

## Ledbury Neighbourhood Development Plan

### Consultation visits or meetings report form 2018-2021

<b>Date and time of meeting</b>	Football facilities NDP consultation 6.00pm Wednesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> March 2021
<b>Name of organisation with which held</b>	Ledbury Sports Federation (LSF), Ledbury Town Football Club (LTFC), Ledbury Swifts Football Club (LSFC)
<b>Persons attending from the organisation (with job roles and relevant further contact information)</b>	Nick Fish – Secretary, LSF and Vice-President LSFC, Herefordshire Football Association Council Member; NDP WP member and football/sports key contact. Tel: 07737 028297 email: <a href="mailto:nickdeanfish@gmail.com">nickdeanfish@gmail.com</a> Peter Boyle – Chairman LTFC Ian Merrick – Vice-Chairman LTFC Steve Onions – President LSFC John Wilesmith – Chairman LSF
<b>Persons representing the Neighbourhood Development Plan Working Party</b>	Cllr Phillip Howells Cllr Helen Anson Bill Bloxsome - Consultant
<b>Where held (physical meeting location or online)</b>	Online Zoom meeting
<b>Agenda – key items to discuss</b>	<p>This is what we need to know for NDP consultation purposes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Whether the football clubs have the ability to deliver facilities with a 3G pitch as this would reduce the area required enabling more land for employment?</li> <li>2. Whether they have a layout for this option and the larger land-take proposal?</li> <li>3. What conclusions they have reached in terms of discussions with the landowner? Some NDP consultation meeting dates have been suggested; do we have any progress on that?</li> <li>4. Are they happy with the sites assessment paper the NDP consultant Bill Bloxsome has circulated (including the review of land options that have been considered for a football site) - are there any errors in his understanding; sites definitions; conclusions?</li> </ol>

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	<p>5. Is there anything he can add in the Topic paper that would add to the evidence base - eg. correspondence with the FA/HFA?</p> <p>6. We know that the recognised desired solution is a combined Swifts/LTFC proposal. Does this rule out separate grounds if that is a way of showing we can meet the employment land requirements.</p> <p>7. Finance – are the clubs satisfied the project could be adequately financed to buy the land and provide all the facilities needed for a pavilion, floodlights? If the Property Solutions sale and development of the current LTFC grounds does not go ahead and so none of the expected contribution funds come from that source, how does that affect the ability to deliver this project financially?</p> <p>8. A problem we foreseen by the NDP WP and consultant is being able to define the area required for playing fields on the policies map. If we put too much and can't show reasonably that we have enough for employment, then the Examiner may reject the playing fields proposal. If we don't show enough for playing fields then they will not achieve their objective which may in turn not receive the funding. Can we show the evidence to demonstrate both are realistically achievable?</p> <p>9. What more input is felt as still needed from HC and HC planners (Cllr Hitchiner the Leader, Richard Ball, Carl Brace and Ruth Jackson?)</p>
<p><b>Summary of discussion</b></p>	<p>Q1. Yes they are sure they have this ability. Bodies concerned to make the decision are Hereford Football Association, Football Development Officer, Football Foundation and Sports England. All agree with the need for, and will only sanction a combined football facility in Ledbury and that it is essential to eventually have and include in the land required, a 3G/4G astra turf full sized football pitch.</p> <p>Funding to provide the 3G pitch would be available once the site has been developed for playing on.</p>

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	<p><b>Q2. Yes a plan exists. Two options are considered. The need to accommodate both clubs is:</b></p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p><b>Option 1 – if no 3G pitch:</b></p> <p>3 x grass 11 a side pitches                  2 x grass 9 a side pitches                  2 x grass 7 a side pitches                  2 x grass 5 a side pitches                  Total 9 pitches</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p><b>Option 2 – if with a 3G pitch (which would reduce some 7 and 5 a side pitches)</b></p> <p>2 x 11 a side grass and 1 x 3G 11 a side                  2 x 9 a side grass                  1 x 7 a side grass                  1 x 5 a side grass                  Total 7 pitches</p> </td> </tr> </table> <p><b>Plus allowance for an additional 11 a side pitch to accommodate growth by 2030+ Total area needed for any option + car parking + pavilion/stand with changing rooms, showers and kitchen/bar area of approx. 40m x 20m + for growth is 5ha (hectares) of land. (Not looking for a full club facility like the adjacent Rugby Club, which would still be used for bigger social occasions – no point in duplication of these facilities).</b></p> <p><b>Q3. This is a key issue because as Bill Bloxsome pointed out, LTC has to find around 12ha of employment land in the area, south of the Little Marcle Road, to meet the requirements of the Herefordshire Local Plan (the Core Strategy) – which is why Q1 is so important. There are 3 owners of land in the site being evaluated for a combination of employment and sporting/recreation development.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>UBL who (in a previous similar NDP consultation meeting) confirm they have land around their site that they have available to sell for employment development, approx. 7.5ha. Their land includes an access site from the Little Marcle Road across waste land around a public footpath between their existing large vehicle delivery access road and the roundabout on the bypass.</b></li> <li>- <b>This would provide access to any employment development area (and hopefully paid for by this development from the Market Towns Economic Investment Plan project, run by Herefordshire Council and which is considering priority investment areas in</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Option 1 – if no 3G pitch:</b></p> <p>3 x grass 11 a side pitches                  2 x grass 9 a side pitches                  2 x grass 7 a side pitches                  2 x grass 5 a side pitches                  Total 9 pitches</p>	<p><b>Option 2 – if with a 3G pitch (which would reduce some 7 and 5 a side pitches)</b></p> <p>2 x 11 a side grass and 1 x 3G 11 a side                  2 x 9 a side grass                  1 x 7 a side grass                  1 x 5 a side grass                  Total 7 pitches</p>
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	<p>the market towns including Ledbury using Rose Regeneration - contact Paul Sampson - as their consultant). Their report with recommendation decisions is due by the end of May 2021 so fits well with the NDP timescales. It is hoped that this site will be included in their recommendations which could mean the land being bought as part of the investment including the access road, which would be available as a result for the football site without extra payment (subject also to the timing being in line with when access is needed by the football clubs). Note an access option from the Ross Road onto Mr Young's land has also been muted as an option to consider; it's not likely since the core strategy anticipates a Little Marcle Road access, but should be borne in mind as a possible alternative.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- LSF pointed out that additional employment land agreement has been negotiated in 2018 by the football bodies with the owner of land to the west of the UBL site along the Little Marcle Road, owned by the Gilbert family (contact is the son, Bruce Gilbert). This would provide another 20 acres/8ha to add to the 7.5ha from UBL and so exceeding the 12ha requirement</li><li>- Then there is the land owned by Mr Alistair Young on which it is being proposed the 5ha football site would be located. Informal discussions have been held with Mr Young, who like many farmers in the area have been 'keeping options open' on whether their land could be suitable for housing development and therefore command a higher price. However it is increasing clear that housing in the area is highly unlikely, expected to be supported through landscape sensitivity work being conducted as part of the NDP revision process to devise a settlement boundary for the town (all of these 3 areas of land expected to be included in the boundary).</li><li>- LSF asked, as a point of information, if development could be proposed by agreement between the landowner and the football clubs independently without the NDP 'allocation' process. Bill Bloxsome pointed out the dangers of this because once a landowner had development approval in principle it need not be for sporting land per se if the landowner so chose, and once in the NDP there is presumption of</li></ul>
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	<p>development which may not end up being what was intended (although housing would not be an option on this land). He also pointed out that in the end it is the inspector who decides if the proposals not only meet local plans but conform with national planning strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Cllr Howells emphasised the advantage of an NDP with a land use assessment and specific policies, agreed by the public on consultation, on the land use preferred, this carries legal planning decision weight and so is the most sure way of attempting to ensure only development desired by the community is allowed on any specific allocated site.</li><li>- Agreed we now need to contact Bruce Gilbert and Alistair Young re arranging a separate consultation meeting like this one with each, trying suggested dates with Mr Young initially (6pm 12/3, 15/3 or 17/3). It was agreed that we needed to have all the plans and action points clearly understood and identified before a meeting – such as the land needed, access points, landscape assessment and planning rules plus the NDP all demonstrating his land as being the best option and preferred site for all these reasons, including convincing him that the only options for his and nearby land is for sport and employment as the direction of travel. There is no prospect of the land in that area being allocated or granted planning permission for housing.</li><li>- An important part of the discussion will be to demonstrate, that should he wish, there will be substantial opportunity to get involved with/invest in the employment development area as a planning gain to provide business income compensation for the loss of farming land.</li><li>- In order to substantiate the land use allocation likelihood being only for sport/football, it was agreed that an updated set of minutes from the meeting held with Herefordshire Council Leader and Head of Planning on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020 was needed and also notes required from an additional meeting with HC planners held on 14<sup>th</sup> December – both of these unequivocally confirmed support for the plans outlined</li></ul>
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	<p>as today's meeting. Agree Cllr Howells and l'Anson to progress these with HC to get these notes formally documented in full for the record to prove the support and promised made by HC in support.</p> <p><b>Q4 &amp; Q5. All the sports/football guys agreed they were happy with Bill's understanding of what is needed and his guidance on the planning and examiner requirements was invaluable. He identified 4 points on which he still needs definitive information and guidance in order to complete his topic guide paper on sport and recreation (see conclusions and actions below)</b></p> <p><b>Q6. Yes unquestionably; separate grounds for the two clubs will not be funded or sanctioned by the football authorities; one combined site is the only solution option. Nick confirmed the documents from the football bodies will make it crystal clear. It has also been the Ledbury Swifts and Town sides sole focus for a new combined football facility for getting on towards a decade now.</b></p> <p><b>Q7. Nick advised the budget to get the plan for a combined facility up and running, including acquisition of the land, is £1.2m plus any access costs + the 3G pitch when applicable. This is expected to be funded by approx. £500k from Property Solutions from the sale to developers of the current Ledbury Town Football Club, approx. £220k in S106 money from Herefordshire Council and then matched funding from the football bodies – Sport England, the FA, and Funding in Sport (a lady called Ruth) to provide between them £500k. However, we need to have acquired the site first for this funding to become available. (Nick to provide a spreadsheet with the detailed cost information to attach to this report).</b></p> <p><b>This is assuming outline planning permission is eventually granted to Property Solutions, who on sale of the land have an obligation to LTFC to fund like for like playing facilities of a pavilion and floodlighting for LTFC when they eventually move. The plan now is to put these proceeds into a fund for the new combined football facility rather than provide the facilities directly for LTFC (it was once felt separate grounds may be necessary, but the football authorities will only sanction a combined site). It has taken time to convince Property</b></p>
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	<p><b>Solutions that a sole LTFC provision (in which they were also exploring possibilities of buying land and then leasing it back to the club) was not a viable route despite being told by Councillors, the sports clubs and planners that this would not work</b></p> <p><b>The potential timescale envisaged could be relatively short once the NDP achieves what is known as Reg 14 status anticipated as being around September 2021 after the 1<sup>st</sup> public consultation exercise and by which time the plan already carries some legal force before going on to the later Reg 16 stage and ultimate adoption anticipated in January 2022. Unlikely maybe, but football could be being played on the site during the 2022/23 playing season. It is estimated this could be achieved within 12 months of acquiring the land (however this is achieved, ideally by purchase but could be by lease – to be negotiated between My Young, HC planners and the football bodies.</b></p> <p><b>The aim is to have a firm plan in place by April/May 2021 in order for LTFC to negotiate at least an extra 2021/22 playing season with Property Solutions (the current agreement expiring end of May 2021). No rent is paid by LTFC at present, but they have funds if necessary to pay some rent to encourage Property Solutions to continue to let them play on the site until the conditions prevail for them to approach HC for outline planning permission in order to then sell the land.</b></p> <p><b>Q8. Given all these notes and actions still needed, yes, the meeting agreed., we should be able to amply demonstrate the evidence to show all of this plan is realistic and achievable.</b></p> <p><b>Q9. Nothing extra needed at this point from HC other than the actions outlined above being achieved.</b></p>
<p><b>OK to publish report with all information or if it needs to be anonymised (point out inspector will need to see key evidence like this in some way)</b></p>	<p><b>All agreed it is OK to publicly publish this report as produced including the names of people participating and when content agreed as being correct, including posting on the LTC website as evidence for the NDP examiner.</b></p>

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<p><b>Estimate of numbers effectively represented by the consultation (eg. employees in company, number of members of the group)</b></p>	<p><b>Ledbury Town Football Club (Adult team) – approx.70 members Ledbury Swifts Football Club (Youth teams) – 300 members + 50 adult coaches and officials + parents, Uncles, Aunties and Grandparents around another 1,000</b></p>
<p><b>Conclusions and recommendations</b></p>	<p><b>Agreed the NDP is the key to ensuring not only that the football use land is identified and allocated for football, but that the policies in the NDP will (with assumed public backing from the consultation) will stipulate that the land is used for this purpose and no other development. On this basis it is firmly felt that all this represents a realistic and achievable plan for a combined football facility to on the proposed site within the next 1-2 years.</b></p> <p><b>Actions needed:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Cllrs Howells and l’Anson to progress minute/notes details from HC</b></li> <li><b>2. John Wilesmith to contact Alistair Young and Bruce Gilbert to agree meeting dates</b></li> <li><b>3. Nick Fish to provide more detailed costing information</b></li> <li><b>4. Cllr Howells to contact Paul Sampson representing the Market Towns Economic Investment Plan consultants to put this plan to him for any comment</b></li> <li><b>5. Bill Bloxsome to discuss and confirm with HC that the employment land potentially available meets the core strategy requirements</b></li> <li><b>6. he four actions required for Bill Bloxsome to draw up the settlement boundary evidence and complete writing up the his topic guides need to be undertaken:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a. Formal confirmation on discussions had from all the football authorities on agreement to the plan including the 2019 land discussion details</b></li> <li><b>b. Details of the agreement with the Gilberts</b></li> <li><b>c. Confirmation (which he will check) from Herefordshire Council planners that the local plan strategy allows the combination of UBL and Gilbert land will meet</b></li> </ol> </li> </ol>



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	<p style="text-align: center;">the core strategy definition of around 12ha of employment on a 'south of Little Marcle Road' location to satisfy the examiner</p> <p style="text-align: center;">d. The result of the consultation meeting with Alistair Young</p> <p style="text-align: center;">7. Cllr Howells to write up the notes of the meeting and circulate for comment/approval</p>
<p><b>Confirm consultee agrees this is an accurate reflection of the meeting.</b></p>	<p><b>Name of person agreeing: Nick Fish, Steve Onions, John Wilesmith</b></p> <p><b>Name of person representing NDP: Cllr Phillip Howells</b></p> <p><b>Date confirmed: 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021</b></p> <p><b>(Signatures, possibly digital, needed to confirm agreement)</b></p>