

Ledbury Neighbourhood Development Plan

Consultation Template

Date: 30/08/2021	Name of organisation: Ledbury Area Cycle Forum
Persons completing form (with roles in organisation and contact details)	Steve Glennie-Smith (Chairman)
Estimate of numbers represented by the Forum	20 (In practice, the Ledbury Area Cycle Forum (LACF) represents hundreds of cyclists. This includes regular cyclists and, more significantly, the large numbers of 'occasional cyclists' who join LACF's community cycle rides and many others (cyclists and potential cyclists) who contact us with cycling enquires on-line, by phone or in person at (eg.) our Community Day stand. The majority of our work is to encourage more people to cycle more often. We also get feedback from local tourism provider businesses who we support through our sister website http://www.comecyclingledbury.com/)
Key items to comment on	What are your concerns about specific footpaths and bridleways? What are your concerns about the cycling infrastructure in Ledbury? Are there other concerns or issues you wish to raise?
Summary of comments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern over Little Marcle Road and bridleway LR8 if the area is used for industrial development; • Poor access to the eastbound railway station platform; • Deterioration of the Town Trail. All proposed new 'green' routes must be open to cyclists; • Contraflows for cyclists on one-way streets; • New-builds (particularly) must include accessible cycle storage. 	
OK to publish report with all information or does it need to be anonymised? (the Inspector will need to see key evidence like this) Yes	

Conclusions and recommendations:

(references below relate to paragraphs in the July 2021 NDP questionnaire).

LACF as an organisation has no comments on **Sections 1, 4 and 6.**

Section 2: Prevent any deleterious effect on **Little Marcle Road (LMR) and bridleway LR8.**

LMR is the only quiet route leading west out of Ledbury: as such, it is very popular with cyclists and walkers. As a narrow road, its quietness must remain sacrosanct and heavy traffic minimised, if not prohibited, using weight limits - certainly to the west of the entrance to Haygrove. Haygrove does not generate a large number of vehicle movements: there must be no more as a result of any industrial development. LMR must **not** become the service road for any new development: new road(s) must fulfil that function, joining the wider section of LMR no further west than UBL's main entrance. The best place for the junction would be beside UBL's eastern curtilage: this would minimally affect LR8 and footpath LR12.

It would make sense if the eastern ends of LR12 and LR8 were combined (as a bridleway) in a diversion following the west bank of the Leadon and then round the north and west sides of the rugby pitch to avoid land east of UBL, which would be the first candidate for any industrial development in this area. Such a route would provide safe access by pedestrians and cyclists to any new sports land. *Please note that cyclists are legally allowed to use bridleways but must not ride on footpaths.* Therefore it is very important that the few bridleways within Ledbury parish (LR1, 8 and 14, and only L18 within the town) are preserved and, as listed later in this submission, some footpaths must be re-designated as bridleways to allow cycle use.

Additionally, a shared use path from the Leadon Vale picnic site to opposite the junction with the road to Leadington, with a designated crossing point of the A449, would provide safer access to the rugby and cricket grounds, plus access from bridleway LR8 to Leadington.

Section 3 - 3b comments:

The eastbound platform of the **railway station** has fallen foul of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) since 2004, when the DDA became law. This impacts others than disabled users: mothers with pushchairs and cyclists (especially those with heavy panniers) are also affected. Whilst a direct pedestrian and cycle access from the Bromyard Road to the eastbound platform is possible, the gradient would be excessive for many users, and access would be difficult and potentially unsafe owing to narrowness of the Bromyard Road at this point and proximity of the railway bridge. A less expensive option, which overcomes all these issues, would be to retain the existing entrance via the car park and install lifts either side of the footbridge.

Section 5 - 5a comments:

All the 'LSC' areas identified must include and/or retain cycle use. In particular:

LSC1: **The Town Trail (TT)** has been badly neglected: surface erosion has been a continual problem ever since it was opened by the then Hereford and Worcester County Council for use by cyclists and mobility scooters, as well as pedestrians, in 1998. This was match-funded by the EU. The original width of 2m is seriously reduced by encroachment of vegetation. Surface erosion is such that it is now **NOT FIT FOR PURPOSE**. The EU funding was on condition that it must remain open to all non-motorised users (except horses) - which includes pedestrians, cyclists (including e-bikes) and disabled users with their conveyances.

This condition remains legally binding on H&WCC's successor (ie. Herefordshire Council), despite Brexit.

The bridge across Orchard Lane is only 850mm wide, which falls foul of the DDA. A bridge that was originally proposed to carry the TT's northern end directly into the station yard was never built, due to lack of funding.

- The surface has worn down to its substrate, such that it is uncomfortable on a road bike.
Ledbury Area Cycle Forum (LACF) has advocated a tarmac surface for many years: this would cost more initially but it would remove the need for continual patching

up and removal of vegetation.

The surface could be beige non-slip chippings: the canal towpaths in the Dudley area were resurfaced this way a few years ago and look attractive;

- The bridge over Orchard Lane must be replaced with one that is at least 1.1m (preferably 2m) wide. The existing bearers could accommodate this: a prefabricated replacement could be installed with minimal disruption to road traffic beneath;
- Put the station bridge on the 'wish list'. The existing TT exit will become a safety issue, now those who think they know better have forced a single access to the 'viaduct estate' via the Bromyard Road. These measures, together with lifts by the footbridge, will provide a seamless link to the rail system for non-motorised users;
- Dilapidated half-barriers leading to the Severn-Trent land and Oatleys Meadow from Little Marcle Road serve no purpose. They obstruct tandems and trailers (particularly), and should be removed.

LSC2: Must include a cycleway - particularly where the extension goes under the viaduct. There was an old PRow (LR15) under the viaduct, which was included on the first definitive map (which was required by the Countryside Act of 1949) but it was omitted from the 1968 map: thus it has been lost.

It is worth noting that the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) has a provision that all missing links must be claimed before 1st January 2026 - this date falls within the timeframe of this NDP.

LSC3: Change status from 'footpath' to 'bridleway' of:

- LR13: From southern end of Green Lane by the stile where another footpath (LR33) joins - to Homend Crescent and;
- LR14: From Upperfields, running south to join LR13. Currently, the south end of Green Lane (a permissive route open to pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders) is legally a dead end for cyclists and horse riders.

Green Lane must become a designated bridleway, and be added to the definitive map.

This **must** be done before 1st January 2026.

LSC4: No path within the New Mills estate, apart from that which leads past the back of the primary school, can legally be used by cyclists. These are only 6 feet wide. Current guidance for shared use paths is 3m width, and certainly no less than 2m. All these paths must be widened to 3m and be opened to cyclists.

LSC5: Must include cycleways, primarily for use by residents of Hawk Rise as a partly traffic-free route to the town centre.

LEZ1: LACF supports cycle use of any towpath beside the canal, should it be restored.

See also earlier mention of 'lost' footpath LR15, which must be reclaimed before 1st January 2026.

A diversion order on LR15 (if required) could be the basis of such a towpath.

Should the canal not be restored, the route of the towpath must become a shared-use path regardless.

LEZ3: LACF supports the proposed new shared use footpath/cycleway to Parkway.

5c and other cycling infrastructure:

- Since a second vehicular access under the viaduct to that planned housing estate has been denied, it is **essential** that a cycle/pedestrian access is installed (of which the proposed towpath could be part), and that it links with the Riverside Walk and Town Trail, with Toucan crossings of the Hereford Road and bypass.
- Any new one-way street must have cycle contraflow. The most recent (south end of Woodleigh Road) is working well and should become permanent. Of the other two existing:

- The west end of **Church Street** should be stopped up to all motor traffic by means of a bollard situated near the Town Council building (which could temporarily be removed by emergency services, for example). This would allow cycle movement in both directions whilst maintaining access to businesses near the Market House;
- The east end of **New Street** could include a contraflow if the timing of the traffic lights was altered such that they go red from the Southend for some time before they do so from the High Street.
This would allow cyclists arriving from that direction to turn right. Since the stop line in New Street is well back from the build-out and bollards that protect the 'house on stilts', there is sufficient space.
The rest of that one-way system (ie. from the build-out to the entrance to the Talbot) is wide enough for a contraflow: there are double yellow lines both sides here.
A 'no unloading' order would be required, and restrictions on waiting must be properly enforced.
- The beside-road cycle routes alongside New Mills Way cross the road in several places. This completely negates their usefulness: they should be contiguous on the same side of the road and traffic on side roads should give way to them, not the other way about. All new such lanes must be contiguous and have priority over side-roads. There must be no 'Cyclists Dismount' signs.
- The shared use path along Aldi's frontage must continue at full width to the end of L2 (the path that leads to the primary school). The land (in front of LDA Meats) was given to Herefordshire Council for that purpose following granting of planning permission (HC planning number 182614) for another building on the site.

Planning:

- The Hawk Rise estate and other housing estates in the process of being built, or for which planning permission has been obtained, must all include interconnecting off-road routes that are 3m wide for cyclists and pedestrians. It must be an automatic planning condition that all future estates must include these.
- Regarding planning generally: All new-builds must include adequate and secure residential cycle storage (LACF recommends storage for one cycle per bed-space), with a power supply for e-bikes or mobility scooters. The storage needs to be easily accessible from the street.
Terraced housing with narrow pathways winding (eg.) around the back of neighbouring gardens is wholly unsuitable for bikes, especially tandems and trailers. It must therefore be a standard planning condition these pathways are wide enough.
- Alternative cycle storage must be provided as part of any application to convert a garage or shed to habitable room(s).

In addition: LACF's submission to the NDP Ambassador Visits and Targeted Events on 24th May 2017 (attached) still stands, though now some of it is work-in-progress [eg. part of Conclusion 2: it was a planning condition for the new building for the Brookfield veterinary practice that the path beside the site (northern section of L18) should be improved, but although the building is almost complete, there is as yet no evidence of such improvement].

Previous feedback to the existing NDP from 2017

NDP Ambassador Visits and Targeted Events	
Date	Wednesday 24th May 2017
Who	With <u>Ledbury Area Cycle Forum</u> - represented by Chairman Steve Glennie-Smith and Publicity Officer Bella Johnson by Phillip Howells
When	Morning
Where	The Mews Café, Ledbury
Summary of Event	<p>The Forum have already had some NDP consultation and presented some structured feedback with recommendations. They were pleased to be consulted again because in their view there are still important topics they feel should be better reflected in the NDP and its associated Design Code than they believe is currently the case.</p> <p>The group was initially set up in 1998 as a pressure group to support the development of the Ledbury Town Trail, which was set up after the Beeching closure of the railway line along the trail in 1962. HCC organised the trail with EU5b funding obtained for part of the cost, with a stipulation that the trail should be accessible for walking, cycling and disabled use (under the DDA - Disability Discrimination Act). In their view the trail has never fully complied with that requirement. They have submitted various proposals to LTC such as in 2005, so they see this as the ideal opportunity to hopefully improve the trail through the auspices of the NDP so it does finally provide the proper access required.</p> <p>They are now active on campaigning on a wider range of cycling, walking and DDA access facilities for Ledbury town and parish. In addition to the feedback below, the forum has provided several well thought out supporting documents with proposals for consideration to be reflected in the NDP. They have been submitted with this report. Contact point: Bella Johnson 01531 6354532 bellatandem@gmail.com</p>
Estimate of numbers consulted	<p>The Forum is essentially a campaigning organisation, so directly the meeting reflects the input of their 6 or 7 strongly active members and some 20 or so other community based cyclists who ride with them. In practice, the Ledbury Area Cycle Forum says they represent hundreds of cyclists. This includes regular cyclists, but, more significantly, the large numbers of 'occasional cyclists' who join their community cycle rides and the many others (cyclists and potential cyclists) who contact them with cycling enquires either on-line, by phone or in person at their Community Day stand. The majority of their work is to encourage more people to cycle more often. They also get feedback from local tourism provider businesses who they support through their website http://www.comecyclingledbury.com/</p>
Conclusion	<p>In addition to their wider thoughts in the attachments, these were the key points the forum representatives raised. The main points were those of very poor active-travel connectivity into the town and lack of cycle storage at residential properties. Since active travel is national and county strategy, the NDP must be consistent with this objective.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Ledbury Town Trail does not address cycling needs adequately and even less satisfies the original funding requirements for disabled access along its whole route. In parts it is becoming unusable for cyclists

and is unusable for disabled access along more of the route. At the Little Marcle road exit the Trail is often deep in water and mud after rain and the path from there back up towards Bye Street for the next few hundred yards is also often wet, muddy and with a narrow path not suitable for cycling or disabled access either. The bridge over Orchard Lane is also too narrow for wheelchairs at just 850mm and not easy to cycle over safely. There is a path down to the road which can be used, but the bridge should be widened to at least 1100mm. The forum recognises that a complete rebuild to provide the 2m minimum recommended for footpaths (and ideally 3m wide) would probably not secure funding in the current climate, but a bolt on to make it 1100mm is apparently a technically feasible and more economically affordable option.

2. Regarding the viaduct housing development plan there are no proposals that they know of for cycling facilities with easy access to the town, schools, shops etc. They suggest that the current tarmac cycle and footpath in New Mills and alongside the Town Trail to the west of the old railway line, which ends 100 yards from the Hereford road, then becoming a narrow grassy foot path with a stile at the end, could be extended to provide this access. The path could be extended along the line of the old canal tunnel under the viaduct (access down Ballard Crescent to the viaduct is possible), which would provide a perfect, flat and direct access connection. A Toucan crossing over the main road should be considered. Give the priorities in the Core Strategy for encouraging cycling and walking, and similarly seen as important to the residents of Ledbury in the Town Plan, they feel this should be formally included as an aim in the NDP. (They pointed out that there is no formal cycling officer at HCC, but Mark Edwards in the Highways Department is sympathetic and has suggested funding for schemes like this could be included Sect 106 wish-list proposals).
3. In support of this theme, they would like to see the transport infrastructure priorities of the NDP in order of clear importance to be pedestrian access, then cycling and DDA access, with motor traffic only being a third priority.
4. Social housing design never considers cycle storage, and given these priorities they strongly believe that secure cycle should be a planning requirement for all new houses. The new houses planned on the south of the Leadon Way currently totally fail to meet this condition. The amended plans for the Leadon Way site also claim 'improved pedestrian and cycle path provision', but the only cycle infrastructure improvement seems to be a short stretch of shared-use tarmac connecting a cul-de-sac directly to the bypass toucan crossing.
5. They recommend that the NDP Design Code specifies that all new housing developments should include in each house, not only adequately sized and secure cycle and mobility scooter storage, but also a combined electric cycle and electric car recharging point.
6. Safe cycling and pedestrian access should be extended to give residents more choices for using both. For instance, ensuring the Ledbury Town Trail is cycling and pedestrian friendly right up to the Ross Road island, with consideration of a Toucan crossing at that point and widening/improving the path up to the Rugby club and beyond for more attractive cyclist and pedestrian use.
7. Railway station - despite the Disability Act of 13 years ago there is still no DDA access to the north platform and no easy cycling access either. The NDP must mention the need for lifts on both sides of the station, clarifying in the wording the need for step free access. (On a point of information, there are only four railway stations in Herefordshire - Pontrillas is not open as a functioning station).
8. Add as an aspiration for improved railway access, the intention to influence train operators to have a minimum of 3 coaches per train instead of the current 2.