

Hereford city centre

Hereford city centre plays an important role in contributing to the economic, cultural and social performance of the wider city and the county as a whole. It has a rich heritage which makes it an attractive location for residents and visitors alike.

The strategic growth policy for Hereford's central area has been influenced by the Hereford City Centre Regeneration Strategy which sets out a ten-year ambition up to 2018 containing broad views and aspirations for the successful future of the city. The successful and sustainable future of the city relies upon maximising its current strengths and realising opportunities for the regeneration and redevelopment of the city centre. The role of Hereford as the main business, service and focal point for the county will be maintained and enhanced through the expansion of the retail, commercial, leisure and residential functions.

Policy HD1 will strengthen Hereford's role as a focus for the county and outlying areas. Hereford will become a stronger shopping, employment, leisure, education and cultural focus for the county. In addition to new retail and leisure opportunities, city expansion and regeneration proposals will also provide new homes (including affordable ones) and tackle existing movement and flooding constraints, improving the city for residents and visitors. Maintaining and enhancing the city's historic heritage and environmental assets will be high priority issues, as will the sustainability of the new development for existing and future generations.

The Core Strategy aims to improve Hereford's status as a sub-regional shopping destination by enhancing and improving existing facilities and integrating the new development into the historic centre. The Eign Gate and Edgar Street regeneration areas are the focus for achieving this aim. Development in the Edgar Street regeneration area will be developed in accordance with a masterplan to ensure the delivery of a high quality mixed use development. This will be informed by the existing masterplan and will set out an overarching vision of how the area will be developed and along with the Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies the required supporting infrastructure to enable the successful delivery of the project.

Policy HD1 – Hereford city centre

The city centre will accommodate around 800 new homes. The majority of these will be located within a new urban village. Further residential development will take place through the implementation of existing commitments, re-development of existing brownfield sites, re-use of upper floors above commercial premises, infill development and site allocations through the Hereford Area Plan. A minimum of 35% of these new homes will be mixed tenure affordable with a density that is compatible with the sustainable urban location of the site.

The urban village will be served by safe and attractive pedestrian and cycle links to other areas of the city, the new transport interchange, the Courtyard Arts Centre and nearby areas of green space. A new Link Road will also serve development parcels forming part of the urban village connecting Edgar Street to the west and Commercial Road to the east (with a spur linking Blackfriars Street to the south) as well as assisting in reducing traffic within the core of the city.

Newmarket Street, Blueschool Street and Commercial Square will be re-designed to become safe and attractive routes for pedestrian and cyclists, with improved public transport facilities and enhanced connectivity between the historic city centre and regeneration area partly facilitated by the construction of the new link road.

The urban village will be complemented by other uses and infrastructure forming part of the wider regeneration area creating a sustainable mixed use development. These include the following:

- A canal basin forming the terminus of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal will be created;
- Widemarsh Brook will be enhanced for biodiversity, to provide flood relief and sustainable surface water drainage solutions and optimised as a green infrastructure link.
- An integrated transport interchange will be developed close to the railway station to maximise opportunities for sustainable travel.
- Opportunities for large scale new commercial, tourism, education, leisure, civic and health uses will be available to meet any identified need.
- Opportunities for the mixed use re-development of parts of Hereford United Football Ground incorporating new spectator stands will be sought
- New public car parking facilities.

In order to maintain and enhance the viability and vitality of the city centre, new retail uses will be focused to the core of the city centre as defined below. Any identified need for further major retail development over the plan period will be met through further development within the Eign Gate regeneration area including the former livestock market site, along Blueschool Street and through the refurbishment and re-development of the Buttermarket.

Hereford HD1 cont/d

Within Hereford city centre, new developments including changes of use will also be encouraged where they:

- provide new commercial and office space in appropriate city centre locations including above existing retail and commercial premises;
- provide residential use of upper floors of retail and commercial premises;
- maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the city centre. Proposals for town centre uses outside the defined town centre will be subject to the sequential test and applications for development over 1,250 sq.m. gross floor space will require an impact assessment to determine whether there could be any adverse impacts on the town centre;
- improve overall accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport
- provide new, or enhanced sport, recreation and leisure facilities for local residents and visitors;
- provide new and improve existing cultural and tourism attractions and facilities which respect the city's historic character and local distinctiveness;
- enable the provision of a canal basin with associated wharfage and visitor centre;
- enable the protection, restoration and enhancement of Hereford's natural and built heritage assets, with particular regard to the historic street patterns and the skyline.

Policy HD1 pursues Core Strategy objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11 and 12

Policy H1 promotes living in the city centre. This has many advantages, including good accessibility levels for residents to a range of services and facilities, encourages walking and cycling and makes best use of existing properties by using vacant and underused spaces above shops and offices. This approach will contribute to the vitality of the city centre as its role is broadened from mainly daytime shopping and business uses to create an inclusive 'evening' economy beyond normal working hours making it a more attractive place to live as well as boosting the local economy.

The development of the urban village will provide around 800 new homes. These will comprise a mixture of apartments and family housing at a minimum average density of 50 dwellings per hectare. One third of these homes will be affordable with different types of tenures available, to satisfy identified local needs. Housing will be delivered that meets the needs of all sections of the community including housing for older persons – a need highlighted in the study of the Housing and Support needs of Older People in Herefordshire 2012. All homes will be constructed to high energy efficiency standards in accordance with other policies in this plan.

The urban village will require associated infrastructure in order to address flooding issues. A key element of this will be the production of an integrated surface water management strategy. This should inform the design and layout of development and help deliver sustainable drainage and flood risk reduction measures taking into account the development of the other strategic sites in Hereford. Access and traffic constraints will also need to be addressed. The need for good pedestrian and cycle links to other parts of the city, including the railway station and retail and leisure areas is vital to a successful urban village development.

The residents of all new homes will have access and public open space and where possible, there should be green corridors to link the site to other green areas. Opportunities exist to make an attractive feature of the canal basin and its corridor within the new residential area.