

RoWToP
Ross-on-Wye Town Plan

Report on Environment and Strategic Housing Meeting with Cllr John Jarvis

Meeting Date: 30/10/07 at 5:00 p.m.

Met By: Brian Atherton, following email consultations with the Chairman and the other members of the Stage 2 sub-group, Rob Brain and Dai Harries.

- 1. The LDF (Local Development Framework)**
 - a. This is being developed now and will, in due course, replace the UDP.
 - b. It is Council Policy that instruments such as Parish and Town Plans will inform the LDF and so influence its content and execution.
- 2. County environment policy**
 - a. Separate meeting with Andy Tectnor to be arranged
 - b. Flower beds are currently tended by the County Council but it has no statutory duty. Would it make more sense for these and similar activities to become officially the Town Council's responsibility?
- 3. County strategic housing policy**
 - a. Separate meeting with Richard Gabb to be arranged
 - b. Town Plan SG could consider including means for identifying "brown-field" sites either for affordable housing or employment.
- 4. Waste collection services**
 - a. Potential health hazard domestic waste, such as kitchen waste, will continue to be collected weekly as at present.
 - b. Recyclable waste will be collected bi-weekly and means will be introduced for energy recovery from its disposal. Failure to achieve this would result in punitive fines by central government.
 - c. Arrangements will be made to extend the opening hours of the Ross domestic waste disposal centre on the Ashburton estate.
- 5. Recycling services**
 - a. These will be extended to cover the entire county.
- 6. Provision for affordable homes**
 - a. Comes under Richard Gabb. See (3) above.
- 7. Flooding**
 - a. Comes under Brian Wilcox with whom a separate meeting has been arranged.
- 8. Signage and street furniture as it relates to the environment**
 - a. Also comes under Brian Wilcox. See (7) above.
- 9. Impact of environmental issues on the aged, disabled and the frail.**
 - a. Needs further discussion.
- 10. Specific issues (e.g. the re-cycling of plastics)**
 - a. Needs further discussion.
- 11. Any other related topics**
 - a. None discussed.

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Environment and Waste Issues

The Herefordshire Council Corporate Environment Strategy 2005 – 2011 (issued in June 2005) is the key document relating to the above issues.

The aim of the above document is to provide partners and managers across the county with an overview of major environmental commitments that have already been made by the authority. Some are mandatory whilst others are led by the need to control costs. All are linked through the agreed ambitions of the Herefordshire Plan and the Corporate Plan (2005 – 2008), which states that one of the Council's top eight priorities for the period of the Plan is *'to protect the environment, including recycling much more waste and reducing carbon emissions.'*

The strategy summarises the policy aims, objectives and action plans that the Council has adopted. Internally the Council is committed to tackling its own environmental impacts, such as waste, energy and transport, right across Council services through its ISO 14001 certification (the international environmental certification standard). Externally the Council makes a major contribution to the county's environment through working in partnership with other organisations and the wider community.

The strategy is backed by an integrated action plan that aligns the aims and objectives described in the strategy with timed targets for each of the following issues :

- Waste
- Transport
- Climate Change and Energy
- Water and Flooding
- Natural and Built Environment
- Planning and Development
- Environmental Risks and Pollution
- Community Involvement and Partnership

Update :

It has been reported by John Jarvis, Cabinet Member for the Environment and Strategic Housing that a recent meeting took place in Pershore with colleagues from Worcestershire County Council to discuss the above issues. A timetable is being jointly developed to organise a series of workshops around the region to which interested parties will be invited. These will commence in early 2008.

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Report on Environment Meeting with Andy Tector, CHDC's Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards

Meeting Date: 05/12/07 at 11:30 p.m.

Met By: Brian Atherton, following consultations with the Chairman and the other members of the Stage 2 sub-group, Rob Brain, Denis Claringbull and Dai Harries.

1. Territory Covered by Andy's Department

Air Quality; Rogue Traders; Enviro Crime (Littering, Anti-social behaviour, fly tipping, etc.), Public Health as affected by traders; Traveller's Services; Bereavement Services; Markets and Fairs; Waste Management.

2. County environment policy

This is under review, following the recent publication of new Government Policy (<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste/strategy/>). In his forward, Ben Bradshaw, the Government Minister for Waste says:

There are important changes underway in the way we deal with waste. We can see this in several different ways. First, we are making significant progress in diverting waste from landfill and in increasing our recycling rates. Second, public environmental consciousness is rising – in particular concern about the serious risk of dangerous climate change. Third, it has become quite clear that we have to raise our sights on waste policy by making faster progress in landfill diversion and recycling so as to reach the levels achieved by many of our European neighbours and by putting more emphasis on the linkages between waste and other policies and in engaging a wider range of players. That means taking account of waste in our broader carbon and resource policies, in our approach to sustainable consumption and production and to Government procurement policies. It means engaging more actively with people and organisations in production, retailing, education and many more sectors. It also means putting more emphasis on waste prevention and re-use; and it means motivating individuals and businesses to appreciate the environmental and economic benefits from waste reduction and in obtaining value out of what might previously have been seen as useless waste material. Finally, these ambitions will not be achieved without bringing into play a new range of policy instruments and tools. This includes better price mechanisms; smarter, more focused regulation; and voluntary agreements based around priority materials, products and sectors. This strategy shows how we intend to make these themes central to our future direction on Waste policy. In compiling the strategy we have greatly benefited from the responses to the consultation which we launched a year ago. There was a broad welcome for the direction we set out then, especially in proposing a more holistic approach to waste. This is a strategy for the whole community, not just for Government. We need to generate and maintain the desire to take responsible action on waste, in which we share a sense that what we do to reduce or better manage waste – as designers, as producers, as retailers, as purchasers, as consumers – will make a real difference to things we care about. Different people and different organisations in different parts of the country will play their part in different ways reflecting different circumstances and that is a good thing.

CHDC has not made any consequential decisions and consultation is at an early stage. Andy promised to include the Town Plan Steering Group in the consultations,

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Report on Meeting with Richard Gabb, Head of Strategic Housing.

Also present:

Jane Thomas, Housing Needs & Development Manager

Hayley Crane, Development Officer for Ross Area

Meeting Date: 04/02/08 at 10:00 a.m.

Met By: Brian Atherton, following email consultations with the Chairman and the other members of the Stage 2 sub-group, Rob Brain, Dai Harries and Denis Claringbull.

- 1. Strategic Housing works with the various Developers/Housing Associations, to provide affordable homes. The department also has associated affordable housing products to offer such as Mortgage Rescue.**
- 2. Homes For Rent**
 - a. A list of available properties (with appropriate descriptions, often including a photograph) is published weekly to those on a Housing Register through means such as the internet, the libraries, etc.
 - b. Currently Herefordshire has 5,317 on the Register of whom 621 are in Ross.
 - c. It should be noted that the Register includes those who have enquired but do not have an urgent need, so a range of needs will be present.
 - d. The Register is for homes available for rent or shared ownership held by partner RSLs in the county.
- 3. Homes for Purchase**
 - a. "Affordable Homes" are defined in Supplementary Planning Guidance, but broadly those for sale would be either 3.25 or 3.75 median gross earnings.
 - b. In Herefordshire, median earnings are about £20,000 and so an affordable home is one priced from £80,396 subject to bedroom numbers and assumptions on deposits available.
 - c. The "average price" of a house in Herefordshire is about £200,000. Clearly, an affordable home requires special conditions for its provision. At the moment, the favoured approach is to require a proportion (roughly $\frac{1}{3}$) of any housing development to be affordable (35% subject to set site thresholds).
 - d. Under existing plans, in 2003 it was identified that 190 affordable homes should be built by May 2008. To date, 38 have been built and a further 112 may be built in the next 12 months, if current negotiations are completed in time.
 - e. The UDP has not delivered as planned and is unlikely to. All eyes are now on the LDF, which is expected to include a requirement for a minimum of 16,600 new houses in Herefordshire by 2026 and an associated planning policy that will deliver the land and the associated support services and infrastructure.
- 4. How Can the Town Plan Contribute?**
 - a. The single biggest short-term problem is to identify suitable existing premises (e.g. empty accommodation over shops) for rent and suitable land for new development focussing on previously developed land. This could form a useful input to the Local Development Framework (LDF). Perhaps the Town Plan could include a project aimed at searching out this information.

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Report on Transport and Flooding Meeting with Cllr Brian Wilcox

Meeting Date: 01/11/07 at 3:30 p.m.

Also Present: Steve Burgess – CHDC Team Leader – Transport Planning Team.

Met By: Brian Atherton, following email consultations with the Chairman and the other members of the Stage 2 sub-group, Rob Brain and Dai Harries.

1. County transport policy

- a. Policy is set out in the Herefordshire Local Transport Plan 2 for the period 2006/7 to 2010/11. This is available in full on <http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/transport/3197.asp> and we have a hard copy. The sub-group will consider this further.

2. Road safety

- a. Two major roads affecting Ross, the A40 and the A49 are official Trunk Roads and, therefore, the responsibility of the Highways Agency, not Herefordshire Council.
- b. The appropriate section of the LTP 2 is number 7 Safer Roads – Road Safety Strategy, which can be found at http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/docs/LTP_2006_Section_7.pdf
- c. Simon Hobbs of CHDC has information on local safety statistics.
- d. Where desired for local monitoring Parish Councils and other local organisations may borrow Speed Measuring Equipment and receive training. Details from Emma Jones 01432 260946.

3. Bus services

- a. The LTP 2, section 4 on Accessibility Strategy, and 9.3 Bus and Community Transport Strategy applies and that can be found at http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/docs/LTP_2006_Section_4.pdf http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/docs/LTP_2006_Section_9.pdf
- b. Education Transport is separately managed under Andrew Blackman.
- c. The Accessibility Strategy is underpinned by software called 'Accession' which enables assessment of relative accessibility of any location in the County via bus services. A limited amount of assessments could be made using this software if required.

4. Taxi services

- a. CHDC is involved in two aspects:
 - i. Licensing
 - ii. Provision of waiting points

The LTP2 has brief coverage of these items at chapter 9.5

Operational responsibility for Taxi Licensing is with the Licensing Team in Environmental Health. More details:

http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/business/trading_licences/1133.asp

5. Other transport services (e.g. Dial-a-Ride)

- a. CHDC is looking at how they might contribute to better integration
- b. Debbie Griffiths of the WRVS may have more information.
- c. HASP (Herefordshire Access to Services Partnership) has some funding.

6. Use of private cars

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Report on Transport Meeting with Debbie Griffiths of the WRVS

Meeting Date: 15/11/07 at 12:00 p.m.

Met By: Brian Atherton, following email consultations with the Chairman and the other members of the Stage 2 sub-group, Rob Brain and Dai Harries.

Debbie has wide experience of the various voluntary and statutory agencies that can provide transport and associated services for the frail and the disabled. Ross is well served by such agencies. Of course, more could be done – it always can and it usually requires additional funding.

The services are not co-ordinated and consequently less useful to the residents than they could be. In particular, there is no central clearing point and some of the agencies restrict their responses to their own service. They do not refer the caller to alternatives. Co-ordination would make the services more widely available and could lead to better services for a similar expenditure.

At the moment, to collect a complete list of all services available at any one time involves contacting the NHS; Herefordshire Council; Gloucestershire Council and a significant number of voluntary groups including The Red Cross; St John's Ambulance; the WRVS etc. There are probably more than 10 in total. Some of these services are grouped on one website www.ablehereford.com but by no means all and, of course, the internet is not available to all. There is some cross-border co-operation, particularly with Gloucestershire and there is need for more.

The individual resources of the various agencies, if properly co-ordinated, would satisfy a significant proportion of the needs within Ross; less so when the town's service area is included.

SUGGESTION FOR THE STAGE 3 GROUP.

In the meeting with Cllr Brian Wilcox, he said that "CHDC is looking at how they might contribute to better integration". How much easier might that be if Ross has its own co-ordination centre, readily and easily available to all? It would not be difficult. It requires a small team of people, responsible for a 24/7 telephone and internet service that is always up to date; can direct the caller to an appropriate service and "put them through". The cost should be easily within HR9's resources.