

Rail for Herefordshire, PO Box 299, Hereford, HR1 2YE
E-mail: railfh@aol.com www.RailForHerefordshire.org.uk

Core Strategy
Licence No RRJX-TLSH-SCYH
Freepost
Forward Planning
Herefordshire Council
PO Box 4
Plough Lane
Hereford HR3 0XH

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Dear Madam/Sir

Preferred Options

With regard to the LDF planning process, our group has preferred options for location of houses and other issues. I thought I would send now, so it can be given plenty of time for thought.

1. We believe there will be a requirement for Councils to increase house building, in Herefordshire this will be in the order of 20,000 new homes. In planning where they should go public transport will be a key issue. The new homes will come with a considerable amount of **developer funding and government grant** to contribute to local services and infrastructure. What Herefordshire needs desperately and will be of benefit to everyone living in the county, where ever the houses are placed, is to **twin track the railway line between Hereford and Ledbury**. There is already a feasibility study underway to twin track from Malvern to London, to continue it to Hereford makes good sense. The line was only singled in 1982, to save the wages of signal men, a great mistake. A single track has twice the wear of a double and current technology has obviated the need for an extra manned signal box in any case. A contribution from developer funding to re-instating the track could be matched from a variety of sources. Please look towards this solution when thinking about transport and housing, which is far more suitable for the 21st century than a bypass and road building. In 2026 Herefordshire will be facing fuel shortage, global warming and population increase. New roads will be pretty pointless, taking up precious land, using unnecessary fuel and making the county ugly when green space will be absolutely precious (as it is now).

2. In planning the location of houses please think imaginatively. Herefordshire is a county with the largest amount of redundant railway lines in the country. Why not re-open one of these as a **green transport link, either light rail, Heritage Rail or another option**. I can put you in touch with an expert on current rail re-openings who will be able to inform you of the range of possibilities there are. Once the green transport link is in place, then you can put your houses at the end of it, or at places alongside. I would think the Leominster-Kington line is a good option, or the Hereford-Credenhill-Hay line, or the Leominster-Bromyard line. These all have most of the track bed in place. There would be some CPO, but far less painful and disruptive than a road building alternative. Remember we are planning to 2026, putting new houses in the market towns, like Kington, Bromyard, Credenhill, near to agricultural land and renewable energy sources, might be the better solution than concentrating houses in Hereford.

It goes without saying that no development should be allowed that will further erode or encroach on the redundant lines we have.

Bedfordshire Council is currently building a new housing estate at Leighton Buzzard that includes real time bus information in every house, a new 15 minute bus service, plus adjustment of the highway for enhanced walking into town, all provided by developer funding and matched funded by Government. So other councils are already creating imaginative, sustainable communities. In Bedfordshire based on buses, but in Herefordshire it could be based on trains.

3. People object to new housing largely because its newness is ugly and it doesn't fit in to the surrounding area. Some designs never fit in and the communities don't work, however long they are in place, largely because of poor design. If we are to have new houses, they **must** have decent sized gardens, new trees, hedging, woods and copse must be in place. **Sustainable housing will mean somewhere that people can grow food and get fuel** as well as keep warm with limited fuel. This means:

- Gardens so people can grow food (and a place for children to play)
- Associated wood coppice so people have access to fuel and biodiversity, every development must plant a suitable wood coppice around it
- Some car-free housing, so hard standing is reduced and those who don't want cars don't have to look at them all day (more and more people will live a car free life style in 2026)
- Limited amount of hard standing around the houses, so run off is reduced
- Car parking that is provided should be separated from the houses, to make people walk a bit more (good for health)
- Local materials so the design fits in. Make sure local stone is used on some or all of the building, this will require re-opening quarries. Look imaginatively at other materials, wood, mud, thatch – all will add to a pleasing building.
- Insist on hedging around the houses and gardens – good for biodiversity and a fuel source
- Insist on houses being designed so they can collect and store water.

4. Tourism and Culture: This comment relates also to Farming, Health and Transport.

Herefordshire derives much of its income and reputation from being a countryside county, good for walking and cycling. In truth we are not that blessed with footpaths. There are areas with lots of footpaths, but around population centres, just where you need them, there are very few. In particular there are hardly any bridlepaths, and road are too dangerous to ride on now. Planners should always be looking at ways of increasing the foot and bridlepath network in the county, in particular we need connecting paths that don't require roads. It may be possible again through planning gain, to negotiate new bridleways and footpaths and the opportunity should be actively sought by planners.

Yours sincerely

Rail for Herefordshire

Contact: Rebecca Roseff, Secretary,