



Title of report: Public Involvement in Housing Development Task and Finish Group - terms of reference

Meeting: Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee

Meeting date: Tuesday 9 September 2025

Report by: Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

To agree the terms of reference for a task and finish group

- To look at good practice in public involvement in housing development and planning, including examples from other local authorities.
- To understand the points of a housing development when people in Herefordshire can and should be involved in housing development.
 - Local Plan, and its ancillary planning documents and statements
 - Local Transport Plan
 - Planning application process
- To scrutinise current practice and explore opportunities to apply learning from other local authorities to Herefordshire.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) **The committee agree the terms of reference for the proposed task and finish group.**

Alternative options

1. The committee has previously agreed that it wishes to set up the proposed task and finish group. Therefore no alternative option is provided.

Key considerations

2. As part of its regular work programming, the committee has discussed how Herefordshire Council consults with people of communities as part of the housing development and planning processes. The committee wished to ensure that the council had effective processes in place for consultation and engagement, and that it had a healthy culture of proactive engagement throughout the development and planning processes.
3. Committee members feel that this topic is not well-suited for scrutiny within a formal committee meeting, as exploring the topic fully will require considerable public and community engagement, as well as time spent looking at how other local authorities carry out this work. It therefore proposed to set up a task and finish group, the first job of which will be to develop a work programme to meet the objectives of the task and finish group.
4. A draft terms of reference are attached as Appendix 1.

Community impact

5. The terms of reference detail a proposal to carry out a piece of work to look at community involvement in housing development and planning. This work is expected to result in recommendations for change in council processes, which are expected to have a positive community impact. An assessment of any recommendations for change, once agreed, will include an assessment of their community impact.

Environmental Impact

6. Herefordshire Council provides and purchases a wide range of services for the people of Herefordshire. Together with partner organisations in the private, public and voluntary sectors we share a strong commitment to improving our environmental sustainability, achieving carbon neutrality and to protect and enhance Herefordshire's outstanding natural environment.
7. Whilst this is a decision on back-office functions and will have minimal environmental impacts, consideration has been made to minimise waste and resource use in line with the Council's Environmental Policy.

Equality duty

8. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to consider how it can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations and demonstrate that it is paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.
9. The mandatory equality impact screening checklist has been completed for this project/decision/activity and it has been found to have a low impact for equality.
10. Due to the potential impact of this project/decision/activity being low, a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required. However the following equality considerations should be taken into account when making a decision about this activity/project:
 - a. Ensuring that all reports use plain English
 - b. Consideration of the composition of any focus groups or community outreach activities.

Resource implications

11. The proposed task and finish group would be part of the usual business of the council. There are therefore no additional resource implications in carting out this work. Scheduling will help ensure that the work does not inadvertently cause an unreasonable demand on the work of those contributing to the task and finish group.

Legal implications

12. The remit of the scrutiny committee is set out in part 3 section 4 of the constitution and the role of the scrutiny committee is set out in part 2 article 6 of the constitution.
13. The Local Government Act 2000 requires the council to deliver the scrutiny function.

Risk management

14. There are no identified risks in agreeing to carry out this piece of work.

Consultees

15. None

Appendices

Appendix 1: Public Involvement in Housing Development Task and Finish Group - Terms of Reference

Background papers

None identified

Report Reviewers Used for appraising this report:

Governance	Danial Webb	Date 01/09/2025
Finance	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.
Legal	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.
Communications	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.
Equality Duty	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.
Procurement	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.
Risk	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.
Approved by	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.