

Place Shaping Options Consultation - Hereford

Local Plan 2021-2041

June 2022



Hereford Place Shaping Options

Background

Hereford is the county town and cathedral city of Herefordshire located in the centre of the county. Its population is around 60,000 and is the administrative, leisure and employment centre within the county. The city also has the best public transport options in the county with a more frequent bus services and a railway station, linking the city to Worcester, Cardiff and Birmingham, among other destinations.

Current and emerging policy background

Core Strategy

Within the [Core Strategy](#) there are three Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs) designated in Hereford, alongside other channels of housing delivery, to accommodate 6,500 new homes. These were:

- Holmer West for 500 new homes.
- Three Elms for 1,000 new homes.
- Lower Bullingham for 1,000 new homes.
- A proposal in the city centre for 800 new homes.

To date, there has been considerable progress on the Holmer West area and a number of developments have delivered housing within the city centre but proposals within the Lower Bullingham and Three Elms areas have not yet obtained planning permission.

Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)

There are no Neighbourhood Development Plans for the city parish of Hereford. There are Neighbourhood Development Plans in areas which adjoin Hereford, however, in [Breinton](#); [Belmont Rural](#); [Burghill](#); [Holmer and Shelwick](#); [Hampton Bishop](#) and [Lower Bullingham](#). These will need to be considered when formulating growth options.

Town Investment Plan

Hereford, through its Town Board, submitted a [Town Investment Plan](#) in January 2021 to access Towns Fund money based on the aims of urban regeneration, boosting the local skills base and improving connectivity.

Examples of projects outlined in the bid are:

- Southside Project.
- Marches Experience.
- HCA School of Creative Digital Futures.
- NMITE Future of Work Hub.
- Greening the City.
- River Wye Infrastructure.
- Castle Green Pavilion.
- Maylord Library Resource Centre.

Hereford Masterplan

The Hereford Masterplan has been commissioned to look at how movement and transport can operate more effectively in the city. A Transport Scoping Report has been commissioned, comprising of two stages. Stage 1 will consist of a high level scoping assessment of likely transport scenarios, as outlined within the Spatial Options Consultation, Stage 2 will consist of a more detailed transport assessment once site capacities are better understood.

Issues from the Spatial Options Consultation

The main issues gathered from the Strategic Options Consultation in regards to Hereford are shown below:

- Acknowledgement that Hereford should accommodate more growth due to the city's ability to facilitate sustainable development with good active travel and public transport links to key leisure, recreational and health services.
- The university and increasing business activity were also reasons why Hereford should take a larger amount of growth.
- The city has the capability, of orientating development along the 15-minute neighbourhood principle.
- Concerns around the strategic highway network being at capacity in the city and further transport modelling and impact on carbon emissions being needed to support large-scale development.
- Explore developing smaller sites which could accommodate more compact developments which are not reliant on the highways network as much but favour walking and cycling in the short to medium term.
- Desire expressed for new housing in the city to focus on helping first-time buyers onto the market with an emphasis on one-bedroom houses. Mid-rise apartments were mentioned as a focus for housing typologies for expansion of Hereford.

Spatial option growth for Hereford

The preferred option provides an indicative strategic growth target of approximately 3,900 dwellings within Hereford. In addition, as of April 2022 there were approximately 880 commitments (planning permissions). Hereford being the largest settlement in the county, with the greatest range of facilities and services, largest centre of employment and retail provision is best placed to accommodate housing numbers. However, the road network within and through the City, including the A49 trunk road are subject to significant congestion which has the potential to limit capacity for Hereford to accommodate new development. The final dwelling capacity of Hereford will be further determined with the completion of the Transport Scoping Report later this year.

Capacity for development

Built April 2021- April 2022	Commitments at April 2022
287	approx. 880

Opportunities and constraints

Key constraints to development in Hereford are:

Flood prone areas

- Hereford is affected by flooding and is subject to periodical flooding events, which due to the impacts of climate change are increasing in frequency. This affects areas both to the north and south of the River Wye.
- Areas in the north of the city centred on Yazor Brook, Ayles Brook, Widemarsh Brook and Eign Brook, which flow into the River Wye towards the south of the city, are located in Flood Zones 1 and 2. The [Yazor Brook Alleviation Scheme](#) has reduced the impact of flooding in this area.
- There are also Flood Zones concentrated on the River Wye, predominantly in Flood Zone 3. This includes a relatively large piece of undeveloped land located where the river meanders. Bishop's Meadow and King George's Playing Field are also in Flood Zone 3. A flood defence protects the area closest to the river at Hinton on the south side of Hereford.
- Whilst flooding constrains development in areas and alleviation schemes require funding, these offer the opportunity of providing green buffers to contribute to the [network of green infrastructure corridors](#). This links up the city centre with Rotherwas to the south east and towards Huntington in the north west.

Water Quality

- Due to phosphate levels exceeding targets in the River Lugg which is a sub-catchment of the River Wye Special Area of Conservation (SAC), there are currently restrictions in place for development within the River Lugg catchment. The River Lugg enters the River Wye just to the east of Hereford.

Designated Areas

- There are seven Conservation Areas in Hereford. These are:
 - [Central Area](#)
 - [Widemarsh Common](#)
 - [Hampton Park](#)

- [Aylestone Hill](#)
 - [Broomy Hill](#)
 - [Bulmer Garden Suburb](#)
 - [Bodenham Road](#)
- [Huntington Conservation Area](#) is located just to the west a possible western expansion of the city. [Hampton Bishop Conservation Area](#) is located further to the east of the city and a possible eastern expansion of the city.
 - The city has an [Area of Archaeological Importance \(AAI\)](#) - one of only five in the country - which encompasses the area bounded by the medieval city walls, as well as some early suburbs and former monastic precincts.
 - Although these aspects could be seen as constraining development, they add to the sense of place that Hereford offers and providing opportunities to utilising these assets in regenerating areas of the city.

Brownfield Land

- Potential for Brownfield land can be found outside the historic core of the city, for example as a result of land being released with the building of the City Link Road linking Commercial Street and Edgar Street. There may be scope for land in and around industrial areas located to the north and west of the city along radial routes to be redeveloped into residential units, subject to appropriate relocation arrangements.

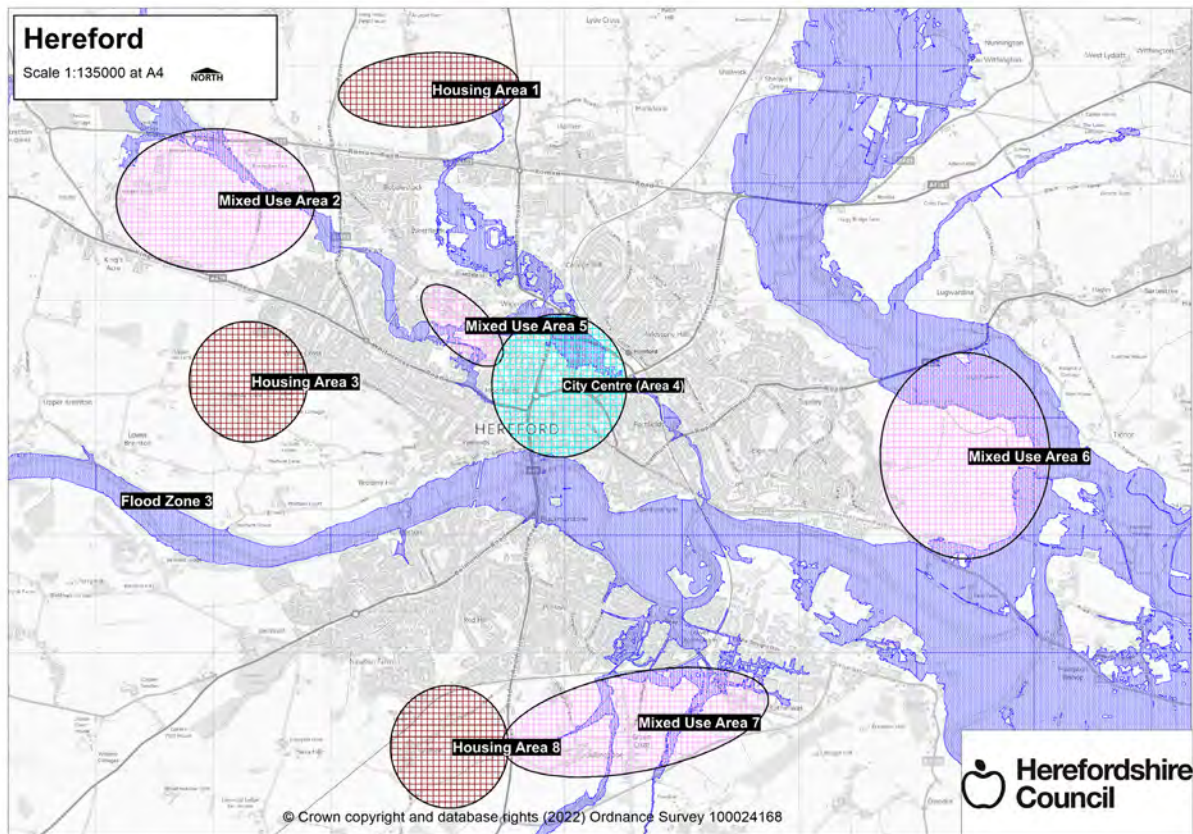
Transport

- At present, there are congestion issues centred on the A49 trunk road which bisects the city north to south. There are particular 'pinch points' south of the river and at Widemarsh Common at the humpback bridge. As mentioned above, the Hereford Masterplan will look at measures to improve the transport situation. Although the congestion issue currently impacts on connectivity and overall attractiveness across the city, this offers an opportunity to re-think how people move around the city, re-allocating places for pedestrians and cyclists and improving public spaces.

Options

Strategic housing growth options

A number of areas have been identified as potential strategic development areas within and on the periphery of Hereford. These include areas within and adjacent to those identified in the Core Strategy as well as other which provide alternatives. A number of the areas identified have potential to be developed as mixed use sites whilst others would be predominantly residential. The preferred approach is likely to require a combination of the areas to be identified in order to deliver sufficient housing to achieve the strategic target.



Area 1: Land to the North

This option would effectively extend the housing development currently being constructed to the north of Hereford at Roman Road. A large part of the site has now been built, with work on a care home in the area now underway. Further development could provide an opportunity to deliver community and social facilities as well as open space to support the growing community in this area. As with other strategic sites the capacity of the highway network will need to be assessed in any further expansion this area.

Area 2 Land to the North West (Mixed Use)

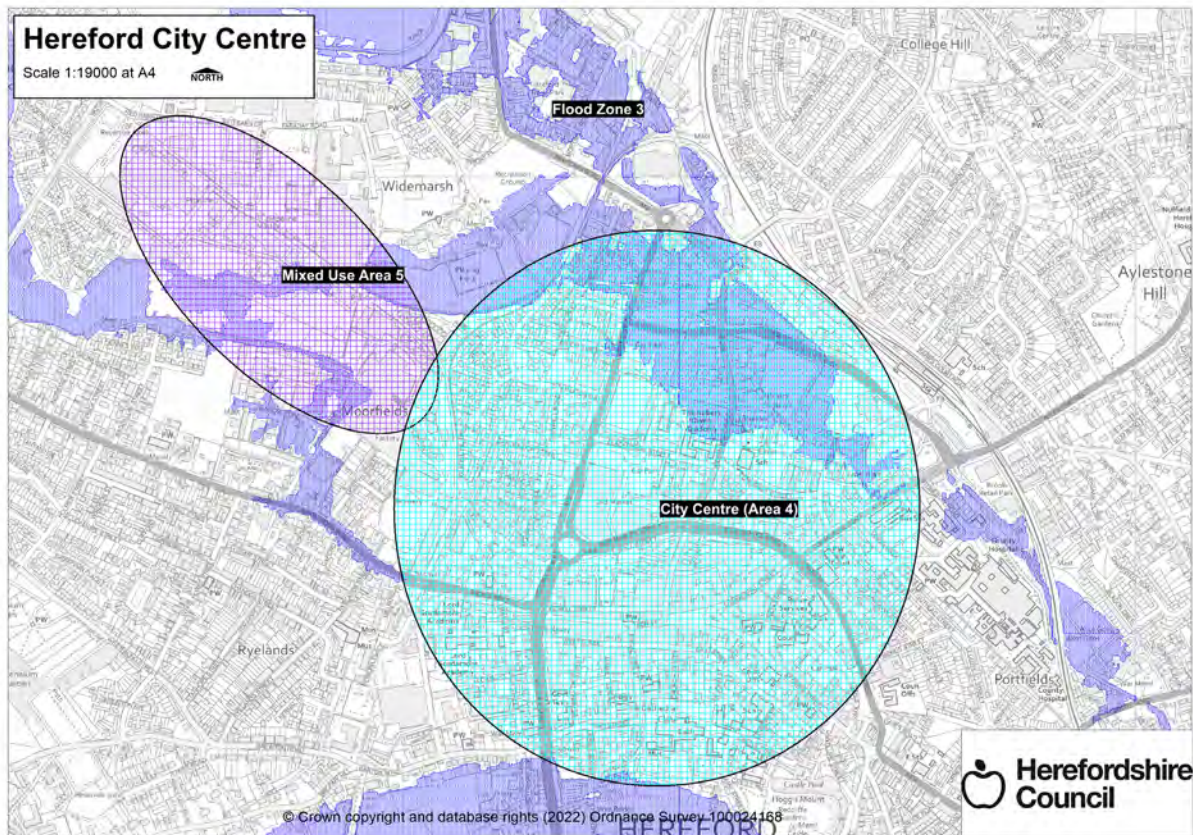
This option would take forward the Three Elms expansion area identified in the Core Strategy. However, highway capacity issues are likely to result in a reduced level of housing being permissible in this area. Potential employment land should also be given consideration as part of this option.

Area 3 Land to the West

This area lying to the south of Kings Acre Road and has good bus links and opportunities to walk and cycle into the city centre. There are constraints due to the high quality of agricultural land, in contrast to other areas of the city with poorer quality agricultural land. Given the location of the area in the west of the City there are likely to be significant capacity issues on the local road network since primary road access would be off the Kings Acre Road this may limit the number of houses which can be built in this area.

Area 4 City Centre

The City centre offers a range of opportunities to develop on brownfield land. This would include continuing development of areas opened up by the Hereford Link Road which could provide a range of uses including leisure and commercial developments, improved public transport facilities, development associated with the [New Model Institute for Technology & Engineering](#) (NMITE) University and opportunities for urban living. This could include capitalising and continuing to benefit from the convenient location of the football stadium at Edgar Street by utilising surrounding land for community, events and conference and potential residential uses.



Area 4 City Centre continued

Residential development in the City Centre would reduce the need to drive, which in turn reduces carbon emissions. The provision of car free developments could be considered within this area. The City Centre also contains a number of car parks and the rationalisation of car parking within the City would also provide a range of potential redevelopment opportunities. The preparation of the Hereford Masterplan will include an assessment of car parking within the City and will assist in identifying the redevelopment opportunities across the City Centre.

Development of upper floor retail units into residential use can contribute to make places safer with more people providing natural surveillance. However, the complex ownership

patterns within the City Centre and limited access opportunities to upper floors in what are often historic buildings can be challenging in bringing residential development on upper floors forward. It will also be important that where conversion of constrained historic buildings are concerned appropriate standards for residential accommodation are incorporated. Nevertheless such development does have the potential to boost the night time economy of the City as well as the overall vitality of the City Centre.

Poor air quality north to south along the A49 through the city centre and along Blueschool, New Market, Eign Streets and Holmer Road has resulted in the designation of an [Air Quality Management Area \(AQMA\)](#). This will also have to be taken into consideration to ensure that no new development would exacerbate further the air quality issues in this area.

Area 5 Potential land west of city centre

To the west of the City Centre areas of residential development sit close to a range of existing employment uses, some of a significant scale. This area provides a significant level of local employment and is vital to the local economy. However, potential relocation to a peripheral location could offer environmental benefits for the neighbouring residential areas and reduce the number of heavy goods vehicles in the City.

This option could improve the physical appearance this area, bringing with it better linkages to Widemarsh Brook and Yazor Brook. Better cycling and walking routes could be established including benefitting from the Great Western Way located to the south of the area. The area is well served by the close links to the city centre in addition to the various shops and services on Whitecross Road. Improved pedestrian linkages would also contribute to better connectivity and accessibility to city centre areas.

Area 5 Potential land west of city centre continued

Utilising brownfield land within the City could potentially reduce the amount of peripheral Greenfield land required to deliver the strategic housing target for the City. However, the implementation of an approach would be a longer term proposal and dependent upon identifying and development of suitable alternative employment land.

Area 6 Land to the East (Potential Mixed Use)

The eastern option would involve the development of land between the A438 Ledbury Road and the B4224 Hampton Bishop Road. The area is close to a number of significant environmental designations which include the Lugg Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the River Wye Special Area of Conservation (SAC), including the section of the River Lugg which is currently failing with respect to the levels of phosphate. In addition, there are extensive areas of land in the east which fall within the floodplain.

Therefore, it will be essential that if brought forward for development that this area is comprehensively planned to ensure that there is no detrimental impact upon the environmental features of the area. The development of this land could however help to deliver the Council's ambitions to realise the eastern river crossing to link to Hampton Park Road, A438 and the Enterprise Zone at Rotherwas. As with other options careful consideration will need to be given to the capacity of the local road network, including the impacts rural settlements on the east of Hereford.

Area 7 Land to the South (Mixed Use)

This option focusses continues the existing Core Strategy strategic area at Lower Bullingham, which also included 5 hectares of employment land. The area is separated from the rest of the City by the railway line. As with other options there may be limits on the housing potential of the site as a result of capacity issues on the road network in the area, but it will be important to look to maximise the sustainable transport measures for this development and enhance pedestrian and cycling routes into the City.

Area 8 Land to the South West

This area, to the west of the A49 and concentrated south of Grafton Lane and require a comprehensive approach to the development of the area. Development of a new access off the A49 would be challenging without restructuring of Grafton Lane, and there are likely to be issues regarding the level of development possible on this area given congestion on the road network and, in particular, the capacity constraints on the A49 trunk road.

Environment:

Open Space:

- Strategic allocations will facilitate the incorporation of open space into new development proposals by promoting the benefits that open space brings to community cohesion, health outcomes and climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- The Town Investment Plan proposes improvements to the River Wye and surrounding infrastructure which would encourage the use of this area more through improved accessibility and visibility. This would harness the assets in this part of the city such the Left Bank Village, Rowing Club and Sea Cadets facility to boost tourism.

Green infrastructure:

- New growth allocations will aim, wherever possible, to incorporate existing green infrastructure corridors into the development, capitalising on local natural assets, such as the Yazor Brook restoration project.
- With regard to newer developments, there are opportunities to extend green infrastructure corridors at Holmer West.
- The proposed route of the Hereford and Gloucester canal is protected but promoting its use as a green infrastructure corridor with recreational benefits could also be considered.

Community:

Community facilities:

- New growth will have to be supported by accompanying community and social facilities.
- The Town Improvement Plan proposes a 'community focal point' at Southside by drawing on the local expertise of Growing Local and Belmont Wanderers Community Interest Companies (CICs) and NMITE University. This would provide opportunities for: training for local adults and young people, places for business incubation, community growing and sports.

Affordable/Specialist Housing:

- Would be more viable on larger sites on periphery on city built to scale. However, there are also likely to be opportunities within the city centre area, for example at Merton Meadow which could provide affordable housing and key worker accommodation.
- New house building in the city centre, for example for students, young people and single people, could provide an alternative to Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs). A new planning policy to help control the number and location of HMO's will need to be considered, particularly as the need for student housing increases.

Education:

- NMITE welcomed its first students in September 2021. As the university grows and more students come to study at NMITE, thought will need to be given as to how additional university buildings and student accommodation will be provided for in the city, as well as for students' wider recreational, leisure and health needs. This is required to encourage more students and young people to stay in Hereford.

Healthcare:

- New health facilities have been built at station approach, capitalising on the release of land afforded by the building of the city link road. New residential developments will need to keep in line with the health needs of existing and future communities.
- Harnessing the benefits that the One Public Estate programme seeks to achieve, by making good use of public land across educational, health, fire and police services, can positively contribute to wider house building, place making and greening aspirations through the freeing up of developable land.

Economy

Employment Land:

- Hereford Enterprise Zone, known as [Skylon Park](#), is a main centre for employment in the city. It is home to a variety of businesses across different sectors such as in the Defence and Security, Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering, Food and Drink Production and Sustainable Technologies sectors. Projects within the Enterprise Zone include the Shell Store Incubation Centre and the Midlands Centre for Cyber Security, with the construction of the latter almost complete. The southern option offers the opportunity to extend the Enterprise Zone further.
- The Western Option may provide an opportunity to consider land for employment uses on the southern side of the Roman Road. Road capacity issues and the potential limitation on housing numbers in this option would have to be dealt with in tandem to any proposals for employment here.

Retail

- The Local Plan offers the opportunity to review the merit in designating the retail area in order to safeguard and reinvigorate the City Centre currently suffering from vacant units.
- The Maylord Shopping Centre is proposed for a mix of uses providing opportunities for smaller business and developing a community and civic hub. A Town Centre and Retail assessment report will provide an up to date requirement of retail space for Hereford for the forthcoming plan period.

Transport facilities/car parks/cycleways:

- There have been plans for a number of years for the relocation of the country bus station on Commercial Street to an integrative transport hub by the railway station. Hereford's Transport Strategy has been commissioned and will look at how people can move around the city in a more efficient and safer way. This will also look into how car parks are used, evaluating how these can be best utilised to reduce congestion, incorporate active travel options and free up space for alternative uses.