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Your Ref: PLAN DMH/DB Per ID no 640  
Our Ref: GOWM/WPT/P5248LDF/54940

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Date: 2 May 2006

Dear Mr Hobbs

**CITY OF WORCESTER LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK  
PREFERRED OPTIONS REPORT: CONTRIBUTIONS FROM DEVELOPMENT TO  
OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION FACILITIES DPD.**

Thank you for your letter dated 17 March 2006 inviting comments on the Preferred Options Report for the Contributions From Development to Open Space and Recreation Facilities DPD.

Firstly, I welcome the fact that the document has been prepared taking into account the comments of the Government Office on the Issues and Options Report. I note that you have also responded to the views expressed during community engagement and consultations during the Issues and Options stage and that as a result the purpose of the DPD has changed.

The representations of the Government Office on the Preferred Options Report are based primarily on the Tests of Soundness for DPDs. In considering the document regard has also been taken of the checklist for Prepared Options Reports contained in the guidance, "Creating LDFs" (November 2004). All the points made are aimed to assist you in preparing the DPD for submission to the Secretary of State.

**Vision and Objectives**

I am pleased to see that you have included a clear vision and set of objectives. I note that this has also helped to set out a spatial approach in terms of the contribution open space and recreation facilities can make to promoting urban renaissance, social inclusion and community cohesion, health and well-being.

### **Test One**

It is noted that the document has been brought forward in accordance with the effective Local Development Scheme. The Report is another stage in the preparation of a DPD which is "to address the outcome of the PPG 17 assessment in providing typologies and appropriate standards of provision together with guidance on Section 106 contributions from development".

### **Test Two**

The inclusion of a summary of responses and representations on the Issues and Options as an Appendix has been helpful, together with references in the text which show how changes have been made in response to community engagement.

### **Test Three**

It is noted that a Sustainability Appraisal has been carried out and included as an Appendix to the Report. It is also noted that a Scoping Report has been prepared and has been the subject of consultations.

### **Test Four**

I note that the document has been prepared in a manner which is consistent with national policy, in particular, the evidence is based upon an assessment in accordance with PPG 17. I note that this has been amended in order to fit better Worcester's particular circumstances in relation to the role of churchyards and cemeteries which you state are important to open space in the City.

It is also noted that the provisions of the DPD follow the principles on contributions contained in Circular 05/2005.

### **Test Five**

It is noted that account has been taken of the Community Strategy and that the DPD is being prepared in order to be in general conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy and the emerging Core Strategy.

### **Test Seven**

The Preferred Option appears to be based on the evidence of the PPG 17 assessment. However it appears that standards of provision have been set out without considering options. It is necessary to show that all reasonable options have been considered and the reasons why different options have been rejected.

### **Test Eight**

Reference is made to the monitoring of policies. This approach is welcomed. However there is a need to identify more clearly what will be monitored for example the financial contributions or the level of provision. Specific reference should be made to the Annual Monitoring Report as a vehicle for monitoring and the identifying the need to change.

It is noted that Chapter 6 makes reference to implementation and delivery mechanisms

### **Test Nine**

The Report indicates that a flexible approach will be taken and that policies will be changed should the need be identified through monitoring. This approach is welcomed.

Should you need to clarify any of the issues raised in this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

MIKE PRICE  
Senior Planning Officer  
Western Division