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Herefordshire Core Strategy: Revised Preferred Option

The comments of Herefordshire CPRE (consultee reference 343) on the Revised Preferred Option are as follows:

1. We welcome the reduction in the housing requirement for Herefordshire and for the city of Hereford and also the extension of the plan period.
2. Given the particular pattern of housing development in Herefordshire, we strongly support taking account of windfalls in calculating the county's housing supply trajectory.
3. The Core Strategy must include a robust policy for phasing of the release of land to ensure that the construction of infrastructure is carried out in time for the new housing that necessitates it and to ensure that developers do not 'cherry-pick' their preferred sites. Given the uncertainty about the extent and timing of future economic growth, there may well be indefinite pauses in the execution of the planned housing and infrastructure, and it would be disastrous if the county were left in the interim with an uncoordinated mess of disjointed and inadequately serviced development.
4. We still consider that the case for the Hereford relief road has not yet been established. In particular we draw attention to the following:
 - a. in the absence of an Infrastructure Development Plan it is impossible to judge whether the relief road, and all the other new infrastructure necessary to support the proposed housing numbers, can be funded,
 - b. in combination with increased housing in and around Hereford and the traffic this will generate, the relief road will not, according to the Council's own studies, reduce congestion on the city's roads. The reduction in the housing requirement may ease this, but only slightly. Has the Council recalculated its traffic figures on the basis of the Revised Preferred Option?
 - c. Improvements to public transport - desirable in their own right - should be attempted first. It is no excuse to argue that the Highways Agency will not permit measures such as bus lanes on a trunk road: has the Council tried to persuade the Agency, or if necessary go over the Agency's head to central Government, to

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waive this policy in view of the strategic importance of transport improvements in Hereford?

d. While we welcome the adjustment to the south-west alignment of the relief road, we think that the route still has a serious adverse impact on the historic parkland and the setting of listed buildings at Belmont and on the Wye riverside landscape, so further adjustment would be essential if the road were to go ahead.

5. There appears to be no further information on the impact of the increased water abstractions and discharges that will be generated by the proposed development, especially in and around Hereford and Leominster. Unless it can be shown that there will be no adverse impact on the Wye/Lugg Special Area of Conservation, the Core Strategy will be unsound and possibly unlawful.

Yours Faithfully

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