

# Ward Councillor Report: June-July 2021

## New Responsibilities

Following the county council's Annual Council meeting in June there has been a few changes to cabinet responsibilities. This includes me taking on the responsibility of Deputy Leader of the Council and also taking responsibility for all Planning functions in addition to my existing responsibility for Finance and Corporate Services.

## 5-yr Housing Land Supply

I am really pleased to announce the news that – for the first time since the Core Strategy was adopted - Herefordshire has a 5-year Housing Land Supply. Better than that – it actually has a 6.9-year HLS. Please find included a briefing note and position statement on the detail. This news is huge for parishes that have been worried about the weight able to be given by planners to your Neighbourhood Plan policies where your plans are over 2-years old.

Since 2015, as councillors, we have all come to experience the impact that a poor land supply, and the consequent unplanned development it enables, has had on Ledbury. Hopefully the updated NDP will provide the detailed planning policies the town needs to provide the local detail to complement the place shaping strategies for Ledbury which again also carry full weight in the Core Strategy.

## S106 Wish List and Infrastructure Delivery Plan for Ledbury

If the council hasn't already done so, please could I encourage councillors to update the Section 106 wish-list for Ledbury so that planners can include relevant infrastructure projects in their earliest discussions with developers about funded projects to come forward alongside developments. The present wish-list hasn't been updated since at least 2015.

Please may I request that councillors refer to the draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan for Ledbury in considering an updated wish-list and also consider whether any additions need to be proposed to the draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

## Master's House

In June I hosted an exploratory meeting of interested parties to discuss whether a community-led project to deliver the intended landscaping around the Master's House and the improved layout of the surrounding car park was feasible. The Clerk and Mayor (Cllr Vesma at the time) were invited to attend.

The county council continues to recognise and accept its responsibilities for these spaces, but is happy to explore other delivery models which may achieve greater value for money than the project being led, top-down, by the county. Stakeholders at the meeting were interested to explore in more detail how such a project might be delivered and a further stakeholder meeting will take place shortly.

Given the prominence and importance of this area in the town centre I would like to suggest that a separate dedicated briefing for town councillors with officers present would be appropriate. Please could councillors consider this request.

## Footpath works

Pavement works have been underway in the Queensway/Longacres area. These works are the result of surveys undertaken as part of the preparatory works for the BBLP Annual Plan which identified these pavements as having significant structural deficiencies. I am advised that further pavement repair works have been identified in the Ledbury area for inclusion in the 2022 Annual Plan. I have requested sight of the survey analysis for Ledbury and will share this with councillors when I have it.

## Top Cross Post & Rail

Temporary barriers have been in place for some time (nearly 3 years) at the Top Cross where a post and rail barrier protecting the public along an elevated section of pavement. I have encouraged BBLP to survey the site and develop plans for the repair/reinstatement of the balustrade. A letter of support for the swift completion of this work from the Town Council would be of assistance to me in maintaining the pressure for the work to be completed.

## Access for Businesses

A number of businesses along the west side of The Homend have been experiencing difficulties with delivery and refuse collection access to the rear of their premises which are all accessed via Hodges Yard off Lawnside Road. Cars are parking along the access road and preventing lorries and refuse wagons from being able to make the tight turns to access these business premises. Platform Housing, who own the unadopted roadway, are cooperating with businesses to find a workable solution. Please can members of the public and tenants of the Lawnside Road flats and houses please not park on this access road and obstruct traffic.

## Planning

**Viaduct Site:** Planners are expecting detailed planning application to be received very shortly. Local people may be interested in the Heads of Terms/Section 106 Agreement for this development which has been agreed by the inspector/SoS as part of the appeal and comprises the following contributions by Bloor to the provision of local infrastructure:

- 40% Affordable Housing on the site in the following mix and number:
  - 93 Social Rent
  - 32 Affordable Rent
  - 125 Intermediate Housing
- £1m contribution towards the reinstatement of the canal section through the site
- Contribution towards additional classrooms, toilets, storage and circulation space at Ledbury Primary School; and a new 10 classroom block, 4 new classrooms, 2 new science laboratories, improved art and sport facilities at John Masefield High School of:
  - £2,413 per open market 2 bedroom unit
  - £4,297 per open market 3 bedroom unit
  - £7,560 per open market 4/5 bedroom unit
- £330,305 towards hospital services
- £167,924 towards additional GP facilities for Ledbury Healthcare Partnership
- £22,414 towards the cost of monitoring compliance
- 5,700 m2 of public open space
- 11,500m2 of children's play area of which 3,500m2 is installed play equipment
- £80 per dwelling towards cost of waste and recycling bins

- £630 per open market unit towards improved outdoor sports facilities (630 x 375 = £236,250)
- £455,000 towards the following transport improvements:
  - Widening of the footbridge over Orchard Lane
  - Improved crossing facilities where Town Trail crosses Bridge Street
  - Refurbishment of Town Trail between Orchard Lane and Bridge Street
  - Refurbishment of Town Trail south of Bridge Street

## Consultations

### Statutory consultation on proposal to close Westfield School Sixth Form: Wednesday 16 June 2021 to Friday 24 September 2021

Herefordshire Local Authority proposes the closure of the sixth form phase at Westfield Special School in Leominster. The proposed closure, subject to the outcome of this consultation, would mean that the last intake of sixth form pupils to Westfield School would be in September 2021. All pupils attending the sixth form at that point would be able to remain at Westfield School to complete their sixth form years if they chose, but no new pupils would join after that time.

Beyond the start of the 2021-2022 school year, the local authority proposes to commission all sixth form places for young people with severe, complex, multiple and profound learning difficulties at a new specialist sixth form college in Hereford city, called the Beacon College.

<https://consultations.herefordshire.gov.uk/consultations/article/58/statutory-consultation-on-proposal-to-close-westfield-school-sixth-form>

### Bus service improvement plan survey: Friday 16 July to Sunday 15 August 2021

The government recently published its national bus strategy for England called Bus back better. The strategy is encouraging local authorities to work with bus operators to create plans for improving their local bus services and encouraging more people to use them.

The strategy comes with the promise of £3 billion in funding across England to support this and Herefordshire Council intends to bid for funding to be used locally. In response to the national bus strategy, the council will be drafting a bus service improvement plan (BSIP) for Herefordshire, in collaboration with the county's bus operators, and other stakeholders.

The Council aims to publish the final plan on this website in October 2021. In drafting the plan, it's important for us to know what you think would improve local bus services and what would encourage you to use local buses more. The council is keen to hear from people who already use buses and from those who currently don't. It also wants to hear from public, private and voluntary organisations who have an interest in local bus services and making them work better.

<https://consultations.herefordshire.gov.uk/consultations/article/59/bus-service-improvement-plan-survey>

## County Council initiatives

I refer councillors to the Herefordshire Council Leader's monthly newsletter for July and August, which will shortly be published. These provide more information on developments and initiatives many of which are relevant to Ledbury and its residents. If councillors would like further information on any of the above initiatives, please contact me.

*Councillor Liz Harvey*

Independents for Herefordshire – Ledbury North Ward Member – 27 July 2021