

Ledbury Town Council

Ledbury Neighbourhood Development Plan Working Party

Current progress report for the Economic development and planning committee meeting on 8th July 2020

The Neighbourhood Development Plan update work has been effectively on hold since the start of the COVID-19 lockdown on 19th March. At that point we were about half way through the Landscape Capacity and Sensitivity Analysis (LSCA) with a number of working party volunteer members gathering information and taking photographs on different land areas around Ledbury within an initially proposed (likely maximum) settlement boundary area.

Reports were in the process of being produced to be coordinated by our retained landscape consultant, Carly Tinkler, in conjunction with our technical consultant Bill Bloxsome, with a view to then identifying the characteristics of different areas of land and how and if they could be used or allocated for their most suitable development or non-development and in order to start defining a firm settlement boundary.

We were also part way through the grant application process working with the Herefordshire Council Funding Officer, Dave Tristram. The expectation was that the applications would be submitted some time in May when the new grant application period started and applications invited. The WP Deputy Chair Nicola Forde was working with the Council's administrator to update the NDP website info for public access to documentation.

At this point the project plan was to get the NDP to its first consultation stage in September 2020, at Reg 14 by March 2021 (when it acquires some legal status) and adopted by mid-2021. This was ambitious, but agreed as realistic at the time.

The hoped-for intention was to continue with the reporting during the lockdown period since we were at a stage where some work could still be carried out from home. This quickly became impractical with the requirements of social isolating and individuals being split between other necessities, such as shielding and community volunteering. More particularly, Carly Tinkler and I became intimately involved with the intense Bloor Appeal Rule 6 status preparatory work which has been fully hands on for most of the intervening months. The good news is that we see much of the Rule 6 investment and consultant work as being invaluable to the NDP work as well.

We have discussed 'getting going' again this week on all the activity fronts now we know the Bloor appeal inquiry will be finished by 17th July, and agreed we would be able to recommence work by the end of July. The timescale will unfortunately be put back of course and this has to be agreed again with the consultants, but Reg 14 status is probably not now likely until Summer 2021 and adoption before end 2021.

Cllr Phillip Howells
NDPWP Chair
2nd July 2020