

Shaping Our Place 2026

Local Development Framework

Core Strategy

Policy Direction Paper  
Local Distinctiveness

January 2010



## CORE STRATEGY POLICY DEVELOPMENT

**Theme (Policy):**      **Local Distinctiveness**

### **Preferred Policy Direction**

The results of the Developing Options consultation 2008 and the evidence base have provided an emerging preferred direction for local distinctiveness. The preferred approach of the Core Strategy is based on option 2 of the protection of locally distinctive assets policy options. The preferred policy would:

1. Provide an overarching policy to conserve, protect and enhance, promote and restore local distinctiveness in the county;
2. Recognise the value and significance of landscapes and their contribution to the planning process as promoted by the European Landscape Convention;
3. Provide a location and criteria based policy to encourage the application of green infrastructure principles, promote and learn from the work of AONB partnerships, recognise and conserve the historic environment, biodiversity, geodiversity and encourage quality design;
4. Have regard to the studies and evidence that support or will be needed to support these elements, such as the county's Green Infrastructure Strategy, AONB Management Plans, Biodiversity Action Plans, Historic Characterisation Studies, Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plans and Buildings at Risk Surveys.

### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 This section provides background information and evidence to support the policy directions that will form part of the Core Strategy Place Shaping Paper. The full policy wording for appropriate policies will form part of the pre-submission Core Strategy.
- 1.2 The Core Strategy will set out the vision and objectives for the Herefordshire Local Development Framework (LDF), together with the place shaping policies at a strategic level, explaining how the county as a whole is expected to develop up to 2026.

- 1.3 This report seeks to acknowledge linkages between the natural and built environment by considering locally distinctive assets collectively. The report is divided into short sections on each of the following: green infrastructure, landscape, historic environment, biodiversity and geodiversity. The following questions are addressed in each section:

What is the current situation (issues)?

What is the national, regional and local policy framework?

What is the available evidence base indicating?

The remainder of the report will then seek to draw on all these sections to address the following questions:

What can the Core Strategy do?

What were the results, indications from the Developing Options Consultation?

What further consultation has taken place?

What conclusions can be drawn?

What happens next?

## **2.0 The Need for the Policy**

- 2.1 National legislation and regional policy requires our natural and built environment to be conserved, protected and enhanced. However, Herefordshire has a greater opportunity not only to consider these assets in terms of legislation but to be more innovative through the Local Development Framework. Policies could be developed which promote understanding of the county's natural and built environment and the need to capitalise on this knowledge in order to ensure sustainable, sensitive and innovative future growth. Contributions to local distinctiveness need to respond positively to the historic environment context, underpinning the distinctive historic character and growing through appropriate sustainable development.

- 2.2 The State of Herefordshire Report 2009 and the Core Strategy Developing Options Paper June 2008 reflect local distinctiveness in the county being important in making Herefordshire the place that it is today. The role of the

Core Strategy is to achieve a successful balance between protecting the county's environmental assets and enabling the further growth required. Potential policies on local distinctiveness should be specific to Herefordshire and reflect national or regional policy whilst not repeating it.

### **3.0 The Current Situation**

#### **Green Infrastructure, Landscape, Biodiversity and Geodiversity**

- 3.1 The State of Herefordshire Report describes the county as supporting a diverse range of flora and fauna. The county occupies 17% of the West Midlands region but has 31% of the region's ancient semi-natural woodland. The ash/lime woods of the Wye Valley are of international importance. The county has a strong hedgerow pattern associated with ancient landscapes and many historically important veteran trees. Combined with the county's resource of ponds, traditional orchards and parkland there is much to be proud; much of this remains dependent on continued sensitive agricultural management.
- 3.3 There are 21 UK and county priority habitats and 156 key species identified in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan. Largely the county is covered by arable and improved grassland. Designated sites in the county include part of two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, 77 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), 4 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), 683 Special Wildlife Sites (SWS), 56 Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC), 7 Local Nature Reserves (LNR), 117 Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS) and 3 National Nature Reserves (NNR).
- 3.4 The proportion of SSSI that were in favourable condition is 22% with no change since 2006. Sites in favourable or unfavourable but recovering condition have increased from 16% to 31% in two years. Those in unfavourable and declining condition have increased from 4% to 6% in the same period.

## Historic Environment

- 3.5 The conservation of the built environment is recognised as important for economic prosperity, local pride and distinctiveness. Listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled ancient monuments and buildings and monuments of local importance, all contribute to the historic environment.
- 3.6 There are 5,833 listed buildings, 127 of which are grade 1 listed, 354 grade 2\* and 5405 grade 2. In reality there are likely to be many more due to groups of buildings being listed as one. The 2009 Heritage at Risk Register identifies 37 grade 1 and 2\* registered buildings and scheduled monuments to be at risk. 66% of the grade 1 listed buildings are ecclesiastical, including Hereford Cathedral, the Priory of Leominster and Flamesbury and Wigmore Abbey.
- 3.7 There is one Area of Archaeological Interest in Hereford City, 266 Scheduled Monuments clustered generally to the north and west of the county, 24 registered parks and gardens of specific historic interest and 178 unregistered including Eastnor Castle and Berrington Hall, which are within the grounds of nationally important listed buildings.
- 3.8 Approximately 3,800 historic farmsteads have been recorded, which is expected to increase 4800 following completion of the survey work, of those surveyed to date 98% of these predate 1890. It should be recognised that unlisted and unregistered buildings also contribute to the wider historic environment.
- 3.9 Specifically in the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty recent surveys show 86 structures in Herefordshire of local importance. Of these 9% in 2008 were considered to be at risk, above the national average.
- 3.10 There are also 64 Conservation Areas across Herefordshire, which are likely to increase in number by the end of the plan period. There is currently a review of all the Conservation Areas being undertaken in phases. These will help to understand their particular historic character which will be used to develop management plans and policy.

## The Community Strategy

3.11 The Community Strategy<sup>1</sup> sets out the county's aspirations up until 2020 and its vision is that:

“Herefordshire will be a place where, organisations and businesses working together within an outstanding natural environment will bring about sustainable prosperity and well being for all.”

3.12 The key issues relevant to local distinctiveness which were identified in partnership with local people are: a safe and pleasant environment to live and work in and protecting the environment.

3.13 Five guiding principles aim to work towards the county becoming a sustainable county and address these key issues. These principles are to:

- Realise the potential of Herefordshire, its people and communities
- Integrate sustainability into all our actions
- Ensure an equal inclusive society
- Build on the achievement of partnership working and ensure continual improvement
- Protect and improve Herefordshire's distinctive environment

3.14 The Community Strategy has themes and those relevant are: safer and stronger communities that are working towards cleaner, greener communities.

3.15 The Local Area Agreement (LAA)<sup>2</sup> is agreed through partnership working and aims to demonstrate how the county's priorities will be addressed to aid a better life. It has the same themes as the Community Strategy with an additional theme on the environment following the decision to split the combined theme “safer and stronger communities”. The priorities are not specific for local distinctiveness however under themes in the LAA a marginal connection with reductions in local contributions to climate change, are relevant.

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<sup>1</sup> The Herefordshire Partnership, The Community Strategy for Herefordshire “A Sustainable Future for the County”, 2006

<sup>2</sup> The Herefordshire Partnership Herefordshire Story of Place Local Area Agreement 2008-2011

3.16 In order to avoid a situation of having no policies to guide development between the end of the current plan and the adoption of the new Local Development Framework, the council has submitted proposals to save appropriate UDP policies. The saved policies will provide a basis for determining planning applications prior to the adoption of the Local Development Framework. Forty two policies throughout the UDP are relevant to local distinctiveness and of these, in the proposed saved policies document<sup>3</sup>, two were recommended for deletion, as they repeated national policy. The remainder have been suggested to be saved.

## **4.0 The Policy Framework**

### **Green Infrastructure, Landscape, Biodiversity and Geodiversity**

#### **National Policy**

##### **4.1 PPS 9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation**

The PPS sets out planning policies on protection of biodiversity and geodiversity conservation through the planning system. The PPS refers to biodiversity as the variety of life in all its forms as discussed in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan Geological conservation relates to the sites that are designated for their geology and/or geomorphologic importance (ODPM, 2005).

#### **Regional Policy**

4.2 Phase II of the Regional Spatial Strategy 2004<sup>4</sup> indicates that Local Authorities should identify those assets considered to be irreplaceable in the development plan and provide appropriate protection. Development Plans should provide guidance on where mitigation and / or compensation will be required. Three policies have specific relevance to the environmental assets.

- Policy QE1 seeks to conserve, protect and enhance distinctive environmental features of the Region. This includes Areas of

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<sup>3</sup> 15<sup>th</sup> May 2009 Planning Committee Report, Herefordshire UDP Saved Policies

<sup>4</sup> Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands (RPG 11), June 2004 GOWM chapter 8



Outstanding Natural Beauty, European wildlife sites, special wildlife habitats, historic landscape features and built heritage.

- Policy QE5 indicates that development plans should identify, protect, conserve and enhance the region's diverse historic environment and manage change which respects local character and distinctiveness.
- Policy QE7 highlights the need for plan to encourage the maintenance and enhancement of the region's wider biodiversity resource by protection specific species and habitats of international, national and sub-regional importance as identified within a Biodiversity Action Plan, those with statutory protection and with biodiversity enhancement areas. A plan should also include policies to reach any BAP targets.

4.3 This section of the RSS is currently under review within phase III and a number of options are currently being consulted upon. The purpose is to update and align the existing policies to ensure consistency with national planning policy statements and regional plans, strategies and initiatives. The review will:

- update policies: QE2, QE4, QE5, QE6, QE7, QE8 and QE9;
- update the supporting text on air quality;
- develop a strategy for the protection, conservation, enhancement and management of regional environmental assets and resources, for their intrinsic value and wider social and economic benefits. It is also suggested that policy QE1 (conserving and enhancing the environment) should be replaced by a new "integrated approach to the management of environmental resources" policy;
- Policy QE3 (creating a high quality built environment) is also suggested to be replaced by policies SR2 (creating sustainable communities) and SR3 (sustainable design and construction) in the WMRSS phase two preferred option.

## **The Historic Environment**

### **National Policy**

4.6 PPG 15 Planning and the Historic Environment  
PPG 16 Archaeology and Planning

The above PPGs are to be replaced by PPS 15 on Planning and the Historic Environment which is currently out for consultation. This is combined with a document by English Heritage, Historic Environment Planning Practice Guidance.

- 4.7 The new PPS15 is aiming to protect what is significant about heritage and be a component of shaping places to create a sense of place. Consideration for the conservation of heritage assets most at risk from neglect, decay or other pressures should also be supported by local lists of heritage assets. High quality, inspirational design is paramount in order to respect and harmonise new build in with the setting and character of an area of heritage.
- 4.8 Other relevant PPS guidance and documents for the historic environment include PPS1 on sustainable development and the climate change supplementary document, PPS3 on housing, PPS7 sustainable development in rural areas and "By Design" by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment.

### **Regional Policy**

- 4.7 See paragraphs 4.2 to 4.3 above.

### **Other documents**

- 4.8 English Heritage and Herefordshire study on characterisation of Herefordshire farmsteads and the farmsteads and landscape project: background paper West Midlands 2009.

## **5.0 The Evidence Base**

### **Green Infrastructure**

- 5.1 It is now recognised that truly sustainable development can only be achieved by planning for multifunctional and connected open spaces, green spaces, natural and semi-natural environments and habitats; the 'green' infrastructure, equivalent to 'grey' infrastructure (roads, streets and structures) and 'blue'

infrastructure (water supply, drainage and sewage). This aims to integrate places through holistic, appropriate and co-ordinated approaches to the challenges facing our environment today.

- 5.2 The Green Infrastructure Strategy seeks to identify issues and opportunities relevant to natural and human influenced resources across the county. It is critical when planning for the future growth of the county that an understanding of the existing resource is made clear in the first instance. Such resources as geology; hydrology; topography; biodiversity; land use; access and movement; archaeology, history and culture; landscape character; and designated open space, which have over many generations shaped the places around us. These are all complex areas, which considered holistically as green infrastructure can intrinsically identify and guide future development in the most appropriate way that will benefit both the community and the wider environment in which they are part.
- 5.3 Analysis of the existing resource has been made clear under the two general headings of “natural resources” and “human influenced resources” that reflect the interaction between people and places over time. Recognising these assets and using them to inform and guide future development will encourage specific solutions for specific locations, perpetuating local distinctiveness.

### **Landscape**

- 5.4 Signed by the UK Government in February 2006, the European Landscape Convention (ELC) became binding and part of national policy from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2007. It applies to all landscapes, towns and villages, as well as open countryside, and ordinary or even degraded landscapes, as well as those that are afforded statutory protection. The convention highlights the need to recognise landscape in law, to develop landscape policies dedicated to the protection, management and creation of landscapes, and to establish procedures for the participation of the general public and other stakeholders in the creation and implementation of landscape policies. It also encourages the integration of landscape into all relevant areas of policy, including cultural, economic and social policies. The ELC provides a definition of landscape:

‘An area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.’<sup>5</sup> (Council of Europe 2000)

- 5.5 The Landscape Character Assessment aims to move away from a dependence on regional and local designated areas and take a holistic approach to understanding our surroundings and environment. The planning system needs to accommodate change, whilst retaining and where possible, strengthen the pattern and diversity of the landscape. This does not mean things cannot change, just that new ways need to be found that manage landscape more effectively, and also guides and controls the change. In essence the landscape character assessment is a tool that can be used to prevent the loss of inherent landscape character or take advantage of opportunities to strengthen the character and thus enhance local distinctiveness. (Local distinctiveness results from the action and interaction of human activity with the environment and is comprised of present and past features and assets that are interconnected and often inseparable).

### **Historic and Archaeological Environment**

- 5.6 The Historic Environment Development Impact and Design Studies (HEDIDS) report and the Rapid Townscape Assessment Studies emphasise the need for the historic environment to be understood in terms of a broad ranging definition. The HEDIDS report is underpinned by the definition that “Herefordshire’s historic environment encompasses all types of material remains which are fixtures on the land and which together constitute the environment in which the people of Herefordshire live and work. The whole Herefordshire landscape bears the imprint of successive generations of human activity. Everything we can see in Herefordshire can be judged to be historic to a greater or lesser extent, and those surroundings are a vital resource informing the ongoing well-being of the present and future Herefordshire communities”.
- 5.7 Initial findings of the HEDIDS report on the general character of the historic environment identify the importance of buried archaeological remains and the

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<sup>5</sup> The European Landscape Convention, Revised October 2006 Council of Europe 2000 available at <http://conferences.ncl.ac.uk/unescolandscapes/files/DEJEANTPONSMaguelonne.pdf>

visible inherited landscape that embodies settlement patterns that connect prehistory to the present day. The physical historic environment therefore imbues the pattern of modern Herefordshire life with a strong sense of locally distinctive tradition, and this everyday legacy fundamentally informs communities' sense of contemporary place.

- 5.8 Key historic environment elements include distinctive settlements and vernacular buildings, patterns of fields, woodlands and roads, the varied "earthwork" remains of past human activity, and the relationship of all these components to long established patterns of landscape use. The generally high legibility of these patterns in the modern landscape reveals regionally significant evidence of historically important trends such as the medieval development of major towns and their hinterlands. The spatial distribution of designated heritage assets often does not adequately represent the particular character and value of Herefordshire's historic environment. Informed, fully integrated and locally specific analysis of the character of the historic environment value is therefore required.
- 5.9 A well-conserved historic environment is a major driver in delivering a high quality of life for existing and future generations of Herefordshire. When combined with appropriate uses it can deliver urban renaissance and sustainable regeneration, contributing to a healthy economy, tourism and leisure related activities, and promote employment opportunity through specialist buildings crafts such as stone masonry and carpentry. Adapting and reusing the existing building stock is a sustainable approach to contributing towards an efficient use of scarce resources.
- 5.10 There is a duty to preserve the special interest of listed buildings and scheduled monuments and their settings with significant potential for enhancement of the historic environment, particularly conservation areas. Sensitive innovative high quality architecture and landscape which doesn't just mimic existing styles can enhance the character and appearance of conservation areas in Hereford City, the market towns and villages, historic rural dwellings including the regeneration of historic farmsteads. If of sufficient quality, designed to fit in and contribute to the historic pattern of the

landscape and historic built environment, these too could become a heritage asset of the future.

### **Biodiversity and Geodiversity**

- 5.11 Biodiversity simply means the variety of plant and animal life. It enhances our 'quality of life' and gives a distinctive character to the county. The aim of council policies will be to ensure development does not cause a net loss in the biodiversity resource of Herefordshire as this would conflict with proposals for sustainable development.
- 5.12 It is important to recognise natural features (termed as landscape features in the Habitats Directive) such as woods, trees, hedgerows, rivers, ditches and ponds are important for biodiversity. They may contain semi-natural habitat and be of major importance in their own right or provide a network of stepping stones or linkages from one habitat to another, known as wildlife corridors. These links allow plants and animals to move between natural features and are important for: migration, for example, birds as they follow their long distance routes; the dispersal of habitats and species into new areas when conditions become suitable; and genetic exchange which is crucial to the overall health, adaptability and survival of all wild plants and animals.
- 5.13 The preservation of rocks (including fossils and minerals) and natural processes (such as soil formation and retention) upon which biodiversity relies is of prime importance. Herefordshire is particularly rich in such Geodiversity. The Herefordshire Geodiversity Action Plan (GAP) vision is to contribute to *"Herefordshire's environment and quality of life through education, conservation, enhancement, management and promotion of the county's geodiversity"*
- 5.14 The GAP sets out connections between geodiversity and people, landscape, nature and climate change and is written in the historical context which is hoped to provide an understanding for the future looking at how things have evolved through the ages. In terms of how planning policy can have regard for the GAP the plans objectives should be taken into account. Plan policies should consider geodiversity in the decision making process, safeguard

sources of locally important building stone, encourage the creation of new geodiversity resources e.g. the retention of features uncovered during road improvements and site developments, consider the opportunities that quarries can offer for restoration plans for geological and biological conservation, promote geodiversity as a tourist attraction, and encourage the use of local stone in new construction and in the repair of existing structures.

## **6.0 What can the Core Strategy do?**

- 6.1 The Core Strategy, Developing the Vision and Objective Background Paper, July 2009<sup>6</sup> sets the vision for the county as seeking "...interdependence of...economic prosperity and environmental quality with the aim of increasing the county's self-reliance and resilience." A policy on local distinctiveness should relate to this in order to address the key issues, also set out in the July 2009 paper, of "providing for the needs of all generations", "ensuring high quality, locally distinctive sustainable design and construction", "protection and enhancement of environmental assets", "addressing the impacts of climate change, including flooding" and "better use of resources".
- 6.2 Objectives 8, 10, 11, and 12 also set out in the July 2009 paper, provide the opportunity for local distinctiveness policies to be created. These should integrate green infrastructure, landscape, historic environment and biodiversity and geodiversity networks that comprise the protection, enhancement and creation of quality of place.
- 6.3 The Core Strategy can develop policy to direct land use change in ways that will prevent the destruction of the inherent character of the county or take advantage of opportunities to strengthen its character and thus enhance local distinctiveness. This would assist in the guidance of future housing and employment allocations and help develop criteria on which planning decisions will be made.

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<sup>6</sup> The Core Strategy Developing the Vision and Objective background paper July 2009 is available at [http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/docs/Vision\\_and\\_Objectives\\_July\\_2009\(1\).pdf](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/docs/Vision_and_Objectives_July_2009(1).pdf)

- 6.4 In addition, the Core Strategy can support and encourage energy efficient schemes within the historic environment without detriment to heritage interest, value or significance. Promote high quality public realm where historic streets are attractive pedestrian urban spaces, which reduce the harmful effects of traffic. Secure mixed uses within the historic environment of urban areas to help foster vitality and variety and where appropriate the rejuvenation of the environment. Secure definable high quality in development, which adds real character to an area in delivering “great places to live”. Promote the historic environment for enjoyment to benefit quality of life and recognise the potential to stimulate the economy through tourism, leisure activities, housing and rural diversification or home working.
- 6.5 Policies in the Core Strategy will aid future Development Plan Documents or Supplementary Planning Documents to be specific in terms of the detail that green infrastructure, landscape, archaeology, historic built environments and biodiversity and geodiversity require for area or site level. This will ensure the most is achieved from these assets to thrive and be integrated into the townscape successfully.

## **7.0 Developing Options Consultation Results**

- 7.1 The Developing Options consultation was undertaken in summer 2008 and contained a number of possible policy options including question 59<sup>7</sup> on locally distinctive features / assets which asked:

How should we protect, conserve, enhance our locally distinctive features / assets?

1. Rely on the national and regional policies only to protect Herefordshire’s environmental assets
2. Develop specific policies to provide an appropriate level of protection, conservation and enhancement for those locally distinctive features and areas, which are important for their biodiversity, landscape or the historic and built environment

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<sup>7</sup> Core Strategy Developing Options Results Report Survey Report July 2008, January 2009



3. Ensure that the relevant policies of the plan include criteria which provide an appropriate level of protection, promotion and enhancement for all elements of the natural or historic environment

7.2 Question 59 responses:

Number of respondents: 591

Number of no opinion / answer not provided – 391

Option 1 – 6% support

Option 2 – 55% support

Option 3 – 38% support

**The most desired option was option 2 to develop specific policies to protect, conserve and enhance locally distinctive features and assets, although over one third of respondents also supported option 3.**

7.3 There were 198 additional comments<sup>8</sup> on the conserving and enhancing the natural and built environment, locally distinctive features and assets section that suggested improvements to the options. The most relevant comments included:

- Limiting development to brownfield sites and urban areas
- Promoting high quality design and the use of energy efficient local materials
- Policy options should not be unduly prescriptive or complex
- Protect green space, open views and orchards
- Natural and built environment issues should guide other policy considerations
- Raise greater awareness of the key natural and built environment issues, in particular climate change
- Control pollution
- Conserve places of historical value
- Preserve the balance between landscape, biodiversity and the historic and built environment

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<sup>8</sup> Core Strategy Developing Options Analysis Schedules March 2009

- Protect garden areas, do not consider them as brownfield
- Agricultural land should be valued and protected
- Include a policy promoting measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change with reference to semi-natural and priority UKBAP habitats
- Take a positive approach to alterations and extensions to heritage buildings
- Policies to prevent noise and light pollution and protect rural tranquillity.
- Recognise changing nature of agricultural crops/enterprises

7.4 Colleagues within the Economic Regeneration section<sup>9</sup> considered that Option 2 would be the most preferred although commented that this should be balanced in order not to be constraining on development. The Herefordshire Environment Partnership<sup>10</sup> did not have any particular comments on the options.

7.5 The Developing Options consultation did not identify any distinctive alternatives to the options already consulted upon.

7.6 The Sustainability Appraisal<sup>11</sup> compatibility test showed that the relevant plan objective for the natural environment was mostly compatible with each of the SA objectives, but had no clear relationship with raising educational achievement and reducing waste and minimising the use of non re-useable materials. However, the location of waste sites could have a conflict with the plan objective to conserve and enhance environmental assets.

7.7 The reasonableness test identified that all three options were reasonable. Option 1 being an approach which would mean no specific policy on environmental assets as national and regional policy would be sufficient, a policy which concentrated on local assets with no particular protection but of high value in the county and finally identified that option 3 needed clarity in terms of what type of criteria based policy approach would be given.

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<sup>9</sup> Memo dated 30<sup>th</sup> July 2008 economic regeneration response to developing options paper, 2008

<sup>10</sup> E-mail dated 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2008 Herefordshire Environment Partnership response to developing options paper 2008

<sup>11</sup> Core Strategy Developing Options Paper Sustainability Appraisal June 2008 (and as amended version)

- 7.8 The assessment of the options revealed that all the options were moving towards sustainability. Option 1 would require research upon the impacts to the economy, close consultation with the appropriate bodies for enhancement and protection purposes and in terms of well-being, and on how local distinctiveness through local features would be protected. Option 2 highlighted the need to maximise the economic value of the option by using the environmental assets in the county. Discussions with developers on contributions would be vital to ensure integrated costs to maximise environmental benefits, access to areas would need to be increased to improve activity levels and well-being. Option 3 requires clarity as mentioned above but the response is the same as for options 1 and 2.
- 7.9 Overall option 2 addresses the local distinctiveness issue for the LDF and is provided with reassurance from legislation and national and regional guidance that more important designated sites are given the most appropriate protection without the need for individual policies in the LDF.
- 7.10 In terms of Habitat Regulation Assessment<sup>12</sup> Option 1 identified that national and regional policies are likely to support improvements on general water supply and transport emissions that could impact upon water levels and water and air quality. Options 2 and 3 were considered likely to be more effective at delivering improvements on air and water issues than option 1, assisting in safeguarding designated sites from water level, water quality and air quality impacts.
- 7.11 No clear alternatives from the SA or HRA assessment process were identified.

## **8.0 Place Shaping Paper, January 2010**

- 8.1 All of the above have shaped the Local Distinctiveness Policy Direction and a summary of this can be viewed on the first page. The Place Shaping Paper, January 2010, includes this wording and will be consulted upon.

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<sup>12</sup> Core Strategy Habitat Regulation Assessment June 2008 (amended March 2009)

## **9.0 Further Consultation Undertaken and Sustainability Appraisal**

- 9.1 In addition to the involvement of appropriate Council Officers it is proposed to consult relevant organisations in developing the policy wording including: Herefordshire Partnership, English Heritage, Town Planning, CABI, Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, British Waterways, Environment Agency, Natural England, Welsh Water, Severn Trent, FWAG, Herefordshire Wildlife Trust, CPRE, NFU, Wye Valley AONB and Malvern Hills AONB.
- 9.2 Also, SA and HRA assessments will be undertaken to assist in developing the policy wording prior to submission.

## **10.0 Conclusions**

- 10.1 The emerging understanding upon Herefordshire's local distinctiveness is that a holistic and integrated approach is required, which is first set at the strategic level through the Core Strategy. Whilst the particulars for each interrelated variant will need to be addressed in more specific detail in terms of design, layout and similar considerations at both the area and site levels. The relationship between policy direction areas also needs to be taken into consideration. This includes policy direction on Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and landscape; open space, sport and recreation; green infrastructure; renewable energy; flood risk; tourism and culture; and design. Design is vital to the success of this policy area and as such the requirement for a future SPD would need to be strongly considered.
- 10.2 Option 2 is the preferred choice for developing a policy on local distinctiveness. An overarching policy is required to conserve, protect, and enhance, promote and restore local distinctiveness in the county that will ensure development improves the quality of place. The recognition that the value and significance of landscapes and their contributions to the planning process which is promoted by the European Landscape Convention will also be important. The provision of a location and criteria based policy is needed to encourage the application of green infrastructure principles, promote and learn from the work of the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnerships

on landscape matters, recognise and conserve the historic environment, biodiversity, geodiversity and encourage quality design. In addition, regard should be given to the studies and evidence base that support or will be needed to support these elements, such as the county's Green Infrastructure Strategy, AONB Management Plans, Biodiversity Action Plans, Historic Characterisation Studies, Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plans and Buildings at Risk Surveys.

- 10.3 None of the additional responses provided a new or realistic alternative option to the 3 options published in the Developing Options consultation. The comments made tended either to suggest additions to the proposed options or made reference to detailed policy issues which will either be covered in the Core Strategy policies or within any subsequent Development Plan Documents (these comments are summarised in paragraph 7.3 above).

## **11.0 Way forward**

- 11.1 Continued engagement with the conservation section of the council and when available the finalised studies mentioned in this paper will be required to inform policy writing and in addition, information from future SA and HRA processes. The policy directions will be subjected to the necessary SA and HRA assessments. Policy wording will be developed with the SA, HRA results and the completed evidence base. It will then be assessed under the SA and HRA processes once more, prior to the formal consultation upon the submission document.

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## Appendix A – References

- The Herefordshire Partnership: The State of Herefordshire Report 2009
- Shaping our Place Core Strategy Developing Options Paper June 2008
- The Herefordshire Partnership, The Community Strategy for Herefordshire “A Sustainable Future for the County”, 2006
- The Herefordshire Partnership Herefordshire Story of Place Local Area Agreement 2008-2011
- The European Landscape Convention, Revised October 2006 Council of Europe 2000 available at <http://conferences.ncl.ac.uk/unescolandscapes/files/DEJEANTPONSMaguelonne.pdf>
- 15<sup>th</sup> May 2009 Planning Committee Report, Herefordshire UDP Saved Policies
- The Core Strategy Developing the Vision and Objective background paper July 2009 is available at [http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/docs/Vision\\_and\\_Objectives\\_July\\_2009\(1\).pdf](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/docs/Vision_and_Objectives_July_2009(1).pdf)
- Core Strategy Developing Options Results Report Survey Report July 2008, January 2009
- Core Strategy Developing Options Analysis Schedules March 2009
- Memo dated 30<sup>th</sup> July 2008 economic regeneration response to developing options paper, 2008
- Core Strategy Developing Options Paper Sustainability Appraisal June 2008 (amended March 2009)
- Core Strategy Habitat Regulation Assessment June 2008 (amended March 2009)
-