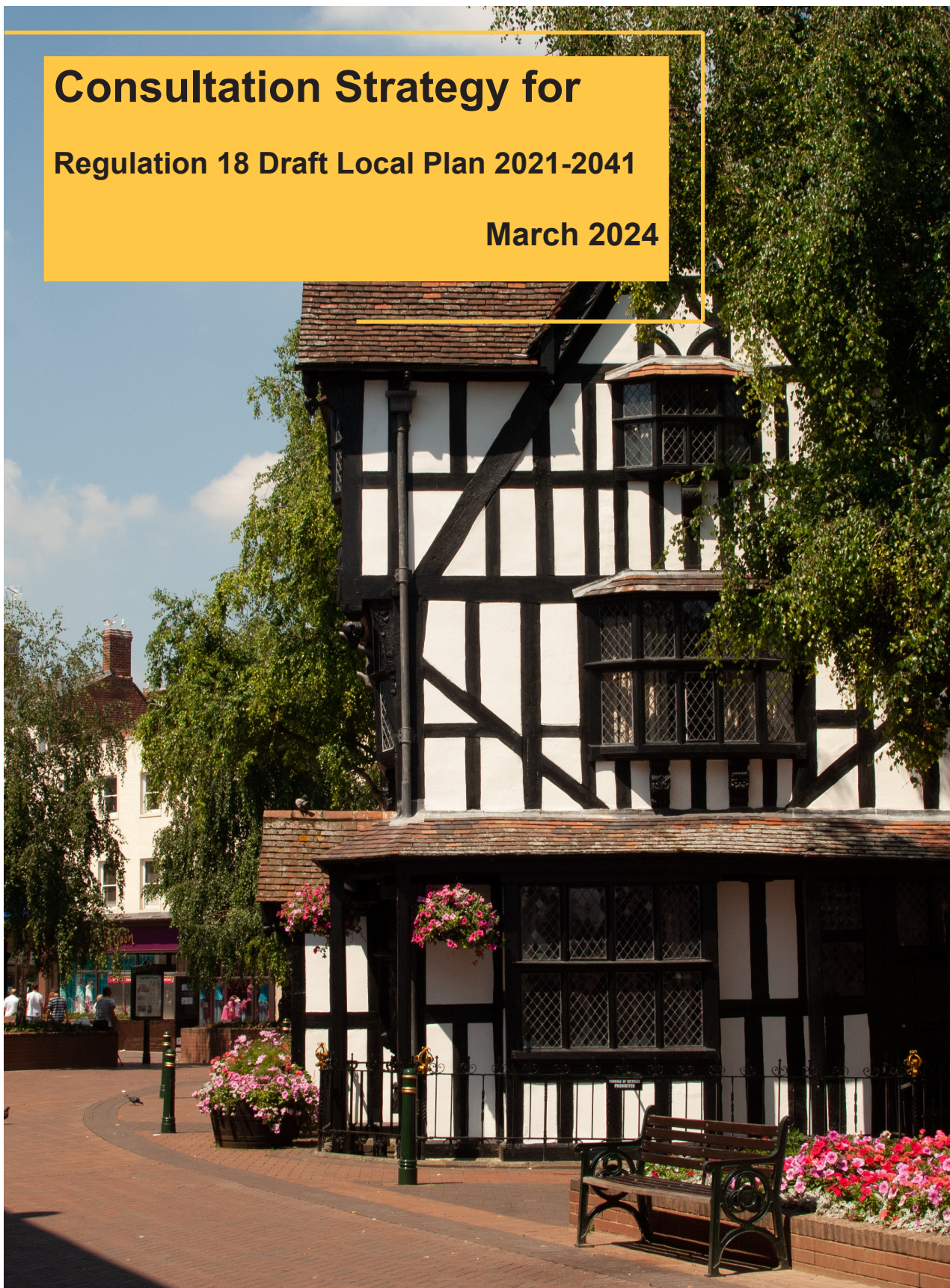


Consultation Strategy for

Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan 2021-2041

March 2024



Herefordshire Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan Engagement and Communication Strategy

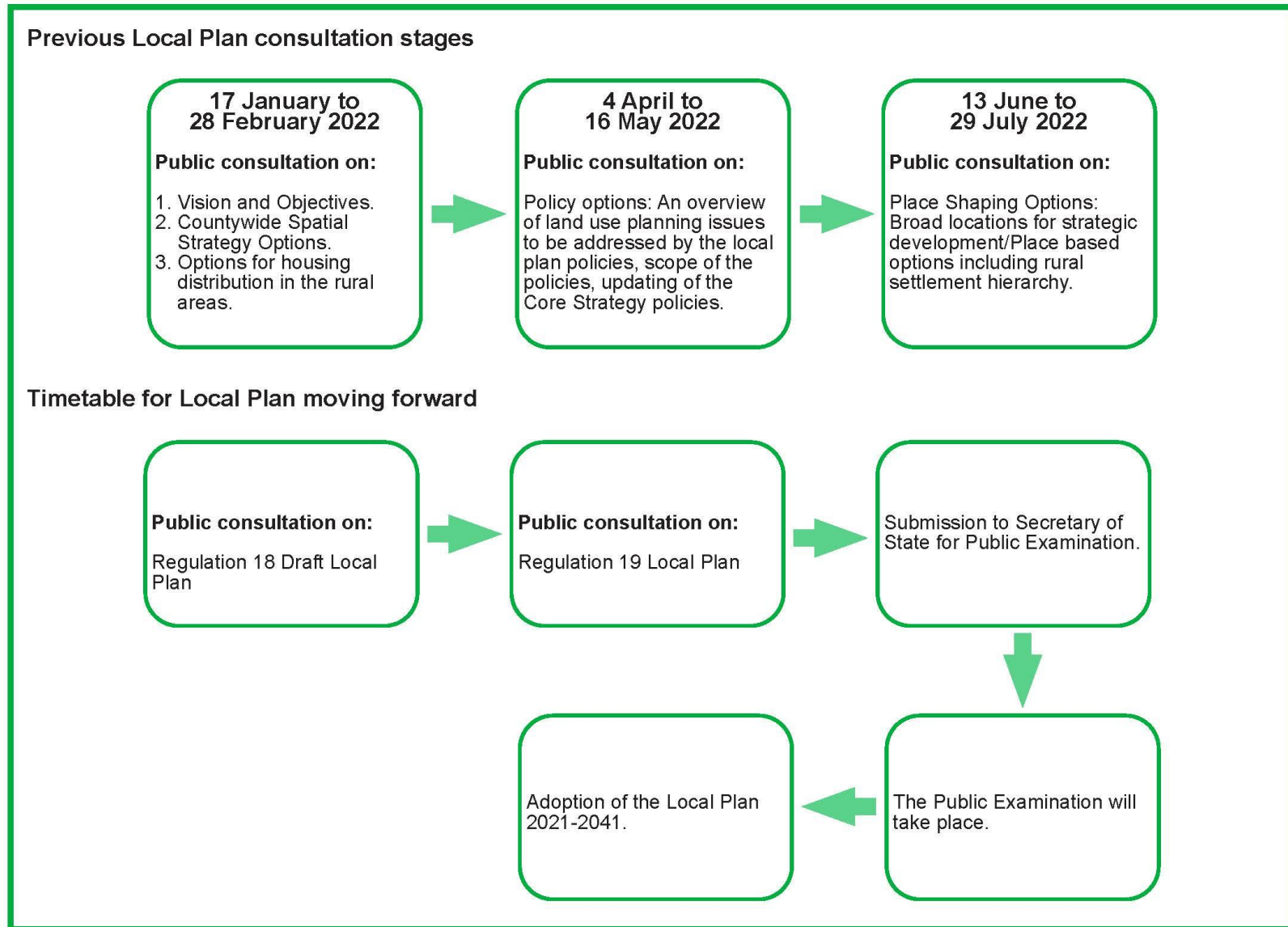
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The involvement of communities and stakeholders is key to preparing a Local Plan for Herefordshire which allows it to grow sustainably, meets the needs of our communities, and protects and enhances the things we value most.
- 1.2 The Council works closely with communities and stakeholders in reviewing the Local Plan, carrying out a range of engagement and consultation, including in person event, throughout its preparation.
- 1.3 This document sets out Herefordshire Council's approach to consulting and engaging the community and stakeholders on the next stage of consultation on the Local Plan which is the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan. The Council seeks to take an inclusive and proactive approach to engagement, providing the opportunity for all to engage in the plan-making process.
- 1.4 The Local Plan has already gone through various stages of consultation. A summary of these stages, along with the timetable going forward is set out in the diagram below.
- 1.5 The principles set out in this document are consistent with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement, which was updated in 2022. We welcome feedback from communities and stakeholders on the content of the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan.

Figure 1 – Local Plan Timeline



2 Engagement and Consultation

2.1 There are a variety of ways in which communities and stakeholders have been involved in the preparation of the Herefordshire Local Plan. The minimum requirements for consultation and engagement are set out in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. However, the Council is seeking to be much more proactive in engaging with local communities and stakeholders in the preparation of the new Local Plan.

2.2 Table 3 further on in the document, sets out a comprehensive engagement strategy for the Local Plan designed to reach out to as many people and groups as possible. The tables contain information relating to:

- The methods of consultation and engagement proposed at each stage of the plan making process;
- The stakeholders and community groups to be engaged;
- The scope of the engagement and consultation; and
- The desired outputs for each stage of the process.

2.3 The engagement process will be carried out through in person events and using online platforms. There are certain organisations and bodies that the Council must consult when preparing plan documents, but we have also reached out to key local groups within the county during the preparation of the local plan. The main groups that have been consulted are:

- Central, Regional and Local Government organisations
- Statutory bodies
- Community, voluntary, resident and interested groups
- Individuals who have requested to be kept informed on planning policy matters
- Parish/Town Councils
- Ward members
- Local businesses, developers and agents

2.4 At the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan launch event, the proposed engagement and consultation aims to ensure that all interested parties and relevant groups are aware of the launch of the new Draft Local Plan, its context, scope, and the ways in which they can be involved. The Council seeks an understanding of initial views, through consultation on the draft document. Various methods of engagement and consultation shall be used, comprising mail outs, press releases, webinars, consultation questionnaires,

2.5 A number of roadshow events will also be held around the county, including

Hereford City, market towns and rural village halls, as well as online meetings. Table 2 shows a schedule of the upcoming roadshow events.

Table 2 - Regulation 18 Consultation Roadshow dates		
Date	Location	Times
Tuesday 26th March	Ledbury Market	9:30am – 12:00pm
Wednesday 27th March	Hereford City Centre	9:30am – 12:00pm
Wednesday 27th March	Bartestree Village Hall	1:30pm – 4:00pm
Thursday 28th March	Ross on Wye Market	9:30am – 12:00pm
Thursday 28th March	Weston under Penyard Village Hall	1:30pm – 4:00pm
Thursday 4th April	Bromyard Market	9:30am – 12:00pm
Thursday 4th April	Bishops Frome Village Hall	1:30pm – 4:00pm
Friday 5th April	Leominster Market	9:30am – 12:00pm
Friday 5th April	Wigmore Village Hall	1:30pm – 4:00pm
Wednesday 10th April	Ewyas Harold Village Hall	10:30am – 4:00pm
Friday 12th April	Kington Market	9:30am-12:pm
Friday 12th April	Weobley Village Hall	1:30pm - 4:00pm
Thursday 18th April	Colwall Village Hall	1:30pm – 4:00pm
Saturday 20th April	Hereford City Centre	10:30am – 2:00pm

2.6 The proposed engagement of the Local Plan preparation (**Evidence Gathering, Engagement and Options Formulation**) was originally split into two sections. Initially, between January 2022 and February 2023, the Council sought to build a clear understanding of the key issues facing stakeholders and communities, and begin to understand the opportunities that exist across the County to address these issues. We also worked with stakeholders and communities to establish the evidence base required to better understand these issues. Methods of engagement at this stage comprised, targeted meetings and online engagement with parish and town councils, community groups, key stakeholders and landowners. Following this results were published online, including:

- An update on progress with the preparation of the Local Plan
- Outcomes from previous engagement sessions
- A link to any available evidence produced to date
- Details regarding future engagement sessions

2.7 Following the end of the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan consultation Herefordshire Council will be undertaking a further consultation known as Regulation 19. For information on this, please refer to Figure 1.

Table 3 Engagement Strategy

Engagement / Consultation	When?	Who?	Method	Scope
Communications	February 2024 (pre waring email update) 8 March- 25 March 2024	County-wide	Mail out (email and postal) Social media Press releases Posters in Customer Service Centres/Libraries	<p>Inform interested parties about the context of the Draft Local Plan, its launch, the accompanying proposed engagement strategy, and details on how to get involved in its preparation.</p> <p>Publish updated Local Development Scheme.</p> <p>Set the new Local Plan within context of the One Shared Vision, the new Corporate Strategy, the Economic, Cultural & Wellbeing Strategies and the Joint Local Transport Plan.</p> <p>Communications to be clear, meaningful, and useful.</p> <p>Targeted social media posts announcing consultation and linkages by QR code to the Common Place platform for further engagement.</p>
Launch Event	25 March 2024	County-wide	In person event in Hereford	<p>Inform interested parties about the context of the Draft Local Plan and how to get involved. Outline the importance the Council places on stakeholder engagement</p> <p>Answer any initial questions interested parties have about the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan.</p> <p>Provide information on how to comment on the content of the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan.</p> <p>Provide links to the Common Place platform for responding</p>
Consultation on Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan	25 March – 20 May 2024	County-wide	Online publication of Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan and associated	Publish Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan and associated documents online.

Table 3 Engagement Strategy

Engagement / Consultation	When?	Who?	Method	Scope
			<p>documents.</p> <p>Hard copy in customer service centres and libraries.</p> <p>Questionnaire for responses</p> <p>Email/written comments where parties cannot use web questionnaire.</p>	<p>Seek comments from interested parties on each document. Questionnaire to provide simple way to respond to the consultation, with the options of written comments where users are unable to comment online.</p> <p>Launch interactive policies map online.</p>
Parish/Town Council engagement	19 & 20 March 2024	All Parish and Town Councils	Physical presentation and Q&A	<p>Inform parishes about context of the new Local Plan, Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan consultation.</p> <p>Answer any initial questions Parishes have about the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan.</p>
Informal engagement with statutory consultees and other consultation organisations	25 March-May 2024	Statutory Consultees and other consultation organisations	Statutory Notices sent by email/post	<p>Inform statutory consultees and other consultation organisations about the context of the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan consultation.</p> <p>Identify any Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) required.</p>
Duty to Cooperate Letter	25 March 2024	Prescribed Duty to Cooperate bodies and	Letter sent by email/post	Inform Duty to Cooperate bodies and neighbouring authorities about the Consultation, its context, and how to comment on the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan

Table 3 Engagement Strategy

Engagement / Consultation	When?	Who?	Method	Scope
		neighbouring authorities		<p>Identify initial strategic planning issues that cross administrative boundaries, which will need to be addressed.</p> <p>Identify any Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) required.</p>
Targeted roadshow events	March-April 2024	General public, including organisations and other interested parties.	In person road show events to be held in Hereford, market towns and the rural areas.	<p>Inform local communities about the Consultation, its context, and how to comment on the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan.</p> <p>Answer any initial questions members of the general public have about the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan.</p>
Targeted landowner engagement	March-April 2024	Landowners	Post / email / meetings	<p>Liaising with landowners on selected strategic sites within Draft Local Plan.</p> <p>Identify any Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) required.</p>
Youth engagement event	April 2024	Young people within the county.	In person event at Hereford Sixth Form College	<p>Inform young people about the Consultation, its context, and how to comment on the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan.</p> <p>Answer any initial questions about the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan and the importance of their involvement.</p> <p>Youth questionnaire and summary of Draft Local Plan document has been development to enhance engagement.</p>

Table 3 Engagement Strategy

Engagement / Consultation	When?	Who?	Method	Scope
Engagement with Ward Members	18 & 21 March	All Ward Members	Online presentation followed by Q&A session	<p>Inform Members about context of the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan consultation.</p> <p>Answer any initial questions ward members have about the Regulation 18 draft Local Plan.</p> <p>Agree Members' role in engaging with local communities.</p>
Engagement with gypsy, travellers and travelling showpeople	March & April	Gypsy, travellers and travelling showpeople	Leaflets and letters	<p>Deliver leaflets to the Council traveller sites and the travelling showpeople community informing them about the Consultation, how to comment on the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan and the Call for Sites process.</p> <p>Post letters to the private traveller sites across the county informing them about the Consultation, how to comment on the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan and the Call for Sites process.</p>

Key Outputs from Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan consultation

- Ensure all interested parties and relevant organisations are aware of the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan consultation, its context, scope, and the ways in which they can become involved.
- Understanding views of interested parties and relevant organisations, following consultation on the Draft Plan Document.
- Clarity on the next steps of Local Plan preparation and basis for further work, including timescales for engagement and consultation moving forward.
- Preparation of Consultation Statement to record outcomes of engagement and consultation.

3 Our Engagement and Communication Website

3.1 The Council have used the engagement platform [Commonplace](#) alongside the [Herefordshire Council](#) website throughout the preparation of the new Local Plan, providing regular updates regarding progress on its preparation. Commonplace has been updated and will continue to be regularly updated, and will comprise the following:

- A web form to which residents and stakeholders can add their contact details, to sign up to our Commonplace mailing list for the latest updates regarding the Herefordshire Local Plan.
- A live '[evidence base page](#)' is available on the Herefordshire Council website, in which evidence base documents are uploaded as and when they become available.
- A programme showing key dates in the preparation of the Local Plan.
- Commonplace and Herefordshire council website, will be updated regularly to include dates and details of public engagement sessions.
- A number of live 'Call for Sites' webpage providing a space for landowners and interested parties to upload details on potential development sites. This will also include key dates by which potential development sites should be submitted by.

4 Alignment with other Council engagement and consultation events

4.1 The preparation of the Local Plan will be aligned with the preparation of other relevant strategies for the County, and where possible, engagement and consultation events will also be aligned.

4.2 The Planning Policy team have consulted with other services within the Council on a regular basis through an internal document mail out. Officers were asked to provide comments on strategic policy documents to ensure alignment across county visions.

4.3 The services to be consulted include:

- Planning Policy
- Development Management
- Transportation
- Public Health
- Economic development
- Strategic Housing
- Waste
- Community Engagement
- Education
- Adult and Children's Services
- Environmental Health
- Natural Environment
- Historic Environment
- Legal
- Climate Change
- Highways Team
- Drainage Team

5. Ensuring an inclusive consultation

The Council's [Statement of Community Involvement](#) sets out all groups with whom the Council will seek to engage directly throughout the preparation of the Local Plan, as summarised below:

Young people Children and young people have not traditionally been involved in planning issues. Involvement will be encouraged through initiatives linked to local colleges, schools and youth groups or other voluntary and community organisations. A young person's survey has been included on the Commonplace consultation platform. Secondary schools and colleges across Herefordshire will be emailed with information and instructions on how to view a simplified version of the local plan and how to complete the survey. In person events at Hereford Sixth Form will strengthen the involvement of a younger demographic

Gypsies and travellers: We will involve gypsy and traveller groups, particularly as part of the policy evidence gathering process. We will consult members of the gypsy and traveller communities, particularly where issues are of direct relevance.

People located in dispersed rural areas.

Residents in more remote rural areas may not have easy access to council offices and may have less access to community events depending on where these are held. Linkages are already in existence with Neighbourhood Plans groups. We aim to build on these established Parish Council networks in order to disseminate information and gather feedback at the most local level possible.. The development of e-consultation within the Council will ensure that consultation reaches a wider audience. Information, posters and leaflets will be provided for display on village notice boards and in community libraries and mobile libraries for those who may not have access to the internet.

Disabled People including those with numeracy, literacy disabilities

We will seek ideas and feedback from disabled individuals as well as local and national organisations representing disabled people to ensure that community consultation is inclusive and their views are obtained. We will ensure that all community involvement events are fully accessible, and will always respond to any accessibility requests in a positive way by providing Easy Read documents where appropriate

Minority Ethnic and people following different religions or with certain beliefs will be looked at through links with the Council's Equality and diversity team as well as local organisations representing these specific groups.

Older people have generally been active in past consultation responses. There will continue to be links representing local groups supporting the elderly.

Homeless groups there will continue to be links with the Council's Housing Teams as well as local organisations representing this specific group

For young single parents there will be steps to continue to disseminate information through online methods of engagement Local community groups will continue to be contacted to share information

The Strategic and Neighbourhood Planning Team hold an extensive database which lists a wide variety of community groups, businesses and environmental groups. It is frequently updated and anyone can be added to it at any time.

6 Duty to Co-operate

- 4.4 Herefordshire Council has a duty to co-operate on strategic planning issues that cross administrative boundaries and must collaborate with other strategic authorities to identify any relevant strategic matters which need to be addressed.
- 4.5 Cross boundary strategic issues relating to the Local Plan might include issues such as addressing housing need, strategic highway issues, and flooding.
- 4.6 We have liaised with the prescribed duty to co-operate bodies in identifying the cross boundary strategic issues and work jointly with them to address such issues throughout the preparation of the Local Plan, and will continue to do so. The Council will prepare and maintain a Statement of Common Ground documenting the cross boundary matters and progress in co-operation.
- 4.7 A full list of 'duty to co-operate bodies' is set out in Part 2 of the Local Plan Regulations 2012. Herefordshire Council's main duty to co-operate bodies are:
- Shropshire Council
 - Worcestershire County Council
 - Malvern Hills District Council
 - Gloucestershire County Council
 - Forest of Dean District Council
 - Powys County Council
 - Monmouthshire County Council
 - Brecon Beacons National Park Authority
 - The Environment Agency
 - Historic England
 - Natural England
 - Natural Resources Wales
 - Homes England
 - NHS Herefordshire & Worcestershire
 - Office of Rail and Road

Conclusion

Following on from the March 2024 consultation, the next consultation is anticipated to be in February 2025. This consultation will have taken all comments from the 2024 consultation into consideration. Other inputs to the Local Plan will be made such as updated and new evidence and the Local Plan will be amended accordingly. The results of the Draft Local Plan consultation March 2024 will be made available later in the year. This Engagement and Communications Strategy will be revised thereafter in preparation for the next stage in the process as per Figure 1 above.