

Market Town Guidance Sheet

This guidance sheet is for Market Towns (and Parishes with a population of more than 3,000) in Worcestershire, who are developing, or planning to develop a Town or Community Plan. This additional sheet is provided to address some of the more complex issues faced by these larger communities.

Community Plans should:

- be comprehensive, considering all aspects of local life including social, economic and environmental issues of concern to the community
- involve the whole community; everyone should have a chance to have their say and get involved in producing the Plan
- be based upon information provided by community participation, surveys and research
- involve Local Authorities such as the Police, Herefordshire Council etc., with the process
- be focused on creating an action plan with a clear statement of who? what? why? and how?
- include a post publication process

Town and Parish plans can be produced by any size community or neighbourhood. The process described in the Herefordshire Parish Plan Guidance Notes will support and guide you, while these notes give some specific advice to larger communities such as Market Towns.

Identify your community:

Market towns are usually service centres for a particular geographical area, providing a focus for employment, services, leisure and community facilities. This will mean that the steering group will have to work pro-actively to identify exactly who uses/lives in the area in order to build up a picture of who the community are. For example those who work within the town but live elsewhere or migrant workers who live elsewhere but who use the services that the town has to offer.

Governance in Worcestershire:

Worcestershire has the following governance structure:

- Worcestershire County Council
- Bromsgrove District Council
- Malvern Hills District Council
- Redditch District Council
- Worcester City Council
- Wychavon District Council
- Wyre Forest District Council
- Town Councils
- Parish Councils

The input and added expertise of representatives from County and Districts can be useful for the Town Planning steering group in making links with service providers and other relevant officers. Good communication is recommended throughout the Town Planning process between the group and members of the Town Council, District Councillors, County Council and Parish Councillors from outlying Parishes surrounding the Town. Some of these representatives may join the steering group who are producing the plan, while others will only want to be kept informed of the progress, and any issues that may be specific to them.

A steering group can be made up of between eight and fifteen people from within the community conducting the Town Plan. The group should be a representative cross section from the community, and we would encourage it to be made up as follows: 5 members of the Town Council, 5 representatives from 'other' organisations within the Town and surrounding area, and 5 volunteers not members of the Town Council, or any other organisation. The group should also be a representative cross section from the community and should include a wide variety of residents such as:

- Town/Parish Councillors
- Civic society members
- Local groups/clubs/societies
- Local residents – to include those living in different residential areas.
- Young people
- Migrant workers
- There should also be a spread of age groups, interests and different residential areas.

Sub-groups/working groups:

The purpose of working groups is to assist the main steering group in preparing the Town Plan for the community. Sub-groups will report back to the main steering group on any work that they carry out on behalf of the steering group

Sub groups may be used to do a number of things:

- Identify the Community
- Investigate specific topics of interest within the community, such as:
 - Housing
 - Young people
 - Business
 - Migrant Workers
 - Look at the needs facing a specific group of people within the communityOr they may investigate specific aspects of producing the plan, such as:
 - Communications
 - IT
 - Managing meetings

Sub-groups can be used to engage with as wide a range as possible of people within the Town community.

Population:

A Market Town will have a considerably larger population than most Parishes making it sometimes difficult to consult with the whole population. We would encourage Market Towns producing a community plan to aim to consult with a significant percentage of the total population. The extent of consultation that can be carried out will be determined by things such as what financial resources are available to you, what time resources you have, and the period of time that has been scheduled to carry out and complete the published Plan

Consultation:

Market Town steering groups will usually find evidence of previous consultation that has been carried out in the area during the last 5 years. This information may come from a variety of methods used by different organisations. Use the evidence from this consultation as a starting point for your steering group to begin to build up a picture of what the community have said felt or done about recent issues. The information can also be used to draw attention to issues and themes that the new steering group may want to explore in more depth for the Town Plan, and the steering group may then want to carry out further consultation to explore these issues in more detail. Some new consultation will also need to take place to fill in any gaps, and address new emerging themes from within the community. As a larger and more diverse community it is important that the steering group use a variety of different methods to maximise consultation opportunities and to involve the population in their consultation. Engaging the community and thinking of creative ways to involve everyone is one of the central roles of a Town Plan steering group. Please refer to the Consultation section of the Community Planning guidance notes for ideas on how best to do this. The steering group should put together a plan of action on how to involve different sections of the community, different age groups, and different geographical areas including outlying areas.

Know your community:

Knowing the different groups that make up your community will be beneficial when it comes to finding different ways to communicate and consult with them to get their views as part of your Town Plan process.

Here is a brief list of some groups that may be found in a Market Town community:

Schoolchildren (5-16)	People with physical needs	Single parent families
Young people (16-25)	Faith groups	Black and minority ethnic groups
People employed in the community	Community groups and societies	Travellers and gypsies
Older people	Visitors	Families
Commuters	Local businesses	Migrant workers
People with learning needs	Housing estates	

Go to your community:

A Market Town will have central locations which will be useful for consultation purposes. However, there may be groups of people who use Town services but live elsewhere, for example, migrant workers, farmers, those living in outlying Parishes. By using different locations for your consultation you will enable everyone to have a chance to participate. Consider different consultation venues to reach out to the whole of your community, knowing who makes up your community will help to do this.

Useful contacts:

Please use the contact list in the main guidance pack for contact information

