

Hereford Area Plan Reference Group Meeting

Notes of Meeting

Date: 22nd February 2017

Time: 15:30

Venue: Hereford City Council Offices, Town Hall, Hereford

Attendees:

Cllr P Price (Chair), Herefordshire Council – (PP)
Cllr P Andrews, Herefordshire Council – (PA)
Cllr M Lloyd-Hayes, Hereford City Council – (MLH)
Steve Kerry, Hereford City Council (Clerk) - (SK)
Marc Mohan, Holmer & Shelwick Parish Council – (MM)
Bill Bloxsome, Herefordshire Local Nature Partnership – (BB)
Mark Truelove, Hereford BID – (MT)
David Shepard, NMiTE – (DS)
John Bothomley, Hereford Civic Society – (JB)
Richard Gabb, Herefordshire Council – (RG)
Kevin Singleton, Herefordshire Council – (KS)
Victoria Eaton, Herefordshire Council – (VE)

Apologies:

Joy Harvey, HVOSS – (JH)

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1. Welcome, introductions and apologies.
 2. Minutes of previous meeting agreed without amendment.
 3. KS informed group members that the I&O paper is in draft form at the moment and has been assembled for the Reference Group to be able to make any suggested changes before going out to public consultation. KS acknowledged that the number of questions is too large and that refinement is needed before the document is finalised.
 4. KS outlined the role and purpose of the draft HAP issues and options paper (I&O). At this early stage in the HAP's production, the I&O paper is intended to be a high level consultation document. It is a chance to listen and feed responses into the next stage of production; a draft HAP.
 5. The I&O outlines how the HAP will be prepared and the regulatory stages of production that must be followed. The role and purpose of the Reference Group is also described. With the strategic planning policy context set out in the Core Strategy's visions; the I&O paper seeks to raise a number of key issues and ask questions around these topics, to find out people's views on what is important to them and how they would like the future development of Hereford city to be planned. The framework of the HAP is to be seen together with those of other key strategies and projects such as; the Economic Vision,

the University project, the Hereford Transport Package and Neighbourhood Development Plans. These will all interlink to support the future development of the city.

6. KS outlined the main issues identified around the key themes and emerging policies and proposals for the HAP.
 - a) Social progress: housing strategy, targets, strategic sites, remaining numbers of homes to be developed. No identification of specific sites is necessary at this stage in the HAP's production.
 - b) Social and community: land use transport issues (to support the bypass and Hereford Transport Package, but not to duplicate issues), economic progress e.g. employment land, retail, university, tourism, leisure
 - c) Natural and built environment: e.g. sustainability, townscape, historic environment

The document sets out how people can submit their views and an appendix gives details of the framework of Core Strategy policies.

7. The Courtyard Theatre has been booked for three days near the beginning of April for a joint HTP/HAP/Economic Vision public consultation. There will be an opportunity for key stakeholders to view the exhibition prior to the public launch. The overall consultation period will run for 7 weeks.
8. PA and JB expressed concerns that the I&O document is too long for the public to read and would benefit from alterations to make it simpler and more succinct. People are really only interested in what is going in their local area. KS: the way the consultation is presented will provide the opportunity for people to respond to only the topics that they are interested in.
9. BB queried whether or not the I&O paper should put more focus on climate change issues. KS pointed out that the Core Strategy does include a number of objectives and policies which cover a number of aspects relating to climate change, however, if there are areas not covered, then these will be considered for inclusion. BB to get back with details.
10. RG stressed the importance of getting the public to engage with the process and to consider what the challenges for Hereford will be in the future. DS: what will people who are visiting Hereford actually experience when they arrive here? How can the city be improved to make it an attractive place to come to again? A new university being one improvement which has been highlighted by the young people living here in previous public engagement events. All sections of the community need to be engaged in the HAP consultations. SK: if we will be asking the public to suggest sites for new developments, then it would be useful to have a large plan of the city to help in their identification.
11. PP: the aim of this consultation will be to find out how we can make Hereford an attractive place to come to (to visit and live) and this can only happen if various development proposals come together to make an attractive city of interlinked new developments and attractions. The city as a whole should be considered, rather than developing in a piecemeal fashion. The HAP needs to be acceptable to the public, then funding can be obtained, then the proposals can be delivered.

12. JB: those who are consulted need to feel that their comments will make a difference. He mentioned that he will be giving a talk about consultation matters on 23.03.17 at the colleges in Folly Lane. He expressed concern that there is too much detail in the I&O document that is not needed or helpful. PP: people who want to get involved will read the detail and this is necessary to enable a full discussion and understanding of what the HAP is about. SK: agreed, the consultation events will provide the headlines and will lead people to read more and respond usefully. KS agreed that we need to enable people who want to get involved to feel they are able to do so. The consultation will set out key points and point to more detail for those who want it. Those who respond will be added to a database and will then automatically be included in all subsequent opportunities to make comments as the HAP progresses. This stage is a listening one, then the draft HAP will be developed with detailed policies and proposals. Comments made will be reported formally in accordance with regulatory requirements. It is often the case when plan making that some people think the consultations are too detailed and others think there is not enough. An appropriate balance has to be struck which meets both the regulatory requirements and gets people to engage constructively. A leaflet giving the headlines, and a link to the detail of the document is probably the best option.
13. BB: it would be a good idea to involve specific interest groups in the consultations or have their representatives at the consultation events. Perhaps members of the Reference Group could arrange to help out at these. DS: to have different groups represented would be useful as part of a rounded, constructive discussion, but would be concerned not to cause an imbalance.
14. Herefordshire Council's communications team will be involved in the consultations to help to pitch the consultations at the right level and to ensure that people feel engaged. PA: would a mass consultation event, as sometimes hearing a range of other people's opinions can help to bring other views into the open. DS: mass events of this kind take some time and a lot of organising and managing to get the best results.
15. MM: queried whether there is a plan to invite local employers to the events. KS: the Enterprise Zone Board have asked him to speak to them about the I&O consultation specifically and he will be doing that. MM: there is a need to ask what the HAP can do to help local employers to build for the future.
16. PA: people can get a degree of consultation fatigue, but we do need to engage people and get them to embrace the bigger picture to see what the advantages of new growth and development are to Hereford as a whole.
17. Action: Richard Ball and Richard Gabb will liaise to ensure that there will be no overlap or contradiction between the HAP and the HTP consultations.
18. SK: please can the consultation and its associated exhibition material and documents be presented in such a way that it is clear that the HAP is a document being produced jointly by Hereford City Council and Herefordshire Council. This is very important.
19. DS: for information; as part of the upcoming process of applying for planning permission to support the development of the university, NMiTE is looking to commission transport impact assessments and is considering new innovative schemes such as the use of electric bicycles.

20. Update from Holmer & Shelwick Parish Council

Earlier in February KS and Samantha Banks (Neighbourhood Planning Team Leader) met with Marc Mohan and Mark Millmore of H&SPC to discuss their plans to create a NDP. Subsequently representatives of the H&S NDP group met with SB to discuss funding matters. MM confirmed that parishioners want their own NDP to be produced. A steering group with a co-ordinator has now been formed. Next a consultant will be appointed, then they can go ahead and apply for grant funding.

21. PP: will the two plan boundaries overlap (HAP and H&S NDP)? Is this something that has occurred before? KS: there are other parts of the city where this is the case e.g. Belmont and Lower Bullingham. There is a need to ensure that policies and proposals between the plans are complimentary and do not conflict. MM confirmed that the parish are happy with the situation and that they want the NDP to be produced in conjunction with the HAP. There will be full communication so that the plans can run in parallel.

22. PP: queried the different process for adopting a DPD and an NDP. KS outlined these different regulatory requirements. The test for both documents will be whether they are in conformity with the strategic policies and proposals in the Core Strategy. PP: re-iterated that there should be no conflict between the two documents. JB: the procedures and ability to have a DPD and an NDP covering the same area are not sensible and it is just too much bureaucracy and is too complicated. Surely it what is needed is to simply decide if Holmer and Shelwick is in the city or not. PP outlined the way in which the planning policy system works in England with local plans (DPDs) and Neighbourhood Development Plans. It is a democratic system and parishes can choose to produce an NDP for their area or not. JB: considered it odd that Herefordshire has such high numbers of parishes doing NDPs. BB: communities can decide how to plan for their areas and whether or not to join the NDP process.

23. AOB

SK will take the idea of getting members of the City Council to be involved in the consultation events to its planning committee.

KS asked for comments on the consultation documents and exhibition boards to be sent to him in the next two weeks.