**Herefordshire Local Plan update – pre-consultation survey**

**General Questions**

1. What elements of the strategy and policies in the current Core Strategy do you consider to have been successful or not? Please explain the reasons for your answer.

In general terms the policies are considered to be successful. However, the application of Policy RA2 with regard to the interpretation of settlement boundaries has limited development opportunities, see below. As has the requirement for 10 or more houses in a development before affordable housing becomes mandatory.

1. What elements of current Core Strategy policy could be improved? Please explain the reasons for your answer.

The Core Strategy policies for rural settlements includes support for urban style development with houses positioned closely together on small plots. This does not fit with the majority of historical housing in Wyeside or the preferred NDP “best practice” model of widely spaced houses on larger plots with footpaths through housing clusters.

A major environmental concern is the lack of controls on the River Wye pollution levels, which borders all five villages, and the need for some improvement.

1. Are there any key planning policies that are missing from the current plan?

Paragraph 63 of the 2018 NPPF confirms the Affordable Housing threshold as **10 or less dwellings** or a combined floor space of 1,000sqm, with *an optional lower threshold of 5 or less dwellings in designated rural areas. This option has not been applied to Wyeside*.

**New policies required to address**; the increasing Hereford traffic congestion following cancellation of the Hereford Western by-pass; fragmented bus services in rural areas; the recently adopted Climate Emergency, particularly as it relates to the management of agriculture in rural areas; and regulations to reduce River Wye pollution levels.

1. Are the policy areas that are devolved to Neighbourhood Development Plans at the right level? Please explain the reason for your answer.

Policies for Wyeside specific rural characteristics have been successfully applied which suggests the NDP is operating at the right level.

1. If you have an adopted Neighbourhood Development Plan, do you consider it has been a success? Please explain the reasons for your answer.

NDP policies requiring developments to avoid urbanisation and reflect current housing types, characteristics and large garden sizes appropriate to the rural nature of settlements has been a success.

**Current Core Strategy settlement hierarchy**

1. What impact has the current settlement hierarchy had on your parish? Please explain the reasons for your answer.

Wyeside is on target for meeting the proportional growth of 39 new builds by 2031, with some 27 in the pipeline for planning submission/approved/under construction/completed. However, over 50% of these new builds are located in one village, Preston on Wye. Underperformance by three of the villages against growth targets is in part due to the smaller village centres reducing opportunities for development.

None of Wyeside’s five villages had settlement boundaries prior to development of the NDP and their application under the terms set out in Policy RA2 extract: “*and new housing located within or adjacent to* ***the main built-up area****”* has created difficulties of interpretation and may have constrained development opportunities.

Bredwardine, Blakemere and Tyberton village centres all suffer from scattered village housing interspersed with fields which make it difficult to capture a village centre within an easily identified **“main built-up area”.** Thereby reducing potential development opportunities in areas that have historically been considered part of the village. Leading to a single house development failing to get approval in Blakemere, which may have been approved prior to adoption of the Core Strategy and NDP.

1. Do you consider that the current distribution of proportional growth in the named settlements of policy RA2 of the Core Strategy achieved its aims of rural sustainability? Please explain the reasons for your answer.

It is too early to tell whether there will be any improvement to sustainability at Preston on Wye and Moccas. However, no improvement is anticipated for Bredwardine, Blakemere and Tyberton due to little or no new builds.

**Services and facilities**

1. Have existing services been retained or new services and facilities provided through development in your parish? Please explain the reasons for your answer.

No change to currently very limited facilities and services.

1. What would you consider to be the key services and facilities required to support proportional growth over the next twenty years? Please explain the reasons for your answer.

If the recent demand for rural housing by professional people who can work remotely from city offices continues more facilities will be required including access to better transport, recreational areas and community facilities.

**Future settlement hierarchy**

1. Are there any constraints to new development in your parish which would affect future growth? Please explain the reasons for your answer.

Poor employment prospects and higher costs of living in Wyeside’s rural areas with no credible public transport and lack of facilities other than the three village halls and two pubs across the five villages.

1. Would you consider your area to be a sustainable community for proportionate growth? Please explain the reasons for your answer.

Long term sustainability is at risk across the five villages due to lack of facilities, transport and poor access to employment opportunities????

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.