

Wrekin Forest Partnership meeting 20 February 2012

The Wrekin Forest Plan – scoping evening

1. Exercise – Brainstorm

Part 1. Participants were asked to call out single words that they thought of when considering the Wrekin Forest. The following list was compiled: The list has not been ordered or weighted.

Bridleways/footpaths, exercise, legacy, open spaces, volunteers, geology, local community, wilderness, landscape, management, visitors, leisure, health, wildlife, deer, parking, employment, students, generation, wild flowers, accessibility, AONB, heritage, archaeology, folklore, Wellington, Insects, mountain bikes, natural succession, transport, grant support, forestry, resource, insects, wood-fuel, Wakes.

Part 2. – Participants were asked to call out single words of things that were considered **threats**. The following list was compiled. The list has not been ordered or weighted.

Lack of toilets, economic climate, habitat loss, development, growing population nearby, wear & tear, parking, traffic, lack of information, disturbance, fire, tourism, mining, conflicts between uses and users, visitors, tunnel vision, trying to be all things to all comers, noise, litter, drought, neglect, misunderstanding, soil erosion, damage by deer, poaching, mountain bikes, fly tipping, under management, ownerships, despoilment, boundaries – administrative split, low priority

2. Boundary exercise

Participants were asked to draw a line around what they considered to be the boundary of the Wrekin Forest onto a A0 size map. The map covered an area which included Wenlock Edge in the south, Wellington to the north and east towards Dawley. A range of colours were used to draw the line though people were not asked to identify their line with either an initial or other symbol. The base map was prepared by TWC and showed landscape features such as woodlands, waterways, road networks and built structures such as housing. There were only two existing boundaries left on the map 1. The political boundary between Telford and Wrekin Council and Shropshire Council and 2. The boundary line from the Local Development Framework [TWC] which divides rural Telford and urban Telford.

The resulting lines divided into three sub groups

- a. A line tightly drawn to enclose the contiguous woodland that includes The Wrekin, Ercall, Limekiln and Short Woods.
- b. A line that follows the M54 on its northern boundary, the River Severn to the south, east down the urban/rural interface of Horsehay/Lawley and west along a lien connecting Rushton and Eaton Constantine.
- c. A line that encompasses urban Wellington, Lawley, Lightmoor, Wenlock Edge, Sheinton and then north again to the village of Wrockwardine.

Exercise observation – It is clear that there is no existing consensus amongst the stakeholder group over what the boundary is for the conceptual landscape that has

been called the Wrekin Forest. More work will be required to define the purposes of a boundary and if there is to be a boundary where that line should be drawn.

3. Landscape themes - Exercise

The participants were asked to identify broad landscape scale themes, the following list was generated during this session.

Geology, Landscape , Biodiversity, Land use, Economy , Cultural heritage, land form – iconic hill, economy, sustainable timber production, farming, woodlands, ancient history, industrial history, quarrying, mining, restoration, archaeology, spiritual , social structures, locals/visitors/residents, health/exercise, wellbeing/local, ownership, managing visitors, tourism, traffic, highways, access.

This list will be useful to help create the plan structure and divide issues/options etc into groups

4. Theme focus – a two part process to look in more detail at a landscape theme. Using the list above we selected a. health and wellbeing and b. traffic, highways and access.

The exercise used a plain basemap with the road network named, each member was invited to make a note on a post-it and put that on the map. Of the post-its placed some referred and indicated a particular place other notes highlighted a particular aspect of issue.

Health and wellbeing – the following list records the range of comments made by the members when considering the theme of health and wellbeing:

Fresh air, 5 senses, insects and wildlife, strenuous climbs, multi user routes, right to roam, rural views, wild woodland, village hall amenities, scout group, physical activity, develop skills for employment, physical activity, cycling , orienteering, volunteering opportunities – mental health, Wrekin Forest Volunteers, school visits, rehabilitation, Forest School opportunities, rural refreshment needed, variety of walking landscapes according to ability, walking, meditation, horse riding access [for elders sic] , peace and quiet, Green Gym, off lead dog walking, starting point for walking and running, walking for health, tai chi.

Traffic, highways and access – LB to complete write up of this mapping exercise.

The session closed with general discussion on next steps and a desire to have a detailed timetable of plan development and a clear plan for a public consultation element. TWC/SWT/SHAONB to respond following a digest of this meeting.