

# 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 This Plan – the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (UDP) - is the first such Plan to be produced for the County. The Plan has been prepared by the County of Herefordshire District Council, which was established as a unitary authority on local government re-organisation in April 1998. Within Herefordshire, the new authority replaced two tiers of local government, represented by the former Hereford and Worcester County Council and the following District Councils: Malvern Hills, South Herefordshire, Hereford City, and Leominster. Within Worcestershire, the two-tier system of local government is retained.
- 1.1.2 The Plan has been prepared in accordance with the procedures laid down in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compensation Act 1991, together with the relevant regulations. These procedures provide several opportunities for public comment. Details of the Plan preparation process are set out below. The Plan covers the period 1996-2011.
- 1.1.3 In preparing the Plan, regard has also been had to the changes made to the planning system by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. This creates a new type of planning system, with local authorities now responsible for establishing Local Development Frameworks rather than plans such as the UDP. The 2004 Act includes transitional arrangements, under which the UDP has been adopted and will be used whilst elements of the new approach are put into place. Details can be found in the Council's Local Development Scheme, which sets out how the Local Development Framework for Herefordshire will be established.

## 1.2 The policy background

### *National and regional context*

- 1.2.1 The Plan has been prepared within a context established by a range of national and regional planning policies. At the national level, Government produces a range of Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) notes, which together offer guidance on a range of planning issues. These are being reviewed and replaced by Planning Policy Statements. This advice is brought into more detailed focus by Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands (RPG11).
- 1.2.2 The current RPG11 was published in June 2004. In September 2004, with the commencement of Part 1 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, it became the Regional Spatial Strategy and a statutory development plan. As such, it guides the preparation of local authority development plans and local transport plans in the West Midlands up to 2021.
- 1.2.3 The Regional Spatial Strategy is being revised, in three phases. The first phase was carried out as the Black Country Study. The second phase embraces aspects of housing, employment, transport and environment, and is timetabled for completion by Autumn 2008. Many of the issues being tackled through this phase were raised by the Secretary of State in approving the Strategy in July 2004. In the case of housing and employment land it is also intended to undertake a re-examination of overall regional requirements. A further third phase of revision will be undertaken in due course. These reviews of the Regional Spatial Strategy have implications for the production of the Local Development Framework for the County and have been taken into account in preparing the Local Development Scheme.

## 1.3 Using the Plan

### *Part I and Part II*

- 1.3.1 The 1990 Act as amended requires that the Plan comprises two parts:

- Part I, setting out general policies
- Part II, comprising more detailed proposals, a reasoned justification of those proposals and of the policies set out in Part I, together with proposals maps.

#### *Format of the Plan*

#### 1.3.2 The Plan comprises:

- a section setting out the main characteristics and key issues affecting the County (chapter 2)
- Part I: a Strategy statement, detailing the vision and guiding principles and including the Part I policies of the Plan (chapter 3)
- Part II: a chapter dealing with development criteria and standards, which apply to all forms of land use and development (chapter 4); a series of topic chapters dealing with specific issues such as housing, employment, and so on (chapters 5 to 13); and a statement of implementation and monitoring (chapter 14).

#### 1.3.3 In order to meet statutory requirements, the justification for the Part I policies of the Plan (chapter 3) is included within the later chapters which also include more detailed proposals (chapters 4-13).

#### *Participation and consultation*

#### 1.3.4 The Plan has been prepared using a range of consultation techniques. Key stages include:

- publication in May 1998 of a Project Report setting out a vision and guiding principles to lead development of the Plan, with invited consultation including Parish Councils
- 'Planning for the New Millennium', a major public consultation during Summer 1999 on three strategic options for the location of new development, including a seminar for Parish Councils and distribution of a leaflet and questionnaire to all County households
- establishment of a number of focus groups to consider key aspects of Plan policy. In 2000, these groups were subsumed within the various thematic groups working towards the achievement of the Herefordshire Community Strategy
- a range of site specific consultations undertaken during 2000 and 2001 throughout the County in respect of future development sites, and including the City, Town and Parish Councils and Local Area Forums
- publication in 2002 of the Deposit Draft version of the Plan, which generated a significant response leading to changes being published for comment in the Revised Deposit Draft
- consultation during 2003 as part of the assessment of the BPEO for managing waste in the County
- consultations again in 2003 on the developing proposals for the Edgar Street Grid area of Hereford
- publication in 2004 of the Revised Deposit Draft version of the Plan
- consultation in December 2004 on a number of pre-Inquiry Proposed Changes
- consideration of outstanding objections to the Plan at Public Inquiry during February – June 2005
- publication in 2006 of Proposed Modifications to the Plan, following the recommendations of the Inquiry Inspector.

## **1.4 Supporting documents**

#### *Sustainability appraisal*

#### 1.4.1 Considerations associated with sustainable development are at the heart of the Plan. Sustainable development is defined, and its relationship to land use planning set out, in

chapter 3 and in more detail in the sustainability appraisals which have been prepared for successive stages of the Plan. These set out a systematic approach to the treatment of environmental issues and related social and economic concerns. The appraisals provide a starting point for subsequent monitoring of the Plan, which is critical in developing and implementing a sound planning policy framework to achieve overall objectives and to policy development and review. This work is detailed in the Annual Monitoring Report which is submitted to Government each year.

#### *Background papers*

1.4.2 Background papers setting out the technical basis for Plan policies and other considerations were published in 2002 with the Deposit Draft for the following topic areas:

- housing
- employment
- town centres and retail
- minerals
- waste.

An urban housing capacity study was published with the Revised Deposit Draft version of the Plan.

#### *Supplementary planning documents*

1.4.3 Provision is made in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 for the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents as a means of providing further advice on matters included in the Plan. They can deal either with specific themes or topics, or focus on particular development sites. Prior to the 2004 Act, a range of Supplementary Planning Guidance was prepared by the Council which also provides further detail on Plan policies. This material continues to carry weight and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Over time, such existing guidance will be replaced by Supplementary Planning Documents. The Local Development Scheme sets out the position regarding both the status of existing Guidance and the timetable for preparing Supplementary Planning Documents.