

## Hereford Area Plan Reference Group Meeting

### Notes of Meeting

Date: 20<sup>th</sup> September 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) - (TM)

John Jones, HBID – (JJ)

John Bothamley, Hereford Civic Society – (JB)

Cllr P Andrews, Herefordshire Council – (PA)

Joy Harvey, HVOSS – (JH)

John Jones, HBID – (JJ)

Barbara Frankham – Lower Bullingham Parish Council (BF)

Jeremy Callard, Herefordshire Council – (JC)

Nick Webster, Herefordshire Council – (NW)

Kevin Singleton, Herefordshire Council – (KS)

Victoria Eaton, Herefordshire Council – (VE)

#### Apologies:

Bill Bloxsome, Herefordshire Local Nature Partnership

Steve Kerry, Hereford City Council

David Sheppard, NMiTE

Richard Gabb, Herefordshire Council

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1. Welcome
  2. Policy Workshop

#### Movement

- 2.1 KS introduced Jeremy Callard (Transportation Strategy Manager for Herefordshire Council). JC presented an overview of the Local Transport Plan (LTP), outlining:

- The transport policy for Hereford and the role of the LTP
- LTP vision and objectives
- Impacts of development (university, car parks and parking and housing) and how to mitigate them to deliver the LTP objectives and vision

Two main questions were put to the group to assist debate:

Q1: How should the potential impacts of the developments be established and what should be our strategy to address them?

- Impacts of similar projects elsewhere?
- Modelling and forecasting?
- Appraisal framework and prioritising projects to mitigate impacts?
- All of the above?

Q2: The Hereford transport package contains a bypass and active travel measures. What else should our transport strategy contain to support those land uses and to deliver our transport objectives and vision?

- Commuter parking management?
- Behavioural change campaigns?
- Freight management and signing?
- More bus routes and services?
- All of the above?

## 2.2 Freight

JH have we considered more freight management? JC said that with our appetite for growth, we need to be careful about disincentivising businesses from locating in Hereford. The best thing is to build a bypass and also have a signing strategy for freight to direct them to the most appropriate routes. PA: some companies have set times for deliveries. JH: some countries have strict restrictions on freight movements. JJ: we need to be very careful with such policies, to ensure that Hereford remains a pro-business city.

## Park and Ride

- 2.3 PA: park and ride is very costly and difficult to set up. It is rarely profit-making. One needs a particular type of economy to be able to sustain it. JC: this is probably not a solution for Hereford for those reasons.

## Parking

- 2.4 JC: how should we deal with car parking in Hereford? PA: many car parks in the city are privately owned.

- 2.5 JC: do we need to consider the all-day parking charges and how commuters use city car parks? JH: to alter the way people drive into town and park will need behavioural change. BF: High charges are driving people away from the city. This is particularly bad for those who need to park in town to work. JC: should we be aiming higher charges at those who choose to park in town all day (such as commuters), to free up those spaces for shoppers and visitors? We should try to achieve a balance. PA: any increase in parking charges generates substantial complaints. JH: Hereford is a low wage area and very rural. It is already difficult for those with low disposable incomes to park in town to go to work. JJ: why is it that the premium price car park at the Old Market is so close to one of the cheapest long stay car parks? This is a very confusing situation. Would it not be better to have all short-stay car parks within a defined area close to the city centre and outside this there should be longer stay car parks. The parking situation lets Hereford down because of this confused picture. JJ: longer stay commuter parking could be sorted out at the same time too.

- 2.6 PA: many car parks are so small that visitors would never find them. Could we introduce more pay on exit car parks? JJ: many of the car parks are so small so as to preclude this option. JJ: the smaller private car parks could be redeveloped, however, the return on them is too large for owners to want to develop them for other uses.

- 2.7 The HTP and the HAP must dovetail on the approach to be taken.

- 2.8 TM: discussed the huge differences in traffic congestion in the NE of the city when the schools/colleges are not open. JC explained that with an over-capacity (or near capacity) network, only a small change in demand results in a disproportionate positive effect on the ease of traffic flow. On-street pay parking spaces may be helpful for those wishing to park for less than an hour, if set at an appropriate tariff.

Also, improved and/or new walking and cycling routes, a change in the general perceptions of safety and more effective engagement with schools would all help the internal traffic flow of the city.

- 2.9 PP: at what point do parents decide to make the change from car to bike/walking? Right now, parents see this as the only option. JJ: should we develop cycleways more actively and ambitiously? JC: there is a need for different types of cycle routes for different types of users. Shared cycle/footpaths really do not work unless there is a strong segregation of lanes. On most of Hereford's roads, however, their width does not allow for such segregation. PP: how can provision for this be made through the HAP? JC: now is our chance to change the public realm.

### Economic Development

- 2.10 Nick Webster (Economic Development Manager) provided an overview of the existing and allocated employment sites across the city and nearby at Moreton-on-Lugg and also discussed the definitive market split between demand on the north and south sides of Hereford. In the last 30 – 35 years, the city (minus Rotherwas) has not had much new employment development of a high quality kind. A range of sites/sizes/types/quality is needed however. However, some redevelopment older employment sites or lower quality could take place without detrimental effects on the employment offer in the city. TM: or should we alternatively be considering upgrading such poorer quality sites instead? Viability could be an issue with either option.
- 2.11 NW: demand for employment land at Rotherwas is high and much land has now been sold. There are two major allocations now remaining to be developed. Historically, take-up rates have not been so high. So, can Rotherwas continue to supply sites for this level of demand up to the end of the plan period?
- 2.12 Consideration of uses other than B1, B2 and B8 on employment land: there is rising demand for leisure uses (e.g. climbing facilities, gyms etc.). How flexible should policies in the HAP be? Would this depend upon the quality of the employment sites in question? There needs to be consideration of the potential for conflict between different uses. It is necessary for the plan to provide for bespoke employment land needs, but also to build in flexibility for the development of alternative uses. TM: leisure provision seems to be predominantly located to the north side of the city, rather than the south. This increases travel movements.
- 2.13 What should the HAP do to address the vacancy rates and lack of leisure uses within the city centre? A more varied city centre could attract more footfall and be beneficial. Local businesses seem to like having offices in the city centre. They need the passers-by and enjoy the vibrancy of the town rather than being located on a peripheral site. Although this is not always the case.
- 2.14 Should the HAP focus new employment development on existing and identified sites? Are Rotherwas and Three Elms sites sufficient to cater for demand over the plan period? Should the HAP identify a new site for development later in the plan period? JJ: the logical place for such a site would be to the western side of Hereford, close to the bypass and new residential growth. PP: it is fairly urgent that the HAP identifies this land if it is to be needed over the plan period. NW: there is very little private development of employment allocations. This is due to the significant risk and the high cost of upfront infrastructure. Herefordshire's market is not attractive to

developers of large employment sites, however, once the infrastructure is in place, plots are being taken up fast. If a new strategic allocation is going to be put in the HAP, it will incumbent on the public sector to provide a site ready to develop. And what would such a site be allocated for? Solely B1, B2 and B8, or other uses too? Would it be able to cover out of town retail and leisure uses too? Any constraints on such sites will also need to be taken into consideration when assessing viability.

3. Actions identified from the workshop discussions
  - 3.1 Ensure close working arrangements continue between the development of the HAP and the Transport strategy for the City.
  - 3.2 PP: the HAP needs to consider identifying one or two pieces of land for car parking. PA: the bus depot on Commercial Road will become an obvious brownfield site in an appropriate location. A site serving the southern part of the city centre (possibly south of the river) could also be considered. PA: could the swimming pool car park be a potential multi-storey site? PP: also lacking is a parking area for coaches and buses, which feels welcoming to visitors.
  - 3.3 Consideration of an additional employment land allocation should be considered as part of preparing the HAP.
  - 3.4 Employment land policy should look to include an element of flexibility regarding the range of uses permitted on sites, particularly those of more limited quality. In the case of employment land of poorest quality the redevelopment of such sites for alternative uses could be considered.
4. Other Business
  - 4.1 The university have had discussions with Historic England about the potential use of upper floors in the central area. Historic England are visiting Hereford for two days in early October.
  - 4.2 Lincoln trip: from the HAP Reference Group the following have confirmed their attendance; PP, JB, MLH, KS. A mini bus will leave Hereford at 06:00. Contact DS for further information.