

Hereford Area Plan Reference Group Meeting

Notes of Meeting

Date: 5th April 2017

Time: 15:30

Venue: Hereford City Council Offices, Town Hall, Hereford

Attendees:

Cllr P Price (Chair), Herefordshire Council – (PP)
Steve Kerry, Hereford City Council (Clerk) - (SK)
Joy Harvey, HVOSS – (JH)
John Jones, HBID – (JJ)
Georgia Smith, HBID – (GS)
David Shepard, NMiTE – (DS)
John Bothamley, Hereford Civic Society – (JB)
Kevin Singleton, Herefordshire Council – (KS)
Victoria Eaton, Herefordshire Council – (VE)

Apologies:

Cllr M Lloyd-Hayes, Hereford City Council – (MLH)
Cllr P Andrews, Herefordshire Council – (PA)
Bill Bloxsome, Herefordshire Local Nature Partnership – (BB)
Cllr S Michael, HCC – (SM)

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1. Welcome and apologies.
 2. Minutes of previous meeting agreed as a true record. No amendments suggested.
 3. Update on Issues and Options consultation
 - 3.1 KS gave an overview of the first week of consultation at the Courtyard. A good level of footfall had been experienced and the virtual reality fly-through proved popular. Overall it was a positive start to the 7 week consultation period. SK thought that the exhibition was well-presented, clear and logical and agreed that footfall was good. JB also commented that the exhibition material was well-presented and that the content was good.
 - 3.2 PP: had received predominantly positive comments and very few negative ones. By presenting the wider Hereford context, including infrastructure, accommodation etc., partners are being brought together to find out what is needed in the city and how to achieve that. There were some high profile attendees, including Bloor Homes, who were positive about the plans for Hereford. Hopefully this provided them with an

incentive to begin to build out their projects. Even those who are potentially adversely affected by the road plans, for example, were positive. Staff manning the exhibition were praised for their professionalism. It is hoped that positive and helpful feedback will be received.

- 3.3 DS: Central News article on the consultation presented the bigger picture of Hereford's future and it came across well. The fly-through 3D experience was well-received.
- 3.4 KS: the exhibition would move from the Courtyard to Hereford library on the 7th April, where it will be available to view for a six week period. The constituent organisations on the HAP Reference Group were offered hard copies of the Issues & Options paper. The group were informed that there were 40 online responses made on the first public day of the consultation.
- 3.5 JB: will the virtual reality fly-through showing new buildings such as the terraced housing, be misleading when this might not actually be anything like what will be there in the future? It could give people a false sense of reality. PP: at the very beginning, the point is made clearly in writing and by the operator of the computer, that it is virtual reality, and only a representation of what may be built. It provides a great insight into where current buildings are and where new ones may be built. PP asked the rest of the group if they were happy with it, or whether a change of direction was required. The group were pleased with the virtual reality as it was.
4. Other Matters Raised
 - 4.1 Minerals and Waste:
JB questioned why minerals and waste issues are mentioned in the HAP. PP detailed the regulatory requirements for the production of development plan documents and the need for cross referencing between plans.
 - 4.2 Link Road area:
JH: as the link road and associated development in the vicinity is being constructed, it would be a good idea for the hoarding boards to show an image of the finished development. The group agreed.
 - 4.3 Residential need:
PP: the hospital have identified a need for an accommodation block for health care staff (due to the large numbers of agency staff employed because of difficulties attracting permanent staff – which is partly due to a lack of suitable accommodation) and the university also have significant requirements for student residences. How do we make sure that the policies of the HAP meet these future needs and ambitions? The HAP needs to have a positive and enabling role. JH: should the plan consider including innovative ideas such as buildings using underground levels perhaps?
 - 4.4 JJ: there are many vacant and underused spaces above shops in the city centre, which are not used commercially. The HAP should encourage the use of these spaces and also of larger areas such as the sector to the rear of the Green Dragon. People living over shops discourages crime in the central city area. If the underused areas of the town centre are used to their best, then this would be a move in the right

direction. PP commented that the current underuse of space above shops is often for insurance reasons. GS: the university will drive up the demand for flats of this kind.

- 4.5 DS: initially there needs to be provision of accommodation for 1,000 students, then subsequently, once the university is established, additional ways of meeting the residential needs of the students will need to be investigated. PP: HAP policies need to be both positive and in place so that they can assist in finding the best ways of delivering the need for all types of housing. KS confirmed the need for the plan to use positive rather than restrictive policies, in accordance with the NPPF. DS: the insurance companies who own many of the spaces over shops in Hereford may be more interested into bringing them into residential use once such policies are in place.
- 4.6 JJ: the city will lose many more shops over the coming years as the way people conduct businesses changes, for example King Street. Planning proactively and innovatively, particularly in struggling secondary shopping streets, will help to keep the city centre vibrant and thriving as it diversifies over time. Predominantly retail areas can be kept concentrated in the city's core.
- 4.7 DS: should we consider convening a meeting/seminar with the owners of some of the city centre premises to discuss the issues? PP perhaps this could be arranged at this early stage in the HAP's preparation, so that their specific needs can be understood and then built into policy development.
- 4.6 PP: we need to consider what we see the future of the city centre to be. DS: this may include other uses in addition to residential development, such as pop-up office space.
- 5.0 Discussion regarding the role of the HAP Reference Group post issues and options consultation
- 5.1 (a) Consideration of consultation responses
- KS: The HC team will produce a document to summarise the issues raised. The Reference Group will look at the consultation responses and from these begin to draw up a set of HAP policies.
- 5.2 (b) Additional consultation – university
- DS: wider community engagement could be developed on the university issue. Perhaps taking two wards together and inviting residents to spend time with NMiTE representatives to discuss how they see the future development of Hereford. Perhaps 8 or 9 such sessions could be held and they could be cross-cut with specific interest group consultations e.g. business community, young families etc. Consultation events at schools and colleges often tend to bring out good community engagement ideas, bring out themes of different kinds and develop an energy and buy-in.
- 5.3 JB: expressed concerns about the skew of such consultation events towards the university. DS: the university are partnering closely with the HAP process. Such events would be about the overall community aspirations for the area in which the university will be developed. PP: the HAP process provides local people with the

chance to achieve integration across all sectors. The university project is helping to create positivity across the city and its interest groups.

5.4 JB: will there be too much consultation and confusion as to whether events are about the university or HAP issues? PP: all consultations will provide useful information as to what evidence is required and how the HAP can respond to people's needs.

5.5 PP: the university have a pressing need to provide the first hall of residence in 2019. Immediate needs are already progressed through the plans to use the Franklin Barns building. However, the HAP policies are not in place. KS: the policies of the Core Strategy should not restrict the university's progress and the HAP can provide more detailed policies for its future growth.

5.6 (c) HAP timetable

JB: could we try to stick to a strict timetable for the HAP's production to help with the university's needs? KS/PP: there is a formal, statutory process which needs to be followed. Once the examination process has commenced, the timetable will be out of our hands. In the meantime, the Core Strategy's policies will provide an enabling framework to development.

5.7 (d) Topic or area based Reference Group workshops

KS: there will be a need for targeted topic specific consultations as the HAP's development progresses towards the production of the draft plan. For example; on specific housing or employment sites.

5.8 DS: should members of the Reference Group arrange to visit either Lincoln or Canterbury, which are cathedral cities where universities have been developed in the city centres. It might be useful to understand how they managed the transition from the edge of town campus style to buildings dispersed within the cities themselves. The consensus of the group was that such a visit may well be useful to the HAP's development. However, this needs to be done sooner rather than later and it might be best if just a small number represented the group.

5.9 (d) Intermediate consultations as proposals/projects/policies are advanced

DS: should the Hereford Business Board help with the HAP consultation? Perhaps a single event could be organised. PP: any group that can help should be brought in. KS: the Council may have a little funding available to assist with this. Action: HC to approach the Business Board, HC and NMiTE (and co-ordinate this with the Economic Vision). Such an event may happen at the end of the current consultation period. PP: DS will be presenting to Cabinet soon and this idea could be introduced then.

5.10 (d) Additional evidence base requirements

The Council's conservation section may be producing a new study looking at the Hereford city centre specifically. A brief is being developed and the work may go out to tender. This report will inform the HAP policy position at an early stage.

- 5.11 SK: Do Conservation Areas need to be reconsidered? The competing needs for new development and the protection/enhancement of the historic environment will need to be balanced carefully. PP: evidence must underpin the end policies of the HAP and be robust enough to stand up to public examination. JJ: a certain standard should be required of new development, and such policies need to be backed up by appropriate evidence.
- 6.0 AOB
- 6.1 KS: Cllr Lloyd-Hayes requested that future Reference Group meetings could commence at a later time. It was agreed that a new start time of 16:00 should be introduced for forthcoming meetings.
- 6.2 Next Reference Group meeting to be on 17th May 2017.
Action: HC to send out emails on the new start times.