

Locality master plans - Hereford

1. Hereford

The Hereford locality is made up of the City of Hereford - the county's primary administrative, employment and retail centre - and the surrounding rural area, which includes the large villages of Lugwardine, Burghill, Withington, Marden, Wellington, Fownhope and Moreton-on-Lugg.

The total area is 244km²; 22 km² of which is the city. The area has a total population of 73,100 or 41% of the county's population (55,800 of this is in the city and 17,300 in the rural area). The city is the most densely populated area in the county, and the rural area is the most densely populated of any of the rural areas.

2. Services required

As a City, Hereford provides a broad range of facilities and serves both the needs of its residents as well as those of the rest of the County.

In asset terms there are currently requirements for:

- A range of cultural and leisure facilities of both County and sub-regional significance.
- Higher, further education, secondary and primary education facilities and sustainable early years provision.
- A County Hospital and an associated hierarchy of primary and secondary care infrastructure. A number of GP practices currently exist and there are aspirations for these to come together to share new build infrastructure.
- Hereford has a Police Station, Fire Station and central Ambulance Service base, all of which remain. The Police and Fire Stations also act as divisional headquarters and the Ambulance Service is also re-organising its operations to provide an operational base on the outskirts of the City.
- The Herefordshire City Council require suitable and sufficient premises to execute their current and aspirational future obligations. There are also plans to determine suitable arrangements to accommodate key strategic third sector support services in other shared or stand alone premises. A full legend of publicly owned or occupied premises accompanies this paper.

3. Steps already taken

The Joint Accommodation Strategy for Herefordshire Council and NHS Herefordshire was approved by both bodies in December 2009. The framework for Hereford City comprised of:

- A front facing Hereford Centre
- A back office solution based at Plough Lane
- A refurbished Shire Hall
- A refurbished Town Hall
- A new build County Archive/MRU/Records store
- An integrated community equipment store
- Hereford City Locality accommodation

Unlike the other locality areas, Hereford City needs to provide 2 types of function:

- 1) A hub for back office corporate infrastructure for 4 major public sector organisations (Herefordshire Council, NHS Herefordshire, Wye Valley NHS, and The Shared Services Partnership). It also provides divisional offices for Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service, West Mercia Police, West Midlands Ambulance Service, Job Centre Plus and Ministry of Justice.
- 2) Service accommodation for HPS Locality Teams and some small service teams that provide countywide services which are unable to be disaggregated to localities.

The Hereford City Locality was the last locality to be considered by the Localities Task Group. It has proved extremely difficult to move forward due to the multiplicity of agencies involved and its intimate relationship with the Corporate Accommodation Strategy which is yet to be fully determined. In addition to the other major public sector partners there is a need to fully engage with Hereford City Council and a number of key Third Sector support organisations that have a considerable impact on service delivery at both a County and local level. A review of Third Sector support services is underway and is due to report later this year. The Stage One report identifies a number of potential transitional accommodation issues which Herefordshire Council may be able to assist in supporting to enable the new organisation to become fully established.

Asset reviews are being undertaken in the context of corporate accommodation needs. At the time of drafting, the future needs of Wye Valley NHS and the Shared Services Partnership are yet to be determined. To date therefore, the majority of the work has centred on the needs of Herefordshire Council and NHS Herefordshire. Where interim arrangements have been established, moves to consolidate and co-locate accommodation for Wye Valley NHS and Shared Services have been undertaken.

Examples of work undertaken to date:

- Co-location of HPS Customer Services activity within a refurbished Franklin House (as an interim Hereford Centre solution)
- Co-location of the majority of Shared Services staff within Plough Lane, Town Hall and Thorn offices
- Co-location of Health & Social Care back office management functions with Hereford City Locality staff to the Bath Street offices
- Creation of agile working arrangements for Children's and Families staff based upon a number of multi-agency offices across the County thus releasing space at the Blackfriars offices
- Relocation of Asset Management and Property Services staff to occupy Plough Lane offices
- Decant for disposal Garrick House, No's 9-15 Blackfriars Street and all Cattle Market accommodation for transfer to Stanhope for redevelopment (August 2011)
- The establishment at Ross Road, a base for a redesigned WM Ambulance Service.

4. Proposed work programme for locality

There are a number of work areas identified through the Locality Task Group. These are likely to involve considerable amounts of work and the identification of budgetary resource to progress. They are also only deliverable in the medium to long term as they are heavily reliant on transformation programmes, ICT and other infrastructure investment and planning consent around sensitive iconic buildings.

The initially identified work includes:

- The refurbishment or relocation of the Fire Station from its St Owen's Street premises
- The expansion of accommodation for West Mercia Police at a divisional level to include an exit strategy from their leased Barton Road premises to a potentially more consolidated facility either by expanding the existing base or through development of the Essex Arms site.
- Potential new premises for the Shared Services organisation
- An Accommodation Strategy for Wye Valley NHS services to include a yet to be fully scoped integrated community equipment storage solution
- The identification of a site for a Hereford City Multi GP practice facility which has the potential to accommodate opportunities to co-locate secondary care provision
- The refurbishment of Plough Lane to support flexible back office working
- The refurbishment of the Shire Hall and Town Hall to accommodate Democratic and Member Service functions in anticipation of the disposal of Brockington.
- An exit strategy for Blackfriars in anticipation for its re-use and refurbishment as a Higher Education Gateway Centre
- The delivery of a replacement Archive/MRU facility to meet the requirements of the National Archive Inspectorate and enable agile working to become a reality Collections
- The establishment of front facing solution to meet the needs of Children and Young People needing access to support and safeguarding services
- Determination of the accommodation requirements of the GP led Commissioning Consortium
- A more permanent location for the Hereford Centre
- The completion of a robust and realisable disposal strategy linked to all of the above