

**MINUTES OF A MEETING
OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF
ECONOMIC PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
HELD ON 30 OCTOBER 2019
IN THE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES, LEDBURY**

PRESENT: Councillors: Bannister, Howells, Manns, Morris, Vesma (Chair)

IN ATTENDANCE: The Town Clerk – Angela Price
The Minute Taker- Oliva Bundy

P110. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Harvey

P111. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None received

P112. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public wished to speak.

P113. TO APPROVE AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 10 OCTOBER 2019

RESOLVED:

1. That the minutes of the meeting of Economic Planning and Development committee be approved and signed as correct record

P114. DRAFT RESPONSE TO HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL IN RESPECT OF THE BLOOR HOMES DEVELOPMENT FOLLOWING RECEIPT OF THE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT

Members were provided with a draft objection to Bloor Homes transport proposals in respect of the Land North of the Viaduct that had been prepared via email discussions prior to the meeting.

Members considered the draft document and agreed to number of amendments as follows:

1. Introduction

Ledbury Town Council wish to strongly object to application number P171532/O - Site for a mixed use development including the erection

of up to 625 new homes (including affordable housing), up to 2.9 hectares of B1 employment land, a canal corridor, public open space (including a linear park), access, drainage and ground modelling works and other associated works. The proposal is for outline planning permission with all matters reserved for future consideration with the exception of access. Due to the controversial nature of this application Ledbury Town Council believe that any decision on this should be deferred until after the up-coming General Election (12.12.19).

Beginning with the initial public consultation for this strategic site in 2015 there has been very strong public opinion on the development of the viaduct site. The strength of feeling has become palpable in Ledbury and surrounding communities following the changes to the proposed access to the site which have been made after the public consultation was completed. This public concern is evidenced by the more than 400 objections which have been made to this proposal which are listed on the HCC planning portal. Ledbury Town Council responded to this public concern by calling for a Parish Poll which took place in July this year.

The Ledbury Town Council objection centres on the sole Bromyard Road access being “satisfactory” in planning terms.

2. Parish Poll

The Parish Poll showed that 95% of those that voted (which was a statistically significant sample of the parish) did not support the current Transport and access proposals for the Bloor Development. The transport proposals were not considered to be “Satisfactory”. Ledbury Town Council has commissioned an independent review of the Transport studies made by Bloor and HCC, the results of which support the outcome of the Parish Poll.

3. Summary of TPA Report findings

Ledbury Town Council has commissioned an independent transport study produced by Transport Planning Associates (TPA). This report details significant flaws and errors with both the Bloor and HCC transport studies which substantially question the 'satisfactory' conclusions of both reports, including: -

- The critically important 'active transport' Pedestrian and Cycle accessibility link planned under the viaduct onto Ballard Close and across the Hereford Road (A438) onto a footpath into New Mills estate cannot be delivered within the available space as the boundaries shown do not match OS mapping and there is a large tree which has not been considered in not allowing the required path width within available space. This seriously undermines the options for sustainable travel claims for the

development as proposed and is indicative of a lack of “on the ground” attention to detail in respect of the access provided.

- The key Bromyard Road/Hereford Road/Homend Junction has not been modelled correctly as the blocking of the access to the Railway station by traffic queuing at the junction when coming from the town has not been modelled and hence does not take account of significant delays and much slower subsequent traffic flow movements all around the junction that will occur. Incorrect pedestrian crossing times have been used. This needs re-modelling to reassess whether the traffic flow estimates can still be regarded as 'satisfactory'
- The Hereford Road/Leadon Way roundabout has been modelled "as is" rather than as proposed and therefore with the incorrect layout and without the addition of a Toucan crossing. Again, we feel that the amount of modelling errors in this study are indicative of either a lack of precision or an in-built bias as they generally fall in favour of the scheme being “satisfactory”.
- The junction of High St/Worcester Rd/New Road has been modelled incorrectly as the nearby pedestrian crossing has not been included.
- The proposed site access on the Bromyard Road has been modelled with incorrect road widths and flare lengths, for example road widths showing up to a metre difference between facility access for central and southern parts of the development on the indicative plan. Again, these errors are in the proposals and models in the developer’s favour.
- The proposed emergency access on the Bromyard Road does not provide access to central and southern parts of the development as shown in the indicative site layout.

In addition, the report suggests that there may have been insufficient consultation in respect of emergency access.

4. Access under the Viaduct

Nowhere in the Bloor or HCC transport studies has there been any evidence-based analysis of the benefits and dis-benefits of providing an access to the development from the existing Hereford Road/Leadon Way roundabout despite it being an obvious choice.

The Ledbury Town Council report makes it clear that the reasons for not including this exit in the application as proposed are not based upon sound findings and it needs a total re-assessment before Ledbury Town Council could agree that using this option has been

adequately considered. The Ledbury Town Council report makes it clear there are no sound planning reasons not to use this exit.

- The TPA report deals with and provides solutions to the reasons given by Bloor for not considering and access under the Viaduct.
- It goes on to detail the considerable advantages of such an access point. The report further points out that a Viaduct access point could be delivered in stages with the Viaduct access being delivered in the second stage.

Advantages to the access point at the Viaduct as outlined in the TPA report are: -

- Vehicle trips to/from the west (incl. Hereford) would not be required to travel through the constrained Hereford Road/Bromyard Road/Homend Junction.
- A more direct route to/from the west would be provided such that the potential for rat-running via Rhea Lane would be significantly reduced.
- Vehicle trips to/from the south (incl. Gloucester and the M50) would be directed along the Ledbury by-pass rather than through the constrained Hereford Road/Bromyard Road/Homend Junction and Ledbury Town Centre.
- Subject to demand, it would allow for a future bus service to loop through the development site onto Bromyard Road, enhancing sustainability.
- The setting of the Viaduct could be utilised to provide an attractive gateway to the development site.

All of these issues are considered in a detail in the independent TPA report which has been commissioned by Ledbury Town Council and is attached to this message for your detailed consideration.

It is clear from the 2018 letter from Bloor to HCC that cost has been the only factor in this decision. However, for Ledbury, rather than merely a "Satisfactory" solution to access, we want an optimum, and future proofed solution which will provide a sustainable transport structure for the town going forward.

Ledbury Town Council would ask for clarification on whether Hereford County Council or Bloor are pushing for a single access development in this instance.

5. Final Comments

In considering sustainable transport infrastructure for Herefordshire, HCC have made the following statement with regard to the review of the bypass at Hereford:-

"All options need to be considered as we look to the long term towards providing a high quality, integrated and low carbon transport system for Herefordshire not just for the immediate future but for generations to come"

The people of Ledbury expect this policy to be delivered here in Ledbury and accordingly, Ledbury Town Council recommends that HCC Planning take careful note of the recommendations in the TPA report and reject the current single access proposals as they stand.

Ledbury Town Council also feel that environmental modelling should be carried out before this application is determined.

Ledbury Town Council would further recommend close consultation and cooperation with the Town Council to develop this strategic site in a way which delivers what Ledbury residents and HCC want to see – a sustainable, optimal transport infrastructure for Ledbury and Herefordshire, not a minimal cost, poorly designed access which will lead to traffic congestion, air and noise pollution in the town.

Based on the Independent report commissioned by Ledbury Town Council and the outcome of the Parish Poll, Ledbury Town Council would be inclined to support this application if the secondary access via the Hereford Road roundabout were to be included, subject to traffic management remodelling.

Members questioned whether the Traffic Assessment Report should be published on the website due to the Council potentially being in Purdah.

The Clerk advised that she would like to seek legal advice before publishing the report and proposed that in the meantime she would make the above amendments to the objection letter and update members accordingly.

Councillor Manns Proposed that the Clerk seeks legal advice on whether the report should be published to the website.

Councillor Morris seconded the proposal and Councillor Vesma requested a named vote.

VOTE

For – Councillor Bannister, Howells, Manns, Morris
Against – Councillor Vesma (Chair)

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the above amendments to the Ledbury Town Council response to Hereford County Council in respect of the proposed access to the viaduct site and that this then be forwarded to Hereford County Council along with the Traffic Assessment Report received from TPA - Subject to approval of the final document via email to all members of the ED & PL Committee.**
- 2. That the Town Clerk seek Legal Advice on whether the TPA Transport Assessment can be uploaded to the Council's website, taking into consideration that a general election has been called for and therefore there may be some conditions in respect of Purdah that need to be considered.**

P115. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note that the next meeting of the Economic Development & Planning Committee is scheduled for 14 November 2019 at 7.30 pm

The Meeting ended at 17:25 hrs.

Signed

Dated: 21 November 2019

