set, we need to ensure that this does not adversely affect the viability of developing.

4.9 BB: in addition to the traditional idea of natural greenspaces, the HAP should also consider the options for developing other types of areas, such as allotments and parks and making different and better uses of existing green spaces. RG: the HAP can assist this through policies.

5.0 Historic England Urban Review Panel

5.1 PC outlined the recent visit by Historic England. They were enthusiastic about the Council's plans and ambitions for Hereford, although they did identify some areas of concern. Their report is due to be released shortly. They may be offering some support with planning for future growth ambitions.

5.2 DS: Hereford has an exceptional opportunity to create successful new developments across the city and the Urban Panel are keen to provide their support in this. There are some important historic and archaeological features in Hereford, yet they do not consider these to be constraints to development. It is just a question of how they are dealt with in new schemes.

5.3 The Urban Panel expressed a desire for planners to engage more with the community on matters of historic heritage and the development of the city.

6.0 Youth Council Event Update

6.1 VE and Suzi Gilson (Community Engagement Officer) attended a Youth Council event on 21st October. TM was also there in her Youth Council capacity. A range of groups were represented. VE gave them a presentation on the HAP and sought the views of young people about the future of the city. There was opportunity to talk with them during a workshop at the end of the session and the main points raised included: new and improved cycleways throughout the city, particularly to and from the station; the introduction of new leisure uses within the city centre, especially to encourage better use of the traditional shopping areas during the evenings; and protection of the city's historic heritage.

6.2 RG: High Town area is relatively empty in the evenings and night. Support was expressed for the introduction of policies to encourage the more flexible use of properties in high town for entertainment uses. GS: an open cinema may be a good use of the area.

6.3 TM: the feedback from the Youth Council group was good and those there expressed a positive desire to be involved in the future planning of the city. It was suggested that representatives from the Youth Council could be invited to attend the next HAP meeting which falls in the academic holidays. This was agreed by the group.

7.0 AOB

7.1 GS asked if the BID's work on the future of Hereford's city centre could be presented at the next Reference Group meeting. Agreed

7.2 DS confirmed that £15m funding has been secured from central government, together with additional funding from the LEP. There is a need for additional matched funding and private sector input later in the scheme. PP: congratulated DS and NMiTE team.

7.4 DS talked about the expected envelope of the university campus and presented maps showing this. The bulk of the campus building will be within a 10 minute walk of High Town, centred around St Peter's Square. Buildings will be made accessible to the public where possible. It is possible that, if the university expands to its fullest degree, then the total investment could reach £500 - £550m. There may even be the possibility of extending it out into the market towns e.g. Model Farm, Ross-on-Wye.

7.5 TM was concerned that HCC were assured that they would be involved in the university scheme, but that this has not happened. MLH agreed with this and asked for additional involvement. The city council do not want to find themselves finding out about decisions only after they have been taken. PP said that it has been the technical and funding matters which have been discussed at high level.

7.6 RG outlined how Herefordshire Council has been involved in the process of securing funding from Department of Education/LEP and the greenbook business case work. Also HC has been having conversations with NMiTE about any opportunities there may be to develop Council owned land. HAP policies will need to enable the delivery of the university project.

7.7 DS offered to attend any meetings of HCC to ensure that they have more involvement. There needs to be a mechanism in place to ensure that engagement works.

7.8 DC and JP talked about the potential for conflict between the HAP and the Holmer & Shelwick neighbourhood plan proposals, since the HAP boundary includes this parish. The NDP is now well advanced and there needs to be consistency between them. RG expressed his desire to ensure that communications are kept up between officer of the Council and H&SPC. Kevin Singleton and Samantha Banks are the contacts and have already been involved in meetings to discuss the issues. TM and PP would like to work positively and collectively with H&S on their NDP to help alleviate the possibility of problems in the future.

8.0 Date of Next Meeting

8.1 6th December 2017 at 15:00hrs.

8.1 Items for next agenda:

- BID city centre presentation
- Historic England Urban Panel Report
- Holmer & Shelwick Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan

8.2 Items for a meeting in the new year:

- Update on housing options work - SR