

# Ledbury Neighbourhood Development Plan

## Meeting Note

Meeting held via Zoom on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2021 at 10.30am

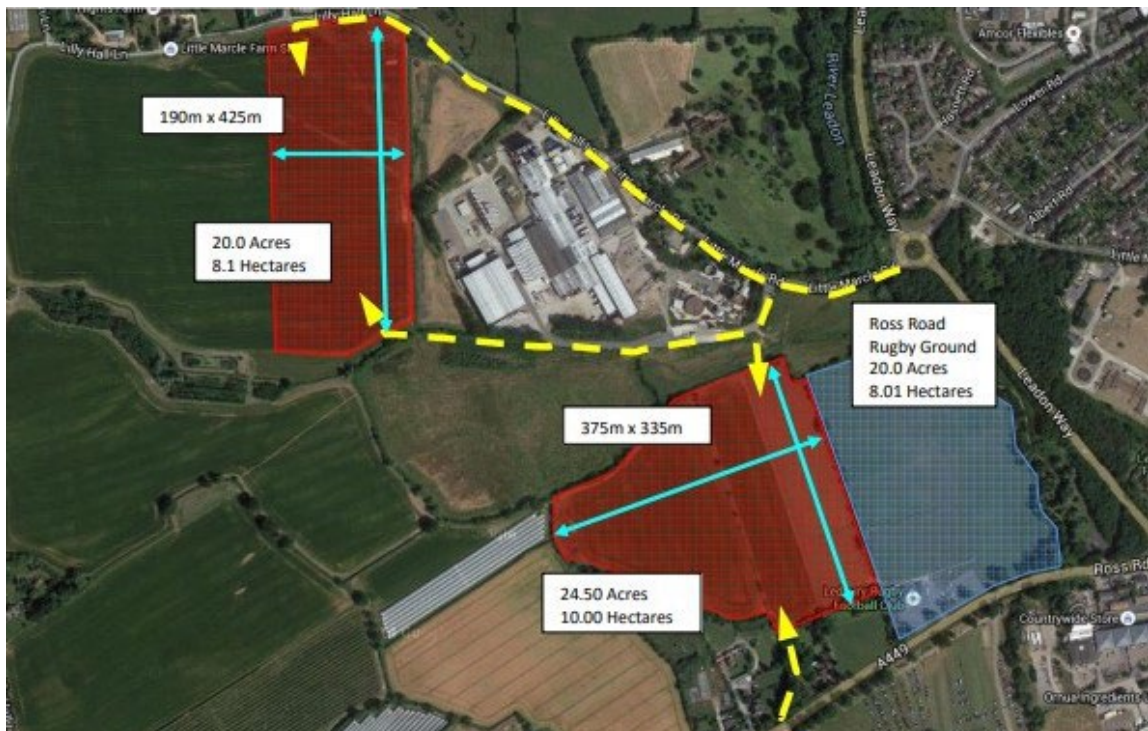
Purpose: To discuss matters about the area and delivery of land for employment and playing fields south of Little Marcle Road, Ledbury.

Present: Phillip Howells – PH (Ledbury Town Council and NDP Steering Group Chair)  
Nicola Ford – NF (Ledbury Town Council and NDP Steering Group – Meeting facilitator)  
Ruth Jackson – RJ (Herefordshire Council)  
Rob Ewing – RE (Herefordshire Council)  
Carl Brace – CB (Herefordshire Council)  
Sam Banks – SB (Herefordshire Council)  
Bill Bloxsome – BB (Planning Consultant assisting with the NDP)

Apologies: Kevin Bishop and Kevin Singleton (Both Herefordshire Council)

### 1. Background

Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy requires 12 hectares of employment land to be provided to the south of Little Marcle Road. This is also the area being looked at for new playing fields to provide for the needs of football within the town. Work upon the NDP has identified three parcels of land that might be used for the combination of these uses. The areas being considered are shown in the map below.



## **2. Employment Land**

2.1 Three landownerships have been identified that might be used for employment:

Land owned by Heineken – amounting to some 7.5 hectares (Not indicated on the map above)

Land to the west of Heineken Factory – amounting to some 8 hectares (Indicated in red above – top left)

Land adjacent to the proposed playing field area – around 5 hectares (the western half of the area indicated in red adjacent to the blue area.

In combination these would provide around 20 hectares of new employment land which, given the additional housing growth beyond what was proposed in the Core Strategy, will help to deliver sustainable and balanced growth.

2.2 Discussions with Heineken’s representative as part of the Market Town’s Investment Plan indicate that the company is looking to release the area to its south which would fall within the area proposed for development as employment land It is understood that Heineken is investigating the market. It is understood the company is in discussion how it might do this. It is also rationalising the use of its existing site which will release some of its buildings and these might be available as incubator units although it is expected this would need some form of public financial support. A report on the Market Towns Economic Investment Plan (covering all the market towns) is expected to be presented to Cabinet in October. It is expected that the approach will be based upon one of self-funding, although this may be difficult within the County.

2.3 Issues associated with development of the employment land include:

- Location and provision of access: Heineken had indicated it would like to see a separate access to the developable area rather than utilise that serving its main factory (eastern end). HC’s Highway section would need to confirm that a new access between the current one and roundabout junction to the east would be possible.
- The land immediately adjacent to Little Marcle Road currently contains the factory’s digester which may affect its use, although discussions about utilising this for access gave no indication it could not be used for this purpose.
- Land to the west of the Heineken factory is higher than that to the east and shown on HC’s Urban Fringe Sensitivity Analysis as high/medium sensitivity while that to the south is medium/low sensitivity. Landscape advice is being sought about how to mitigate the effects of development in this location. A green infrastructure corridor along the western edge of the town’s extension in this direction is expected to be proposed.

## **3. Playing Fields**

3.1 A meeting has been held between the NDP Steering Group, two local football clubs, Herefordshire FA (HFA), Football Foundation (FF) and Herefordshire Council (HC) where actions in relation to funding and defining the area required were agreed. An area of around 5 hectares has tentatively been suggested on the basis that a 3G senior pitch would be provided. In relation to the latter, the football clubs

were to liaise with the HFA and FF to achieve greater clarity on the exact area required. This information is still awaited. It is thought that Sports England may be able to offer expertise to the clubs in drawing up plans and facilities to meet technical specifications.

3.2 It was advised that car parking would be important, and an appropriate level of provision was needed, and this should be taken into account in determining the amount of land required. This could not be relaxed because of the need to avoid parking on Little Marcle Road.

3.3 HC is to clarify what money will be available at what times through S106 towards playing fields. It is also expected that funds will be available once planning permission has been secured to relocate Ledbury Town FC from the landowner who is understood to want to develop the land for housing. However, planning permission can only be secured on the basis of a site being secured for relocation. FF might consider giving the project a high priority within its next funding programme which will cover the 3-years from September 2022, subject to an appropriate application. A phased approach to delivery of all facilities on site was also suggested. It was advised that the Leader of HC had given a commitment to assisting Ledbury Swifts as a consequence of some misunderstandings resulting in the asset transfer of playing fields to Ledbury Rugby Club.

3.4 There was a discussion about land value for the playing field area should it be allocated as playing fields in the NDP. Further advice upon this is needed.

3.5 Access to the playing fields will be needed from Little Marcle Road. Heineken was concerned that this should be separate to its current access for safety reasons although it was suggested that any access would be at times that did not conflict with industrial traffic. Further advice was needed from HC highways on this (linked with paragraph 2.3 above – first bullet point).

#### **4. Actions:**

- 1. CB is to seek advice from his colleagues in the Highways section about access to the proposed employment land and playing fields, to determine whether a separate access was needed and could be achieved if it were. In addition, car parking requirements were to be identified.**
- 2. PH to press the two Football Clubs to produce a scaled drawing for pitch layout and to consult the HFA and FF. Should they have difficulty with this they should contact RJ to see if any assistance can be given by HC/Sports England. The layout should include all other facilities and especially car parking.**
- 3. RJ to find out whether HC can assist with a valuation of the land for playing fields and if so to liaise with the football clubs when a layout is available.**
- 4. PH to contact Paul Kinnaird to see if Paul can ascertain anything further in relation to Heineken's intentions in releasing the land for employment and provision of access.**

- 5. RJ to ascertain the funding schedule for the Barratt's site and also whether there will be any potential s.106 monies towards the new playing fields and facilities from the Bovis and Viaduct sites.**
- 6. Matters for further consideration include:**
  - Whether an interim access to the playing fields might be provided.**
  - Whether a 'masterplan' approach might be adopted to show, in particular, how access might be provided.**