

Herefordshire Local Plan update – pre-consultation survey

General Questions

1. What elements of the strategy and policies in the current Core Strategy do you consider to have been successful or not? Please explain the reasons for your answer.

The local perception of the core strategy is that it is to provide more houses, while neglecting to consider their effect on the infrastructure of remote parishes.

2. What elements of current Core Strategy policy could be improved? Please explain the reasons for your answer.

We think more consideration should be given for the accessibility of new homes. For example, Woolhope parish may appear to be close to centres of population like Ross on Wye. However its geography, steep hills, narrow valleys, small roads, makes it unsuitable for much development. The assessment of each parish for RA2 or RA3 development should be revised taking account of practical matters on the ground in the parishes. Practical matters should address the lack of useful bus transport, and the provision of water and sewerage infrastructure.

3. Are there any key planning policies that are missing from the current plan?

Many come to the parish for holidays. What is valuable about the parish as a tourist destination should form part of the parish plan. What is valuable includes footpaths, cycle paths, unique views which should be protected – the aesthetics and amenity of the parish. “Enhancing while conserving”.

4. Are the policy areas that are devolved to Neighbourhood Development Plans at the right level? Please explain the reason for your answer.

Sorry, we don't understand the question

5. If you have an adopted Neighbourhood Development Plan, do you consider it has been a success? Please explain the reasons for your answer.

Not yet. However 'windfall' planning applications have been fulfilling our housing quota on an organic basis. These are subject to all the ordinary planning constraints, the consent of neighbours, et cetera, and have worked well so far, producing varied new housing on sites scattered throughout the parish, with no untoward pressure on the infrastructure in any one place.

Current Core Strategy settlement hierarchy

1. What impact has the current settlement hierarchy had on your parish? Please explain the reasons for your answer.

If by "settlement hierarchy" mean the Woolhope RA3 practice of windfall planning applications, all the windfall planning applications that have been granted have been approved by the Parish Council, by the community, and are producing a more varied type of housing scattered throughout this large parish.

2. Do you consider that the current distribution of proportional growth in the named settlements of policy RA2 of the Core Strategy achieved its aims of rural sustainability? Please explain the reasons for your answer.

Woolhope parish is the largest parish east of Hereford, albeit one of the least accessible, and has much scattered housing with only a small village relative to the total number of houses in the parish. RA2 would require the parish to build more housing close to the village which would nearly double the number of houses in the village, even though the number of new houses built there would constitute only 14% of the total number of houses in the parish. So the proportional growth of named settlements – doesn't really work for the Woolhope village.

Services and facilities

1. Have existing services been retained or new services and facilities provided through development in your parish? Please explain the reasons for your answer.

No new services have been supplied to the parish during the currency of the present core strategy. In fact the bus service has been reduced which is impossible to use – it leaves less than an hour in its destination at Hereford before it returns. The parish questions its effectiveness. However the parish is now seeing some roads being repaired, but not upgraded, since they were so damaged by the diversion of traffic from the protracted closure of the B4224.

2. What would you consider to be the key services and facilities required to support proportional growth over the next twenty years? Please explain the reasons for your answer.

Occasional 'windfall' growth could be sustainable provided that assurances are given by Welsh Water that confirm the provision of water and sewerage processing in the village. The appropriate septic tank provision should also be confirmed due to differing soil types and stream run off. It is also vital that transport access can be managed at the distributed sites

Future settlement hierarchy

1. Are there any constraints to new development in your parish which would affect future growth? Please explain the reasons for your answer.

Any new development in the Woolhope parish, which is so isolated, needs to account its geography. This was completely lacking from the recent core strategy. The geography is awkward – in a bad winter the only passable road level route out of the village is a narrow road through to Fownhope.

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2. Would you consider your area to be a sustainable community for proportionate growth? Please explain the reasons for your answer.

The fragility of the infrastructure in the parish has been shown by its testing last winter with the informal diversion of the B4224 thorough the parish. Further the opinion is that the parish should not expose its informal charms to change and development. So no street lights, or pavements. Please don't destroy what makes Woolhope a charming place to live in and visit!

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.