

Shaping Our Place 2026

Local Development Framework

Core Strategy

Policy Direction Paper  
Open Space, Sport and  
Recreation

January 2010



# LDF CORE STRATEGY: POLICY DIRECTION BACKGROUND PAPER

**Policy:** Open Space, Sport and Recreation

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## Preferred Policy Direction

The preferred policies for open space, sport and recreation will:

1. Protect existing open space and recreation facilities through the Hereford Area Plan and the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan;
  2. Develop area specific standards and needs for the provision of open space and recreation facilities, to be addressed through the Hereford Area Plan and the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan.
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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides background information and evidence to support the policy directions that form part of the Core Strategy Place Shaping Paper. The full policy wording 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 The remainder of this report seeks to address the following questions:
  - What is the current situation (issue)?
  - What is the national, regional and local policy framework?
  - What is the available evidence base indicating?
  - What can the Core Strategy do?
  - What were the results / indications for the Developing Options Consultation?
  - What further consultation will be taking place?
  - What conclusions can be drawn?
  - What happens next?

## 2.0 The need for the policy

- 2.1 Herefordshire has a legacy of a number of quality parks such as Queenswood Park, countryside sites and other green spaces. The county boasts 4 Special Areas of Conservation, numerous Sites of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI) and other designated areas, including 24 historic parks and gardens scheduled by English Heritage as being of national importance. There is an acknowledgement of the need to provide greater awareness of the importance of protecting and enhancing the county's natural assets.

- 2.2 The parks and green spaces within the county provide networks of accessible high quality open space and recreation facilities fulfilling an important function in terms of the structure of both urban and rural areas, visual amenity, regeneration, townscape and ecological value. Green spaces provide breathing space and offer places for formal and informal recreation, where people can walk and relax and enjoy cultural activities.
- 2.3 Parks and green spaces also provide an outdoor environment for children to learn through play and close social and family interaction. Green spaces provide important wildlife habitats and corridors. Attractive walking and cycling routes and riverside walks provide opportunities for recreation and traffic free routes. Urban green spaces in particular have an important role in mitigating the impact of climate change and their cooling and shading effects are likely to become more important with hotter summer temperatures.
- 2.4 Whilst the public realm incorporates many of the green spaces and areas that have been mentioned above, it also covers roads, streets and other built open spaces which, when combined, provide the principle movement framework for people. Careful management and design of all such open spaces can make a significant contribution to the quality of the environment and the prioritisation of the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and transport users should be encouraged.
- 2.5 The key challenges facing Herefordshire include providing sufficient housing, reviving the city of Hereford, achieving economic growth and addressing transport issues. Open space issues are particularly important, as the provision of formal and informal recreation opportunities can contribute to a range of other council priorities including health, quality of life and protection of the environment.
- 2.6 According to the latest edition of the State of Herefordshire Report (2009), 62% of residents are satisfied with the county's parks and open spaces. The emerging Core Strategy can however, bring about improvements in this figure by setting out a requirement for open spaces, both old and new, to be of high quality, attractive to users, accessible, well maintained and managed.

### **3.0 The policy framework**

- 3.1 There is a general consensus that open spaces are a popular resource, which can make a valuable contribution to the attractiveness of a neighbourhood, to the health and well being of local people and expand the educational opportunities of children and adults alike. For that reason, the Government commissioned a report from the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce to determine how older parks can be revitalised, and how new spaces should be planned and delivered. The final report entitled *Green Spaces, Better Places* (2002) contains numerous recommendations to improve urban parks and gardens and calls for action by all sections of society from the national to the local level.
- 3.2 Many of the actions proposed in the Government's response to Green Spaces, Better Places have been carried forward through the preparation of *Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future* (2003), which effectively launched the organisation known as CABI Space. CABI Space is part of

the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment and aims to bring excellence to the design and management of parks and public spaces.

- 3.3 CABE Space has been contributing to a growing body of evidence over the past few years and the 2005 report entitled *Start with the Park: Creating Urban Green Spaces in areas of Housing Renewal and Growth* demonstrates that green spaces can offer lasting economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits. The guide sets out to persuade local planning authorities that successful place making in areas of housing growth and renewal can be achieved through planning networks of green spaces, and by thinking about their design and care.

### **Sport England**

- 3.4 Sport England is responsible for promoting and investing in sport, supporting the Government (Department of Culture, Media and Sports) in meeting its sporting objectives and distributing both Lottery and Exchequer funds to sport. Sport England also advises planners on what type of sports facilities are needed and where, including open spaces, and how to protect and improve the current facilities.
- 3.5 The 2006 paper entitled *Local Delivery of Sport and Active Recreation: Making the most of Spatial Planning* offers ideas for developing policies for recreation in Core Strategies. There is a particular focus on the relationship between the Sustainable Community Strategy and the LDF and the opportunities for these to work together to better deliver the interests of sport and recreation.

### **National planning policy**

- 3.6 General planning guidance in Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1): Delivering Sustainable Development asserts the importance of public spaces in ensuring development is of high quality. PPS3: Housing builds on this and advises that new dwellings should provide, or have good access to, sufficient open space; particularly play space where family housing is proposed.
- 3.7 Specific national planning policies on open space, sport and recreation are set within Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17): Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation. The Government sees well-designed and implemented planning policies for open space, sport and recreation as fundamental to delivering broader objectives. These include:
- Supporting an urban renaissance;
  - Supporting rural renewal;
  - Promotion of social inclusion and community cohesion;
  - Health and wellbeing;
  - Promoting more sustainable development.
- 3.8 In accordance with PPG17, local planning authorities are required to assess the needs of local communities and undertake an audit of existing open spaces looking at the quantity and quality of open spaces, their use and accessibility. These assessments provide the basis of a local strategy for open space.

- 3.9 PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation requires local planning authorities to contribute to a better quality of life and peoples' sense of wellbeing by enhancing biodiversity in green spaces. In addition, one of the priorities for the national biodiversity strategy for England is to make sure that relevant open spaces are protected and managed for wildlife.

### **Regional guidance**

- 3.10 At a regional level, the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (WMRSS) shows a great deal of support for healthy communities and cultural and sporting activity. Policy QE4: Greenery, Urban Greenspace and Public Places within the WMRSS is particularly important, as it reiterates that access to quality open spaces can greatly improve the quality of life in urban areas by providing opportunities for sport and recreation and through supporting conservation and the improvement of biodiversity. Forestry and woodlands are promoted in Policy QE8 of the WMRSS and at a smaller scale, the opportunities for creating landscape frameworks reflecting local landscape character are greatly encouraged.
- 3.11 As part of the implementation of these policies, the Forestry Commission, on behalf of the Regional Assembly's Environment Partnership, commissioned the production of the West Midlands Green Infrastructure Prospectus and accompanying technical report, which is designed to inform regional, sub regional and local policy and practice. Green infrastructure is defined as the network of green spaces and natural elements that intersperse and connect settlements. The prospectus sets out the regional vision for green infrastructure and has five aims:
1. To ensure politicians, policy developers and decision makers throughout the west midlands are aware of the vital roles of green infrastructure;
  2. To advocate greater investment in, and improved management of, the region's existing green infrastructure;
  3. To ensure green infrastructure is appreciated as an essential element of delivering sustainable communities, underpinning growth and regeneration;
  4. To promote a robust and systematic approach to green infrastructure assessment, planning and investment by local, sub regional and regional planning bodies;
  5. To ensure green infrastructure is proactively planned from the earliest stages of strategic plan preparation through to concept and design stages of all future developments in the region.
- 3.12 Also of importance is the Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2008) for the region, which advises local planning authorities to improve peoples' access to quality open spaces by improving the transport system and the design and location of new development.

### **Sub-regional guidance**

- 3.13 As mentioned previously, Herefordshire has a wealth of parks and open spaces, which reflect the quiet and tranquil nature of the county and provide good opportunities for leisure pursuits or relaxation.

- 3.14 The framework of local plans and strategies shaping Herefordshire and its open space includes the following documents:
- The Sustainable Community Strategy;
  - The Local Area Agreement;
  - The Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.
- 3.15 The **Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy** sets out aspirations for the county by 2020 and how we might achieve them. The strategy also acts as Herefordshire's Local Agenda 21 Plan and Regeneration Strategy and is closely integrated with the emerging LDF for the county.
- 3.16 The **Vision** is that Herefordshire will be a place where people, organisations and businesses working together within an outstanding natural environment will bring about sustainable prosperity and wellbeing for all.
- 3.17 The **Local Area Agreement (LAA)** is closely aligned with the Sustainable Community Strategy and is structured around four themes:
- Economic and Enterprise;
  - Children and Young People;
  - Healthier Communities and Older People;
  - Safer and Stronger Communities.
- 3.18 Within each theme there are a number of outcomes, underpinned by performance indicators which are regularly monitored to show progress towards the achievement.
- 3.19 Two important LAA priorities 2008-11 are to:
- Improve the availability of sustainable services and facilities and access to them;
  - Encourage and promote a healthy lifestyle with particular attention to reducing smoking, levels of obesity and excessive alcohol consumption.
- 3.21 The existing **Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (UDP)** has been operating as part of the LDF since its adoption on 23rd March 2007. Once the UDP expires in March 2010, only the policies which have been formally saved will continue in effect. In January 2009, the council formally commenced work on the process of saving policies, taking into account the close links that exist between UDP policies, the WMRSS and the Sustainable Community Strategy, and the need to ensure effective planning control whilst the Core Strategy is in preparation.
- 3.22 All policies concerning open areas and green spaces contained in Chapter 9 of the UDP have been submitted to the Secretary of State to be saved, and a decision is expected on the saved policies early in 2010.
- 3.23 Policy RST4 affords protection to land valued for recreational and related amenity purposes, while Policy HBA9 within the UDP seeks to protect open land valued locally for its open nature and its contribution to the character of

settlements and neighbourhoods. The policy advises that the following elements are worthy of protection. Land/open areas which:

- Provide relief within an otherwise built-up frontage or within developments;
- Create and maintain a well defined edge to the settlement;
- Provide a buffer between incompatible uses;
- Provide important views into or out of settlements and of attractive buildings and their settings, or of attractive landscapes;
- Provide an important amenity of value to the local community;
- Represent a familiar or distinctive element within an attractive street scene;
- Represent an historic element within the origins or development of the settlement or area; or
- Provide wildlife corridors or stepping stones within built-up areas.

#### **4.0 Evidence base**

4.1 Over the last few years and as part of its LDF the council has been preparing a wide range of background studies as evidence to support its Core Strategy.

4.2 In January 2005, Strategic Leisure Limited was commissioned by Herefordshire Council to carry out an Open Space Audit. The audit offers a comprehensive survey of open space, sport and recreation provision within the county, in accordance with PPG17, and highlights the importance of open space in Herefordshire. It addresses management and supply as well as peoples' perception of spaces within the county, the issues which affect Herefordshire's open space provision and its future needs and demands.

##### **General findings from the audit**

4.3 In order to gain an insight into local needs and aspirations in respect of open spaces, Strategic Leisure undertook the following consultations with the local community:

- Household questionnaires;
- Survey of children and young people;
- Consultation with schools;
- Internal stakeholder consultations.

##### Household survey

4.4 The household survey provided an opportunity for randomly selected households to comment on the quality, quantity and accessibility of existing open space provision, as well as identifying their aspirations for future provision.

4.5 A total of 500 questionnaires were distributed to households across the county to capture the views of both users and non-users of open spaces. The majority of respondents (78%) believe there to be sufficient open space within their neighbourhood and rated each facility positively.



- 4.6 Play areas and playing fields were the only typologies rated poor or very poor by more than 10% of users. Importantly, 79% of those questioned live within five minutes of their nearest facility.

#### Survey of children and young people

- 4.7 Though it was considered important to understand the views of children and young people due to their frequent use of open spaces, the level of response to the survey was poor. As a consequence, no detailed analysis of findings would prove statistically valid.

#### Consultation with schools

- 4.8 Questionnaires were sent to every school in Herefordshire. A total of 106 responses were received and the majority of respondents (49%) claimed that they do not have community use of their facilities.

#### Internal stakeholders

- 4.9 Internal consultations were undertaken with over fifteen key stakeholders who have a direct influence over the level and provision of green space across the county. The interviews revealed that the rural nature and size of the county is a major issue with 80% of the population living in 20% of the area.

#### **Auditing local provision**

- 4.10 Once local needs and aspirations had been established, Strategic Leisure compiled a detailed audit of the provision of open space across Herefordshire, but only those sites falling within the PPG17 typologies were identified. These are:

- Parks and gardens;
- Natural and semi-natural urban greenspaces;
- Green corridors;
- Outdoor sports facilities;
- Amenity greenspace;
- Provision for children and teenagers;
- Allotments, community gardens and urban farms;
- Cemeteries and churchyards;
- Accessible countryside in the urban fringe;
- Civic spaces, including civic and market squares, and other hard surfaced areas designed for pedestrians.

- 4.11 A total of 713 sites were identified through a variety of methods including postal and telephone surveys to all parish councils within the county, site visits for quality assessment, consultation and information provided by council officers.

- 4.12 In terms of quantity the audit and assessment revealed that Herefordshire has:

- 56 sites classified as parks and gardens (196 ha);

- 220 sites classified as natural and semi-natural green space (4,143 ha);
- 182 amenity green space sites (81 ha);
- 255 sites classified as outdoor sports facilities (4,860 ha);
- 129 sites with provision for children and young people (12.55 ha).

4.13 The majority of publicly accessible open space is within the city of Hereford, and to some extent Ross-on-Wye and Leominster, and to a lesser extent Kington, Ledbury and Bromyard.

### **Setting and applying the provision standards**

4.14 The consultation and survey findings were used to develop local standards of open space provision and recommendations which can be carried forward through the preparation of the LDF.

### Surplus/Deficiency

4.15 The current quantitative findings of the study were used to illustrate the variance in provision of open space across Hereford and the market towns by typology.

4.16 The figures shown in Table 1 overleaf provide an overview of the current standard for each particular typology against the actual provision per 1000 population. This was then compared against the recommended standards to demonstrate the surplus/deficiency in the actual level of provision.

4.17 The following observations can be made in relation to Herefordshire's main settlements:

- **Hereford City North**
  - Extensive under provision of natural and semi-natural green space and outdoor sports facilities;
  - Extensive over provision of parks and gardens;
  - Average provision for children and teenagers;
  - Over provision of amenity green space;
- **Hereford City South**
  - Average provision of parks and gardens;
  - Extensive under provision of natural and semi-natural green space and outdoor sports facilities;
  - Average provision for children and teenagers;
  - Extensive over provision of amenity green space;
- **Bromyard**
  - Extensive under provision of parks and gardens;
  - Extensive over provision of natural and semi-natural green space;
  - Under provision of amenity green space and outdoor sport;
  - Average provision for children and teenagers.
- **Kington**
  - Extensive under provision of parks and gardens;

- Extensive over provision of natural and semi-natural green space;
  - Under provision of amenity green space and outdoor sports facilities;
  - Average provision for children and teenagers.
- **Ledbury**
    - Extensive under provision of parks and gardens and outdoor sports facilities;
    - Extensive over provision of natural and semi-natural green space.
- **Leominster**
    - Extensive under provision of parks and gardens and outdoor sports facilities;
    - Extensive over provision of natural and semi-natural green space;
    - Under provision of amenity green space;
    - Average provision for children and teenagers;
- **Ross-on-Wye**
    - Extensive under provision of parks and gardens, amenity green space and outdoor sports facilities;
    - Extensive over provision of natural and semi-natural green space;
    - Average provision for children and teenagers.

Total Provision - Existing Open Space (ha)							
Area	Populations	Parks & Gardens +/-	Nat & Semi Nat Open Space +/-	Amenity Space +/-	Outdoor Sports Facilities +/-		Provision for Children and Young People +/-
					Inc Non Com Use	All Com Use	
Bromyard	11,880	-10.61	234.68	-3.63	3.18	-2.82	-0.38
Hereford City North	34,686	7.18	-47.76	5.46	6.36	-12.01	-0.69
Hereford City South	20,156	0.09	-20.37	20.34	-17.3	-34.15	0.19
Ledbury	14,953	-9.16	78.70	-0.85	4.16	-5.0	0.59
Leominster	16,673	-10.60	286.05	-2.85	0.62	-15.47	0.12
Kington	15,459	-11.74	583.32	-4.66	3.74	-4.19	0.01
Ross-on-Wye	27,710	-11.65	224.14	-5.37	-4.42	-24.47	-0.54

**Table 1:** Surplus and deficiency of open space in quantity by typology

4.18 In terms of future provision, Table 1 gives a broad indication of where the county needs to protect, provide new provision or potentially change use to fill the gaps in the provision across Hereford and the market towns. The study advises that the disposal of sites should be seen very much as a last resort and must only be considered following further consultation with the local community that will be most affected.

#### **Consultants' recommendations and other key strategy documents**

4.19 The PPG17 audit and assessment concluded with the recommendation that identified provision deficiencies should be addressed as a priority in the production of the LDF.

4.20 Work is currently ongoing to produce a comprehensive Open Space Strategy for Herefordshire based on the 2006 audit, as well as other Herefordshire Council strategies that will affect the nature and provision of open space in the county. These include the Green Infrastructure Strategy and the Design Code Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

4.21 With reference to green infrastructure, work to date has concentrated upon developing the Green Infrastructure Study, which was commissioned by Herefordshire Council in January 2007 as part of its ongoing commitment to meeting the needs of new and future communities and to general environmental protection and enhancement.

- 4.22 The completed Green Infrastructure Study, published in April 2008, aims to ensure that the natural and cultural landscape features and functions are placed at the heart of planning for sustainable development within Herefordshire. To achieve this, the study identifies the components forming 'Green Infrastructure', assesses their quality and quantity, identifies any shortfall in provision and considers the opportunities available to provide and manage such infrastructure within the context of growth of the county.
- 4.23 However, although the Green Infrastructure Study identifies opportunities and deficiencies for environmental enhancement and connection, the original document is currently being reworked and supplemented to fit within the structure of the wider Green Infrastructure Strategy.
- 4.24 Once complete, the Green Infrastructure and Open Space strategies, along with the Design Code SPD, will help guide and implement the open space policies within the Core Strategy and subsequent Area Plans. The Open Space Strategy will form the overall strategy for open spaces and planning policy will help in the development and implementation of this key document.

## 5.0 What can the Core Strategy do?

- 5.1 The emerging Core Strategy can ensure the adequate provision of open space and opportunities for sport and recreation by delivering the aspirations of the Sustainable Community Strategy. To achieve this, the following long-term headline spatial vision is proposed:

*“By 2026, Herefordshire will be a place of distinctive environmental, historical and cultural assets and local communities, with sustainable development fostering a high quality of life for those who live, work and visit here. A sustainable future for the county will be based on the interdependence of the themes of social progress, economic prosperity and environmental quality with the aim of increasing the county’s self-reliance and resilience.”*

- 5.2 There are twelve objectives which underpin this vision, six of which directly concern open space, sport and recreation:

**Objective 2:** *To improve the health, well-being and quality of life of all residents by ensuring new developments positively contribute towards better access to, provision and use of, improved public open space, sport and recreation, education, cultural and health facilities.*

### Key issues addressed:

- Providing for the needs of all generations;
- Protection and enhancement of environmental assets;
- Provision of, and access to, important services and facilities.

### Sustainable Community Strategy priorities:

- Children and young people are healthy and have healthy lifestyles;

- Reduce traffic congestion and improve health through integrated transport provision, including opportunity for maximising walking, cycling and public transport;
- Protect and enhance biodiversity within the county;
- Encourage investment in high quality streets, public spaces and the built environment;
- Provide accessible, high quality sporting, cultural and recreational facilities and activities;
- Ensure fair access to the services which Herefordshire residents need.

**Objective 4:** *To reduce the need to travel and lessen the harmful impacts from traffic growth, promote active travel and improve quality of life by locating significant new development where access to employment, shopping, education, health, recreation, leisure and other services are, or could be made available by walking, cycling or public transport.*

Key issues addressed:

- Improving air quality;
- Improving transport infrastructure, choices and movement.

Sustainable Community Strategy priorities:

- Reduce traffic congestion and improve health through integrated transport provision, including opportunity for maximising walking, cycling and public transport;
- Ensure investment in high quality streets, public spaces and the built environment.

**Objective 9:** *To develop Herefordshire as a destination for quality leisure visits and sustainable tourism by enabling the provision of new, as well as enhancement of existing, tourism infrastructure, in appropriate locations.*

Key issues addressed:

- Protecting and enhancing environmental assets.

Sustainable Community Strategy priorities:

- Reduce traffic congestion and improve health through integrated transport provision, including opportunity for maximising walking, cycling and public transport;
- Promote sustainable land management;
- Provide accessible, high quality sporting, cultural and recreational facilities and activities;
- Protect and enhance biodiversity in the county;
- Maintain landscape character;
- Encourage investment in high quality streets, public spaces and the built environment.

**Objective 10:** *To achieve sustainable communities and protect the environment by delivering well-designed places, spaces and buildings, which use land efficiently, reinforce local distinctiveness and are supported by the necessary infrastructure including green infrastructure.*

Key issues addressed:

- Protecting and enhancing environmental assets;
- Better use of resources;
- Provision/access to important services/facilities.

Sustainable Community Strategy priorities:

- Protect and enhance biodiversity within the county;
- Promote sustainable land management;
- Ensure fair access to the services which Herefordshire residents need;
- Reduce traffic congestion and improve health through integrated transport provision, including opportunity for maximising walking, cycling and public transport.

**Objective 11:** *To address the causes and impacts of climate change by ensuring new development: uses sustainable design and construction, methods to conserve natural resources, does not increase flood risk to new or existing property, increases the use of renewable forms of energy to reduce carbon emissions, minimise waste and pollution, manages water supply and conservation and conserves and protects biodiversity and geodiversity.*

Key issues addressed:

- Better use of resources.

Sustainable Community Strategy priorities:

- Protect and enhance biodiversity within the county;
- Maintain landscape character;
- Encourage investment in high quality streets, public spaces and the built environment;
- Promote sustainable land management;
- Provide accessible, high quality sporting, cultural and recreational facilities and activities;
- Reduce traffic congestion and improve health through integrated transport provision, including opportunity for maximising walking, cycling and public transport.

**Objective 12:** *To conserve, promote, utilise and enjoy our natural, built, historic and cultural assets for the fullest benefits to the whole community by safeguarding the county's current stock of environmental assets from loss and damage, reversing negative trends, ensuring best condition and encouraging expansion, as well as appropriately managing future assets.*

Key issues addressed:

- Protection and enhancement of environmental assets.

Sustainable Community Strategy priorities:

- Protect and enhance biodiversity within the county;
- Maintain landscape character;
- Encourage investment in high quality streets, public spaces and the built environment;
- Promote sustainable land management;
- Provide accessible, high quality sporting, cultural and recreational facilities and activities.

## **6.0 Developing Options Consultation Results**

6.1 Public engagement is an important element of developing the Core Strategy and a Developing Options Consultation took place through the summer of 2008 in order to help the council decide upon which options to look at in more detail.

6.2 The consultation period ran from 16 June to 8 August 2008 and residents, statutory consultees and other interested bodies were encouraged to examine and comment upon, among other things, the council's draft spatial vision and objectives.

6.3 With reference to open space provision, the Developing Options Paper asked the following question:

1. What is the best way to provide the required open space and recreation facilities throughout the county?
  - a. Develop a countywide standard for the provision of open space and recreation facilities within all new developments, similar to the current approach;
  - b. Develop area specific standards and needs for the provision of open spaces and recreation facilities.

6.4 The results of the Developing Options Consultation reveal that there was a preference for a countywide standard (54%), with fewer respondents in favour of area specific standards (46%).

6.5 Some respondents made additional comments in respect of open spaces, but none of these would appear to provide alternative options to those raised within the Developing Options Consultation.

### **Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulation Assessment**

6.6 As part of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process of the whole Core Strategy, the objectives were appraised in April 2008 at the Developing Options stage. The results of that exercise were published in June 2008 and the objectives relating to open space, sport and recreation were considered to be in accordance with each of the SA objectives.



- 6.7 The likely effects of options A and B (para 6.3) were considered to be moving towards sustainability and the Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) reveals that the provision of open space and recreational facilities could help reduce disturbances on designated sites.

## **7.0 Further consultation undertaken and Sustainability Appraisal**

- 7.1 Over the next few months, the council will be undertaking further consultation with relevant internal departments and external organisations in order to finalise a preferred policy. The list of consultees can be found at Appendices 1 and 2 of this report.
- 7.2 In August 2009, the council undertook four SA workshops in order to assess the sustainability of the emerging set of preferred policy directions. Those for open space, sport and recreation had not significantly changed since the Developing Options stage and therefore were not re-appraised. A copy of the SA and HRA of the Place Shaping Paper can be found on the council's website.

## **8.0 Conclusion**

- 8.1 In conclusion, the national, regional and local policy frameworks highlight the need to either protect or provide open space. This is a reflection of the growing recognition that public open spaces play a number of important functions and have a vital role in contributing not only to a greener Herefordshire but also to a cleaner and healthier county. For residents and workers alike, open space offers opportunities for recreation and sporting activities.
- 8.2 In January 2005, the council commissioned a detailed audit of open space provision in order to provide evidence to support its Core Strategy. The study was carried out drawing on guidance in PPG17, and the final report identifies either a credit or deficit of public open space within Herefordshire.
- 8.3 Among other things, the PPG17 audit and assessment concluded with the recommendation that identified provision deficiencies should be address as a priority in the production of the LDF. This means that the Core Strategy should develop area specific standards and needs for the provision of open spaces and recreation facilities, notwithstanding the preference amongst consultees for a blanket policy.

## **9.0 Way forward**

- 9.1 Whilst Herefordshire Council needs to demonstrate that there are clear mechanisms for monitoring the outcomes of policies (including open space, sport and recreation policies) within its Core Strategy, it is not the purpose of this report to propose indicators to measure their success or otherwise.
- 9.2 The range of possible indicators which could be used to monitor policies will be developed through further consultation with key stakeholders and other interested bodies throughout the development plan process.



## **Appendix 1: List of Internal Consultees**

Geoff Tarring - *Parks Manager*

Fran White - *Parks Development Manager*

James Bisset - *Principal Countryside Officer*

Ruth Jackson - *Principal Leisure & Countryside Recreation Officer*

Jan Perridge - *Senior Sports Development Officer*

Stephen Ashton - *Olympic 2012 Officer*

Kevin Bishop – *Principal Planning Officer (Central Team)*

Andrew Banks – *Principal Planning Officer (Northern Team)*

Edward Thomas – *Principal Planning Officer (Southern Team)*

## **Appendix 2: List of External Consultees**

Advantage West Midlands

Herefordshire Partnership

Sport England

Rural Community Council for Hereford and Worcester

County Association of Local Councils

Campaign to Protect Rural England

National Playing Fields Association

Open Spaces Society

## **Appendix 3: Bibliography and Further Reading**

### **National documents**

ODPM (2003): *Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future*, London: HMSO

Sport England (2006): *Local Delivery of Sport and Active Recreation: Making the most of Spatial Planning*,

### **Planning policy statements/guidance notes**

DCLG (2006): *PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development*, London: HMSO

DCLG (2005): *PPS9 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation*, London: HMSO

ODPM (2002): *PPG17 – Open Space, Sport and Recreation*, London: HMSO

### **Regional documents**

GOWM (2008) *Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands (Incorporating Phase 1)*, London: TSO

WMRA (2008): *West Midlands Health and Wellbeing Strategy*, Birmingham

Forestry Commission (2007): *Green Infrastructure: A Prospectus for the West Midlands Region*, Worcester

### **Sub-regional documents**

The Herefordshire Partnership (2009): *The State of Herefordshire Report*, Hereford

Herefordshire Council (2009): *Core Strategy - Developing Options Analysis Schedules*, Hereford

Herefordshire Council (2009): *Core Strategy - Developing Options Paper Sustainability Appraisal*, Hereford

Herefordshire Council (2009): *Core Strategy – Developing Options Paper Habitat Regulation Assessment*, Hereford

Herefordshire Council (2008): *Shaping our Place 2026 - Core Strategy Developing Options Paper*, Hereford

The Herefordshire Partnership (2008): *Herefordshire Story of Place Local Area Agreement 2008-2011*, Hereford

The Herefordshire Partnership (2007): *Growing Older in Herefordshire – A Strategy for Older People in Herefordshire*, Hereford

The Herefordshire Partnership (2006): *The Community Strategy for Herefordshire “A Sustainable Future for the County”*, Hereford

**External technical studies (consultants)**

AMEY (2008): *Herefordshire Green Infrastructure Study*, Hereford

Strategic Leisure Limited (2006): *PPG17 Open Spaces Assessment*, Hereford

**Background papers**

Herefordshire Council (2009): *Core Strategy - Developing the Vision and Objectives Background Paper*, Hereford