

Ledbury Neighbourhood Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment

Scoping Report

I. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document is the Scoping Report for the sustainability appraisal, incorporating the requirements for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Ledbury Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.2 This stage of sustainability appraisal involves compiling background information needed before a sustainability appraisal can be undertaken and is referred to as 'scoping'. It establishes an evidence base for ongoing appraisal work and culminates in a framework of sustainability objectives.
- 1.3 The information contained within this report will be used to assess the extent to which the emerging neighbourhood plan policies contribute towards sustainable development.
- 1.4 The Ledbury Neighbourhood Plan must be in conformity with higher level planning policy including the Herefordshire Core Strategy. The Core Strategy has been subject to its own sustainability appraisal and this report has been informed by that assessment and associated Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report.

The Ledbury Neighbourhood Plan

- 1.5 The Localism Act introduced Neighbourhood Planning into the hierarchy of spatial plan making in England, giving communities a new right to shape their local areas.
- 1.6 The Ledbury Neighbourhood Plan is being produced by a Neighbourhood Planning Working Party that includes Parish Council members and representatives from local communities.
- 1.7 The Vision for the Ledbury Neighbourhood Plan is as follows:

As a prosperous Market Town, Ledbury will continue to be a vibrant, thriving community, both socially and economically, with an attractive, well managed and safe built environment, in sympathy with the surrounding natural landscape. The town will continue to be a popular destination as an attractive place to shop for residents, the local rural community and visitors, with a successful tourist industry celebrating the town's heritage.

Residents are proud of Ledbury and gain a sense of well-being from living here. There are currently good services and amenities and a strong sense of community. To maintain this infrastructure will be developed in line with the rate of housing development.

The town's population will live, work and play in high quality, flexible, sustainable/energy efficient and well-designed buildings with appropriate infrastructure, which meet the needs of everyone who spends time in the town and which maintain its unique character and heritage.

Currently there is an imbalance between housing and employment building with some 40% of the working population commuting out of the town. The employment base will be 'grown', developing a diverse economy and continuing the 'technology corridor' from the Midlands, via Malvern, in order to attract high tech and R&D businesses in Ledbury.

The employment base will be widened in order to help develop a diverse economy and to continue the technology corridor from the Midlands via Malvern, in order to attract high-tech and R&D businesses to Ledbury. The effect of this will be to give the option to many residents of Ledbury to work in the town and reduce the number of residents that commute out of the town to their place of work.

Ledbury will be a willing partner in the development of higher education facilities in Herefordshire and will look to develop an R&D facility and, if plans for Hereford University go ahead, a campus.

Ledbury wishes to become an area of sporting excellence for all generations and will develop sports facilities as the town grows.

The built environment will retain its compact feel and its good connectivity. Sustainable transport options, such as walking and cycling, will be encouraged and public transport provisions enhanced. Easy access to the surrounding countryside will be maintained. The Malvern Hills AONB is the backdrop to the town and all development will be complementary to the landscape and the views. This will require design sensitivity and the town will develop and maintain a Design Statement/Guide.

Green space will be protected and biodiversity safeguarded, while the town's relationship with the open countryside will be strengthened through the prioritised use of urban trees, landscaping and decorative planting throughout all developments.

Ledbury's role as a prosperous market town with a diverse economy, including a burgeoning tourist industry, will be protected and enhanced while the heritage of the town will be preserved and celebrated. The town will cherish and nurture its vibrant retail core, and will grow its reputation for markets and festivals. Traders will be encouraged to provide a wide range of retail offerings in order to enhance the standing of Ledbury as a prime visitor destination. Increasing sustainability within the town will mean that Ledbury steadily gains the reputation for being a Green Town.

1.8 The Objectives for the Ledbury Neighbourhood Plan have been defined as follows:

HO1: To ensure that new housing in Ledbury meets the needs of residents.

HO2: To ensure that all new housing in Ledbury is developed in a sustainable manner.

HO3: To recognise and provide for the growth in the needs for older persons and related specialist housing as identified in a Study of the Housing and Support needs of Older People in Herefordshire.

HO4: To provide sustainable and affordable homes for local singles and young families.

HO5: To encourage individual and community based self-build projects.

EE1: Strengthen and grow the presence of key employment sectors by a deliverable mix of sustainable employment sites to cater for future growth. In particular, the town wishes to encourage high quality long term employment, business start-ups and creative industries. Key employment sectors include:

- Independent and national retail
- Tourism - domestic and business/day, overnight and short visit
- Research and Science
- Manufacturing and Distribution
- Engineering
- Food & Drink
- Agricultural services
- Professional services
- Art, Design & the Creative Industries
- Healthcare

EE2: Promote and enhance facilities necessary to attract visitors and to encourage tourism.

EE3: Promote the Town Centre as the destination of choice for retail, leisure and community activities in order to enhance the appearance and historic character of the town.

BE1: To ensure that Ledbury maintains its character as a market town with new development sympathetic in style and form to the immediate surroundings. Future development will contribute to the preservation of the overall distinctiveness of the town.

BE2: To protect the transition from town centre to edge of town, where it is more rural, so that any new 'edge of town' development maintains the character of the current rural boundary.

HRI: To promote enhancement of the historic environment and buildings within the central area of the town centre.

NE1: To maintain, enhance and increase existing open spaces, trees, and hedgerows in order to promote and support wildlife and biodiversity.

NE2: To promote local food production and encourage small-scale, sustainable producers.

NE3: To commission and update a landscape impact assessment of local industrial level agriculture on issues such as local flooding and visual appearance in order to ensure that this sort of activity does not detrimentally impact upon the existing natural beauty, biodiversity and visual appeal of the Ledbury and surrounding areas.

NE4: To register the historic woods above Ledbury as being community assets for both their historical significance and their utility to Ledbury as sources of sustainable wood supplies and sites of natural beauty and wildlife biodiversity that make Ledbury an attractive tourist destination.

NE5: To develop Ledbury as a forward thinking, self-reliant and sustainable lifestyle community to reflect increasing climate change challenges.

CL1: To protect and enhance our Green Spaces, open areas and woodland areas including Riverside Park, Line Bank Town Trail and Dog Hill, Conigree and Frith Woods.

CL2: To improve and increase varied types of facilities for youth activities.

CL3: To provide local medical and care facilities commensurate with population growth and the increasing needs of the more elderly in the community.

CL4: To protect, increase and improve all existing sport & leisure for indoor and outdoor recreation/leisure in line with National Standards.

TR1: To promote the use of sustainable transport methods such as cycling, walking and public transport as primary means of getting around Ledbury both within the existing settlement and the proposed Strategic Allocation site.

TR2: To provide a satisfactory supply of car and cycle parking and coach drop-off and pick-up points in the vicinity of the town centre, in order to meet the needs of residents and visitors.

TR3: To encourage the use of Ledbury Railway Station as a transport hub for Ledbury and District by improving access and facilities with additional parking.

INI: To encourage the provision of a new tri-service emergency centre for Ledbury.

Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

- I.9 Delivering sustainable development is the core principle underpinning the planning system. Indeed, Paragraph 14 of the NPPF states that 'at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan making and decision-taking'.
- I.10 The purpose of sustainability appraisal is to promote the objectives of sustainable development within planning. This is done by appraising the social, environmental and economic effects of a plan from the outset and in doing so, helping to ensure that sustainable development is treated in an integrated way in the preparation of the plan.
- I.11 Sustainability appraisal helps to deliver the UK Sustainable Development Strategy. This strategy defines the goal of sustainable development as "to enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life, without compromising the quality of life of future generations". It sets out five guiding principles to achieve it:
- a. living within environmental limits
 - b. ensuring a strong, healthy and just society
 - c. achieving a sustainable economy
 - d. promoting good governance
 - e. using sound science responsibly
- I.12 In the UK, the Strategic Environmental Assessment process has been incorporated into the Sustainability Appraisal process. Therefore where this report refers to the Sustainability Appraisal, it can be assumed this also means the Strategic Environmental Assessment. It therefore aims to predict the effects of the policies and proposals of the Ledbury Neighbourhood Plan and has been used to inform its production to ensure that the policies promote sustainable development.

Legal requirements

- I.13 It is not a legal requirement for Neighbourhood Plans to undertake sustainability appraisal as set out in section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. A Neighbourhood Plan Group must, however, demonstrate how its plan will contribute to achieving sustainable development.

- I.14 There is a requirement however to carry out a scoping report to consider the need to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

SEA Directive 2001/42/EC legal requirements:

- I.15 A Strategic Environmental Assessment, as defined by European Directive 2001/42, aims to predict and assess the environmental effects that are likely to arise from plans, policies and strategies. It is a process for assessing and mitigating the negative environmental impacts of specific plans and programmes.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

- I.16 The process of sustainability appraisal also incorporates the requirements of the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive. To meet this requirement, officers must start by considering whether or not the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have a significant effect on the environment.
- I.17 The Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have significant environmental effects. Accordingly, the Neighbourhood Plan sustainability appraisal will incorporate the requirements of an environmental assessment, in line with the SEA Directive. A copy of the SEA Screening Determination is provided as Appendix 3 to this report.
- I.18 To show how the requirements of the SEA Directive are met during the appraisal process, a checklist is provided in the Quality Assurance Checklist (Appendix 2).

Sustainability Appraisal Methodology

- I.19 The following sections contain a brief summary of the key SEA stages that will be completed during the preparation of the Ledbury Neighbourhood Plan. The methodology used follows national guidance.
- I.20 There are five stages in the sustainability appraisal process:
- Stage A – Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope.
 - Stage B – Developing and refining plan options.

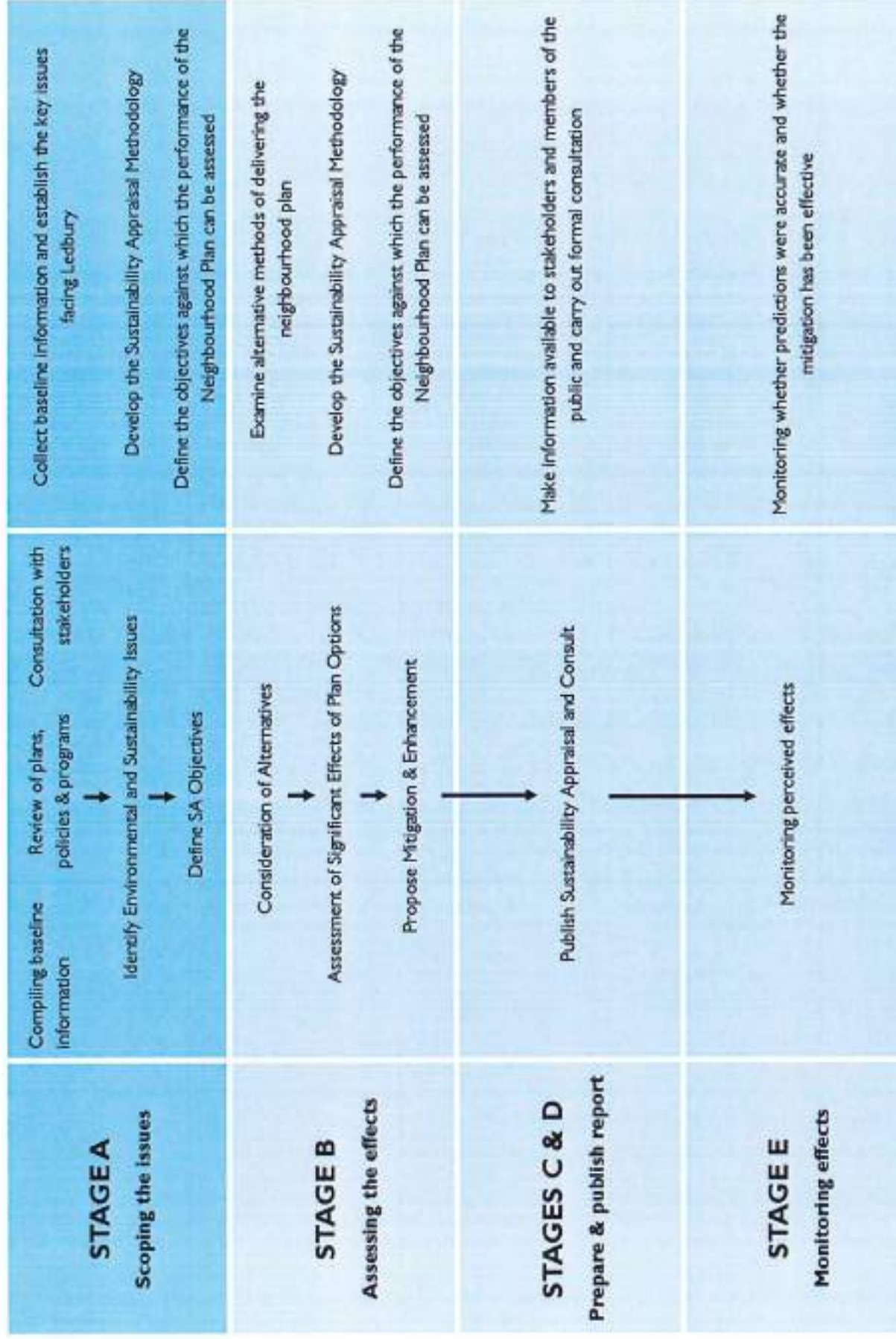
Stage C – Appraising the effects of the plan.

Stage D – Consulting on the draft Ledbury Neighbourhood Plan and the SA Report.

Stage E – Monitoring and implementation of the plan.

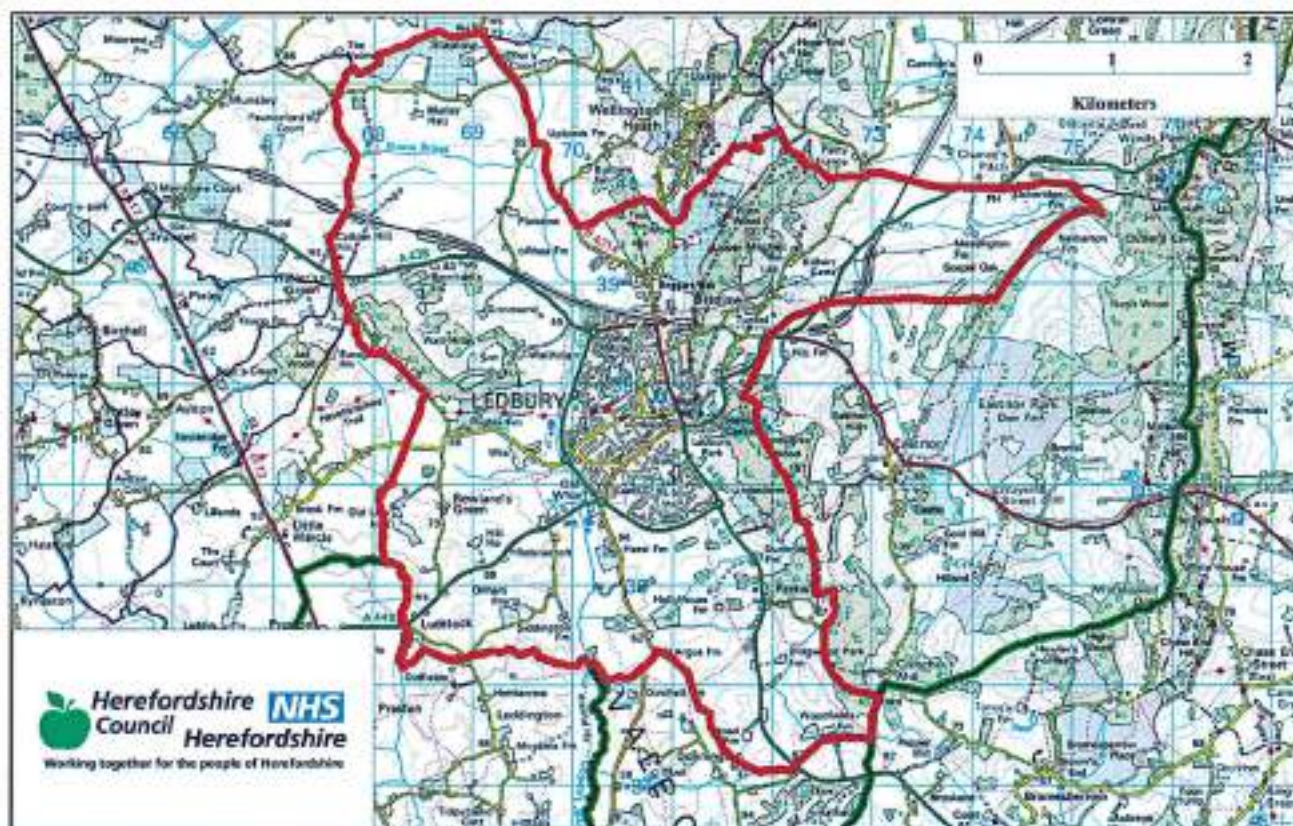
Stage A – Scoping

- 1.21 This Scoping Report is the first stage of the Sustainable Environmental Assessment as laid out in the table overleaf.
- 1.22 The Scoping Report sets out the information required to complete Stage A – i.e. to collect the information required to establish the key issues facing the Neighbourhood Plan Area. This report will undertake an analysis of the relationship of the Neighbourhood Plan with other plans and strategies at various levels, gather baseline environmental, social and economic data about the town and finally identify the key sustainability issues that the Plan should seek to address.
- 1.23 Stage A of the sustainability process, covered by this report, includes five key elements:
- Stage A1 – The identification of national, regional and local plans, programmes, policies and sustainability objectives that will impact upon the emerging Neighbourhood Plan;
 - Stage A2 – The collection of baseline information to provide a picture of past, present and likely future conditions within the area. Key sources of information include census data; population forecasts; commissioned studies and local public consultation. Through this stage indicators can be developed to monitor the effects and performance of the Ledbury Neighbourhood Plan;
 - Stage A3 – Identification of sustainability issues and problems affecting the area, which can be addressed through the development of policies and proposals within the Neighbourhood Plan;
 - Stage A4 – Development of a Sustainability Appraisal Framework to assess the impacts of the emerging Plan's objectives, policies and proposals; and
 - Stage A5 – Consultation on the appropriateness and robustness of the scope of the sustainability appraisal and proposed appraisal framework.



Ledbury in Context

- 1.24 The Ledbury Neighbourhood Plan Area includes the town of Ledbury and surrounding areas. There are no other significant settlements within the Plan Area, although there are some groupings of residential units such as at Rowland's Green.



- 1.25 The Ledbury Neighbourhood Plan Area is broadly consistent with the Ledbury 2011 Census Output Area if one removes Output Area E00070861, which covers Eastnor and open countryside to the south of Ledbury. The Ledbury Output Area (minus Eastnor E00070861) will therefore be used for the purposes of this document to demonstrate the demographic profile of the Neighbourhood Plan Area.
- 1.26 Ledbury is located in south-east Herefordshire surrounded by farmland and areas of woodland. It lies between the River Leadon and a line of wooded hills to the east (The Frith, Dog Hill and The Conigree) which form the border of the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 1.27 Ledbury acts as a local centre providing shops and services for the immediate area but faces competition from local and regional centres such as Hereford, Ross and Malvern.
- 1.28 The town centre is well preserved including historic medieval buildings. As a consequence Ledbury is popular with tourists.

2. STAGE A1: REVIEW OF THE RELEVANT POLICES, PLANS AND PROGRAMMES.

- 2.1 Step A1 of the Scoping Report reviews the national, regional and local plans and programmes that should be taken into account during the preparation of the Ledbury Neighbourhood Plan.

SEA Directive Requirements

The environmental report should include "an outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes" Annex I (a)

The environmental report should include "the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme" Annex I (e)¹.

EU SEA Directive 2001/42/EC

National Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 ²	
Type of document	National Planning Policy Document
Timescale	-
Overview	Sets out the Government's planning policies for England in a single document that replaces all of the previous Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance Notes.
Key messages/ objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There should be a presumption in favour of sustainable development• Local Plans should include policies that will guide how the presumption will be applied locally• 12 core land-use principles- planning should:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• be genuinely plan-led;• not simply be about scrutiny but instead be a creative exercise;• drive and support sustainable economic development;• always seek to secure high quality design;• take account of the different roles and character of different areas;• support the transition to a low carbon future;• contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment;• encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land);• promote mixed-use developments;• conserve heritage assets;• actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling; and

¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eia/sea-legalcontext.htm>

² https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all.
Implications for the Ledbury NP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Neighbourhood Plan must be compliant with the NPPF and take into account all relevant policies • The Plan should promote sustainable development • Must take into account the 12 core land-use principles

Local Policy Context

Herefordshire Core Strategy; Pre-Submission Document May 2014³	
Type of document	Development Plan Document (Emerging)
Year/Timescale	2011-31
Overview	Sets out the overarching principles in the form of a vision, objectives and policies that will guide development across the County up to 2031
Key messages/ objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To meet the housing needs of the community • Deliver improved infrastructure to support economic development & a growing population • Promote a thriving economy and provide sufficient employment land to meet businesses' needs • Protect and enhance natural and built environments • Address issues arising from an ageing population • Meet the challenge of climate change • Promote & enable healthy lifestyles • Achieve sustainable development
Implications for the Ledbury NP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ledbury must continue to be a thriving service centre to its surrounding rural area • Ledbury is required to deliver 800 homes and 12 ha of employment land over the Core Strategy plan period • The NDP must be in full compliance with the Herefordshire Core Strategy

Herefordshire Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment	
Type of document	Evidence
Year/Timescale	2012
Overview	The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) is an evidence base document justifying housing site allocations in the Core Strategy.
Key messages/ objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify sites with potential for housing development • To assess the sites for their housing potential • To consider when a site could be developed • The identification of sites in and around Ledbury considered suitable and those considered unsuitable
Implications for the Ledbury NP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NP should be informed by the findings of the SHLAA where necessary

³ https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/media/7848349/pre-submission_publication.pdf

Herefordshire Local Housing Market Assessment	
Type of document	Evidence
Year/Timescale	2013
Overview	The Local Housing Market Assessment is an evidence base document to inform the provision of market and affordable homes in the County
Key messages/objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To demonstrate housing needs and affordability in Herefordshire To provide the evidence to inform housing policies in the Core Strategy
Implications for the Ledbury NP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of evidence that can be used to inform housing objectives and policies in the Neighbourhood Plan

Herefordshire Housing Requirements Study	
Type of document	Evidence
Year/Timescale	2012
Overview	Technical assessment of the housing market and potential future local housing market requirements which supports planning policy regarding the amount of growth, housing tenure and housing type needed within Herefordshire up to 2031.
Key messages/objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies any current gaps in provision, Looks at likely need in 2031
Implications for the Ledbury NP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of evidence that can be used to inform housing objectives and policies in the Neighbourhood Plan

Herefordshire Local Transport Plan	
Type of document	Corporate
Year/Timescale	2013-15
Overview	The LTP sets out the council's strategy for supporting economic growth, social inclusion and reducing environmental impacts of transport.
Key messages/objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To reduce congestion in Hereford City and increase accessibility by less polluting and healthier forms of transport than the private car To maintain access for rural residents and people without access to a car
Implications for the Ledbury NP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NP should be informed by the findings of the LTP where necessary

Herefordshire Draft Gypsies and Travellers Assessment	
Type of document	Evidence
Year/Timescale	2013
Overview	Examines the accommodation provision and needs of Gypsies and Travellers across Herefordshire
Key messages/objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 31% of households surveyed had some sort of accommodation need • 10 households (56%) had a requirement for bricks and mortar housing, • indicates a total additional requirement for 7 pitches and 9 units of RSL (Registered Social Landlord) accommodation within Herefordshire
Implications for the Ledbury NP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ledbury NP must establish whether any of the identified need falls within the NP area and make appropriate provision

Herefordshire Economic Development Strategy	
Type of document	Corporate
Year/Timescale	2011
Overview	Aims to increase the overall economic output of Herefordshire through various proposals including supporting the growth of businesses.
Key messages/objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustaining business survival and growth • Increasing wage levels, range and quality of jobs • Having a skilled population to meet future work needs • Developing the country's built infrastructure so enterprise can flourish
Implications for the Ledbury NP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None of note

Herefordshire Employment Land Study	
Type of document	Corporate
Year/Timescale	2011
Overview	Aims to increase the overall economic output of Herefordshire through various proposals including supporting the growth of businesses.
Key messages/objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustaining business survival and growth • Increasing wage levels, range and quality of jobs • Having a skilled population to meet future work needs • Developing the country's built infrastructure so enterprise can flourish
Implications for the Ledbury NP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have regard to the study's aims

Herefordshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan	
Type of document	Evidence
Year/Timescale	2007
Overview	Identifies the priority habitats and species that are of importance locally and require focused conservation action
Key messages/objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Useful Biodiversity information in the Ledbury area
Implications for the Ledbury NP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider how the Ledbury NP can help to deliver the LBAP priorities

Herefordshire Green Infrastructure Study	
Type of document	Evidence
Year/Timescale	2010
Overview	Develops a framework of natural and culturally important features and functions so that planning for a sustainable future is at the heart of planning within Herefordshire.
Key messages/objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of policies and principles for the protection and enhancement of those features and functions that contributes to the environment of Herefordshire across a range of scales.
Implications for the Ledbury NP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider how the Ledbury NP can help to deliver the HGIS priorities

Herefordshire Playing Pitch Assessment	
Type of document	Evidence
Year/Timescale	2012
Overview	An assessment of provision and needs of outdoor sports pitches and facilities for the county.
Key messages/objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies any current gaps in provision, Looks at likely need in 2031
Implications for the Ledbury NP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NP should be informed by the findings of the Playing Pitch Assessment

Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan	
Type of document	Corporate
Year/Timescale	2009-14
Overview	Document setting out how the AONB should be managed.
Key messages/ objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve the AONBs special qualities • Manage the pressures on those qualities • Improve the AONB for current and future generations
Implications for the Ledbury NP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the impact of all NP policies and allocations on the setting of the AONB.

Ledbury Rapid Townscape Assessment	
Type of document	Evidence
Year/Timescale	2010
Overview	To define broad character areas within the Ledbury settlement area
Key messages/ objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To define broad character areas within the Ledbury settlement area. • To describe their visible historic and townscape characteristics in sufficient detail to inform strategic options for spatial planning policy and to contribute to an urban capacity study. • To identify issues that may need to be addressed in the spatial management of the respective areas.
Implications for the Ledbury NP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NP will need to have regard to the outcomes of the RTA, especially in respect of identifying sites.

3. BASELINE INFORMATION

SEA Directive Requirements

The environmental report should include "the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme" Annex I(b)

The environment report should include "the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected" Annex I(c)

Introduction

- 3.1 Step A2 of the Scoping Report provides an outline summary of the environmental, social and economic baseline situation in Ledbury. It provides the basis for predicting and monitoring environmental and sustainability effects of the neighbourhood plan and can help to identify problems and potential solutions.
- 3.2 This section outlines a summary of the environmental and sustainability baseline information for Ledbury set out by sustainability topic as displayed in the table overleaf.

Sustainability theme	SEA Directive Topic	Datasets included
Air Quality	Air	Air quality monitoring
Biodiversity & Geodiversity	Biodiversity, flora & fauna	Habitats Biodiversity opportunity areas Species Nature conservation designations Geo-diversity
Climate Change	Climatic factors	Effects of climate change Greenhouse gas emissions Climate change adaption
Economic Factors	Material assets	Economic structure Employment sectors Education and skills Sites and premises Employment demand and land supply Unemployment & economic activity
Historic Environment	Cultural heritage	Historic development of the town Designated and non-designated sites and areas Archaeological assets
Housing	Population, material assets	Housing stock, type tenures and completions Housing prices and affordable housing
Landscape	Landscape	The Malvern Hills AONB Landscape character Sites analysis
Material Assets	Material assets	Minerals Waste and recycling Renewable energy provision Green infrastructure
Population and Quality of Life	Population, human health	Population size, structure and growth Ethnicity Migration and community patterns Indices of multiple deprivation Crime
Soil	Soil	Soil resource Soil quality
Transportation & Accessibility	Population	Transportation infrastructure Mode of transport Accessibility
Water	Water	Watercourses Water resources Water quality Flooding

Air Quality

Air quality monitoring

Nitrogen dioxide is currently monitored at one location in Ledbury at site 50 (Ledbury Town Centre). This site falls well below the objective level although it has increased to 24.78 g/m³ in 2010 from 20.1g/m³ in 2009.

There are no significant air quality issues in Ledbury.

Biodiversity & Geo-diversity

Habitats

The River Leadon together with its associated marginal and bankside habitats is an important biodiversity feature, providing strong habitat linkages around the town. It provides cover and foraging ground for many species such as otters and bats.

Species-rich hedgerows, ditches, roadside verges and green lanes are widespread around Ledbury. The disused railway corridor through the centre of the town provides an important and almost continuous wildlife corridor.

Species

Legally protected and priority species of flora present in the Ledbury Neighbourhood Plan Area include:

- Wild Daffodil

Legally protected and priority species of fauna present in the Ledbury Neighbourhood Plan Area include:

- Great crested newt
- Bat
- Dormouse
- Badger
- Barn owl
- Peregrine Falcon

Nature Conservation Designations

Geological Sites include:

- Knapp Lane Quarry (RIGS_044)
- Ledbury Tunnel Quarry (RIGS_045)
- Coneygree Wood Site (RIGS_016)
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest:
 - Ledbury Cutting SSSI
 - Upper Farm Quarry & Grassland SSSI

In 2010/11 27% of Herefordshire's SSSI land was in unfavourable condition, while in 2010 24% of land was in favourable condition (an increase of 2% from 2008). The proportion of SSSI land that was in unfavourable condition but recovering increased between 2010 and 2012 going from 41% to 65%. The proportion of SSSI land in unfavourable and declining condition had also decreased from 4% to 1%. Herefordshire's SSSIs are in very poor condition compared to the country as a whole where 96.1% of all land was in favourable condition as of April 2014.

There are 7 Special Wildlife Sites (SWS) in the Ledbury Neighbourhood Plan Area as depicted in the map below.



There are currently no Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or any Special Protection Areas (SPAs) within the Ledbury Neighbourhood Plan Area.

Climate Change

Energy Consumption

Table 1 reveals that electricity consumption in 2011 was on average lower in Ledbury than in the rest of the County and England. This represented a significant reduction of an average of over 1,500 KWh per household from 2006, when average consumption was lower than in Herefordshire but higher than the rest of England.

Likewise, gas consumption is on average lower in the town than in the rest of Herefordshire and significantly lower than the rest of England. Consumption of gas fell consistently across the board in the 5 years between 2006 and 2011.

Table 1	Ledbury		Herefordshire		England	
	2006	2011	2006	2011	2006	2011
Average consumption of Ordinary Domestic Electricity (Kwh)	3,891	3,485	4,397	4,070	4,029	3,777
Average consumption of Economy 7 Domestic Electricity (Kwh)	6,616	5,515	7,506	6,721	6,078	5,478
Total Domestic Electricity Consumption (Kwh)	10,507	9,000	11,903	10,791	10,107	9,255
Average consumption of Domestic Gas (Kwh)	16,098	12,413	16,234	12,507	18,216	14,173

Source: Ledbury Neighbourhood Summary; <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/>

Overall energy usage in Ledbury compares well with both the regional and national averages. Consequently Ledbury residents appear to be making a significant contribution towards combating climate change through more efficient use of energy.

Economic Factors

Economic Activity

A higher-than-the-national-average proportion of people in Ledbury are economically active - 72.1% compared with the national average of 70.0%, despite there being more retired people (18.3% of the population) in Ledbury than is the case nationally (13.7%). This can partly be attributed to Ledbury's comparatively ageing population which means that there are fewer full-time students in

the town than there are on average nationally. There are also fewer people looking after the home or the family and fewer long-term sick or disabled people than the national average.

Proportion of adults:	
Retired	24.6%
Unemployed	2.7%
Employed	55.9%

Table 2

The rate of unemployment at the time of the 2011 Census was 3.1%, lower than the figure for England (4.4%) and slightly lower than the figure for Herefordshire of 3.3%.

Table 3

Adults Not in Employment (KS106EW)	Number	%
All households	4315	
No adults in employment in household: With dependent children	91	2.1%
No adults in employment in household: No dependent children	1600	37.1%
Dependent children in household: All ages	1051	24.4%
Dependent children in household: Age 0 to 4	399	9.2%
One person in household with a long-term health problem or disability: With dependent children	165	3.8%
One person in household with a long-term health problem or disability: No dependent children	1039	24.1%

Table 4

Economic Activity (KS601EW)			
All categories: Economic activity		6731	
Economically active:	Employee: Part-time	1015	15.1%
	Employee: Full-time	2606	38.7%
	Self-employed with employees	162	2.4%
	Self-employed without employees	629	9.3%
	Unemployed	212	3.1%
	Full-time student	168	2.5%
Economically inactive:	Retired	1230	18.3%
	Student (including full-time students)	207	3.1%
	Looking after home or family	200	3.0%
	Long-term sick or disabled	181	2.7%
	Other	121	1.8%

Employment Sectors

The largest employment sectors by percentage of the working population are:

- Wholesale and retail trade (17.5%)
- Manufacturing (14.7%)
- Health and social work (12.4%)

Of those in employment in Ledbury, around 70% are in full time employment while 30% work part-time.

According to the Herefordshire Employment Land Study 2012, Ledbury 'has a good balance of employment provision which is primarily focussed on the industrial and warehouse sector. There is some office provision however the town does not function as a key office location'.

Employment Land Provision

Ledbury has two principle employment areas at Bromyard Road Industrial Estate and the recently extended Lower Road Trading Estate. Key employers in the area include A.B.E., Rexan High Performance Flexibles, Sequani, Stuart Houghton, Galebreaker and Dickinson.

Supply of employment land in and around the town is good, however some of the sites are tired and most date back 20 years or more. There are few high quality, modern employment units available.

Ledbury has excellent access to the M50 and the M5 making it a great location for industry located around the ring-road. Employment sites to the north of the town have the advantage of the railway station.

Over 50% of employment in Ledbury is industrial, slightly higher than the average for Herefordshire, while the proportion of office-based employment is lower than the county average. The town has significantly above average sales activity but otherwise the surveyed employment activity in Ledbury is broadly in line with the rest of the County.

Area	Offices	Sales	Warehousing	R&D	Industrial	Other
Ledbury	15.8%	9.4%	20.4%	0%	51.5%	2.9%
Herefordshire	21.2%	1.9%	22.4%	0.7%	48.9%	5.0%

Table 5 - Distribution of Employment Types

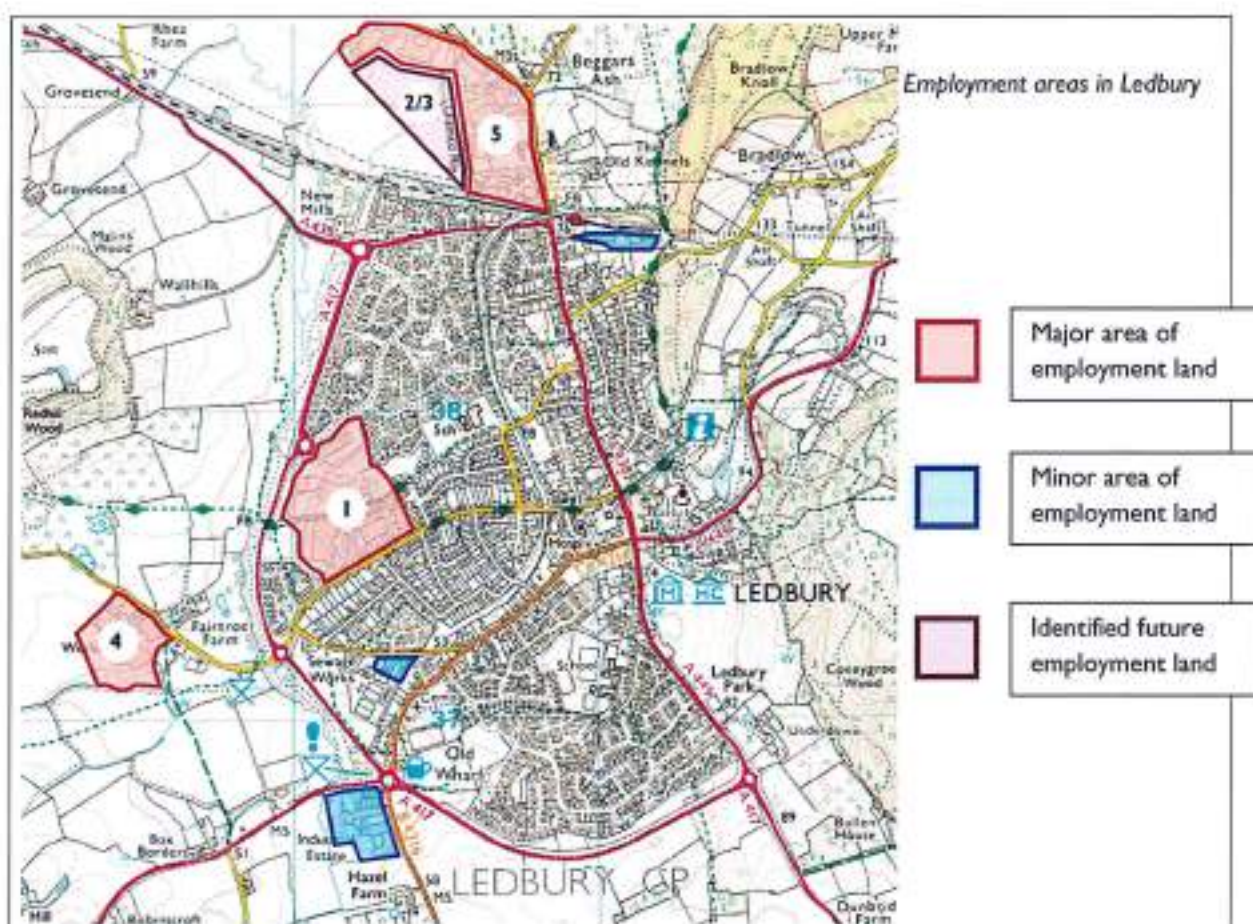


Table 6 Site	Market Attractiveness	Sustainability	Classification
1. Lower Road Trading Estate	3	2	Good
2. Land north of Viaduct (no PP)	3	2	Poor
3. Land north of Viaduct (+ PP)	4	2	Good
4. Land at Little Marcle Road	3	2	Moderate
5. Bromyard Road	3	2	Good

Major Employment Areas in Ledbury and market attractiveness & suitability rated by in the Herefordshire County Employment Land Study 2012 (1 = poor; 4 = best)⁴

⁴ https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/media/6376207/Employment_Land_Study_2012.pdf

Education & Skills

Schools

There is one primary school in Ledbury - Ledbury Primary School, which is rated 'Good' by Ofsted, and one secondary school - John Masfield High School, also rated 'Good'. The 'schooling' geographic area does not match with the Neighbourhood Plan Area. Children from outside of the designated area travel to Ledbury to attend both the Primary and High School.

Qualifications

Table 7 - Qualifications Gained (QS502EW)

All usual residents aged 16 and over	7738	
No qualifications	1811	23%
1-4 O levels/CSE/GCSEs (any grades), Entry Level, Foundation Diploma	2477	32%
NVQ Level 1, Foundation GNVQ, Basic Skills	543	7%
5+ O level (Passes)/CSEs (Grade 1)/GCSEs (Grades A*-C), School Certificate, 1 A level/2-3 AS levels/VCEs, Higher Diploma	2845	37%
NVQ Level 2, Intermediate GNVQ, City and Guilds Craft, BTEC First/General Diploma, RSA Diploma	1091	14%
Apprenticeship	471	6%
2+ A levels/VCEs, 4+ AS levels, Higher School Certificate, Progression/Advanced Diploma	1387	18%
NVQ Level 3, Advanced GNVQ, City and Guilds Advanced Craft, ONC, OND, BTEC National, RSA Advanced Diploma	903	12%
Degree (for example BA, BSc), Higher degree (for example MA, PhD, PGCE)	1248	16%
NVQ Level 4-5, HNC, HND, RSA Higher Diploma, BTEC Higher Level	393	5%
Professional qualifications (e.g. teaching, accountancy)	1409	18%
Other vocational/work-related qualifications	1418	18%
Foreign qualifications	389	5%

In the 2011 Census 16% of adults were qualified to degree level or above, compared to 15% in Herefordshire as a whole and 17% in England. 23% of the adult population of Ledbury have no qualification which is in line with the averages for Herefordshire at 23% and England at 22%.

Historic Environment

Heritage

Ledbury has a distinctive character and a unique local identity owing to its rich history and built heritage.

A large portion of Ledbury's town centre is covered by a Conservation Area which covers the Central Commercial/Historical Area and includes a multitude of listed buildings, many timber-framed, including the 17th Century Market House. Indeed, in total there are 173 listed buildings in Ledbury and 18 Grade II* listed buildings within the Historic Core. The remainder are Grade II. The Grade I listed buildings within the town are:

- Parish Church of St Michael and All Saints and the church tower
- Ledbury Park
- Market House

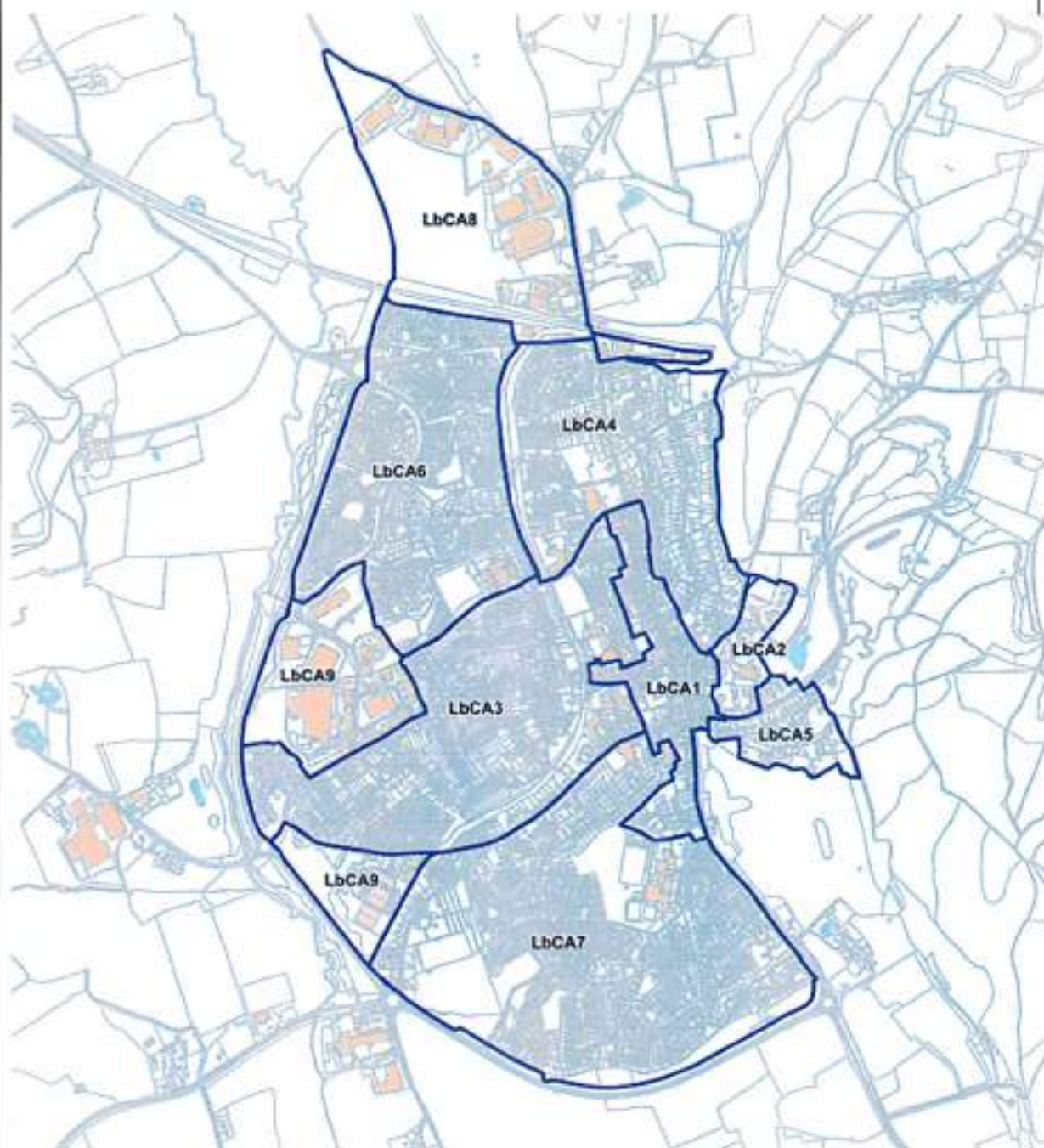
Character Areas

The character of the rest of the town largely reflects the recent history of the town which grew rapidly between the 1980s and the 2000s from a small town of around 3,500 to the medium-sized town of nearly 10,000 people that it is today. Consequently, while the town centre and surrounding areas constitute the historic core of Ledbury, the north, south and west of the town date very much from the latter 20th Century. The southern end of the town for example has a distinctive character, all the housing having been built during the same period in the 1980s.

As part of the analysis of the Historic Environment, in the evidence base for the Neighbourhood Plan, the Council carried out a Rapid Townscape Assessment. This assessment broke the town down into the following areas:

- Central Commercial/ Historical Area: centred around the Southend, High Street, the Church and the southern part of the Homend (LbCA1 & 2)
- Areas of 19th/early 20th Century Development: predominantly made up of development either side of the Homend, around Knapp Lane, and Bank Crescent to the east and Newbury Park and The Langland to the west (LbCA4), but also including development around New Street and Bridge Street (LbCA3).

- Areas of later 20th/21st Century Development: The New Mills estate to the north-west of the town (LbCA6) and Deer Park residential area to the south of the town (LbCA7).
- Trading/Industrial Estates: such as the North Ledbury Trading Estate (LbCA8) and the West Ledbury Trading Estate (LbCA9).



Housing

Types & tenures

The 9,300 residents of Ledbury live in 4,188 households, an average household size of 2.22 people. Detached homes and bungalows are the most prevalent type of residential units in the town, accounting for 87% of properties. There are relatively few flats or apartments in the town.

Two and three bedroom properties are the most common dwelling sizes in the town. Ledbury has more 2 bedroom properties but fewer 3 bedroom homes than the national average. There are proportionally fewer one bedroom properties but more large (i.e. 4 & 5 bedroom) properties than in England as a whole.

<i>Table 8</i> House size	Ledbury %	England %
No bedrooms	0.0%	0.2%
1 bedroom	8.8%	11.8%
2 bedrooms	32.9%	27.9%
3 bedrooms	37.2%	41.2%
4 bedrooms	17.2%	14.4%
5 or more	3.8%	4.6%

Overall Ledbury has a wide choice of properties. The relatively small supply of one bedroom properties does not necessarily reflect the needs of the ageing demographic of the town however. Ledbury has on average more small households (i.e. 0-2 bedrooms) than the county and national averages, and fewer larger homes (3-5 bedrooms). There are a significantly higher proportion of 2-bedroom households in the town than nationally on average.

Ledbury has a high rate of home ownership, with almost 70% of homes being owner occupied. According to Zoopla, the average price paid for a standard property in the 3 years to 2013 was £225,823. This was the second highest of any of the main towns in Herefordshire and 7.3% above the County average. In 2013 detached properties in Ledbury sold for an average of £281,243, terraced properties for an average of £171,031 and semi-detached properties for an average of £172,031.

The Herefordshire Local Housing Market Assessment notes that, 'while average prices for all property types were above the County average, there was a notable premium for larger detached and semi-detached homes in the HMA'.

'Private rental levels came out similarly ranked, with the 'entry level' monthly rental being estimated as ranging from £400 for a one-bed flat to £900 for a four-bed house'.

It is estimated that an income of £26,400 is required to access market housing, but at an income of £21,120 is required to access intermediate housing within the Ledbury HMA'. It is estimated that, within the Ledbury HMA, 27% of households will be able to afford intermediate housing with 73% requiring social rented/affordable rented housing.

<i>Table 9</i>			
All categories: Tenure	Ledbury	Herefords.	England
Owned outright	40.6%	39.4%	30.6%
Owned with a mortgage or loan	26.2%	28.3%	32.8%
Part owned and Part rented	1.9%	1.0%	0.8%
Social rented: Total	13.7%	13.9%	17.7%
Private rented: Total	16.4%	15.5%	16.8%
Living rent free	1.3%	1.9%	1.3%

Landscape

Landscape

None of the land around Ledbury has been assessed as having low sensitivity.

The land between the railway viaduct and the industrial estate on the Bromyard Road is assessed as having medium-low sensitivity.

Both the Old Wharf sports ground & football ground and the land to the south and west of the UBL site are considered to be areas of medium sensitivity.

There are a number of sites considered to be of high-medium sensitivity. These areas are:

- Land south of the Ledbury bypass
- Land south of Redhill Wood and West of the UBL site
- Land between the River Leadon and Wall Hill & Plaistow
- Land to the west of Bromyard Road

The land to the east of Bromyard Road, the Homend, the Southend and the A417 is considered to be of high sensitivity, for reasons of high quality, wooded AONB landscape, historic landscape character, being elevated and visually prominent and being very low density with a scattered settlement pattern.

Material Assets

Waste

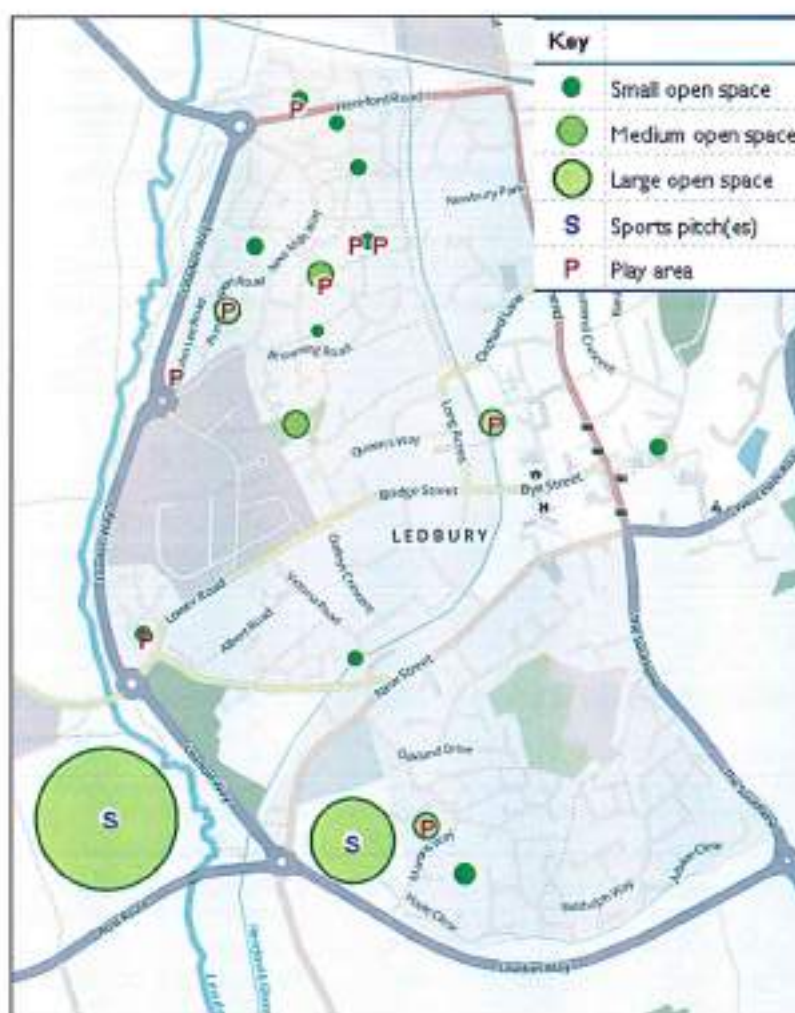
The Ledbury Sewage Treatment Works (STW) under Severn Trent Water has capacity for some 2,500 houses, although some refurbishment work to the terminal pumping station would be needed.

Green Infrastructure

Ledbury has good connections to the countryside, although the bypass (Leadon Way) does form a manmade barrier between the town and the surrounding land. The River Leadon to the west of the town and is accessible to the public through the linear Riverside Park.



Running through the centre of the town is the route of the former Ledbury to Gloucester railway branch line, now forming the Ledbury Town Walk. A continuous linear green space, footpath and cycle way links Hereford Road in the north, near the railway station, with Little Marcle Road in the south, near to the town cemetery. The Town Walk provides easy access to substantial housing areas, the primary school and town centre.



Play space

There are a number of areas of open space within Ledbury although the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Policy Direction Paper (Jan 2010) produced by Herefordshire Council found that there was:

- Extensive under provision of parks and gardens and outdoor sports facilities;
- Extensive over provision of natural and semi-natural green space.

Within these areas of open space there are 9 Local or Neighbourhood Play Areas of which one is managed by the Parish Council and the remainder by Herefordshire (one in conjunction with a Housing Association).

Community Facilities

Community Halls:

- Burgage Hall
- Heritage centre first floor
- TCO pink rooms

Pubs & Hotels:

- Prince of Wales
- Feathers Hotel
- Royal Oak
- The Retreat
- Seven Stars
- The Horseshoe

Churches & Religious buildings:

- Methodist Church
- Baptist church
- Catholic Church meeting room
- Masters House

Sports Clubs:

- Rugby club
- Football club
- Cricket club
- Tennis club
- Bowls club

Allotments

There is one existing allotment site within the Ledbury Neighbourhood Plan area. It is understood neither to be fully occupied nor to have a waiting list for vacant sites. Consequently the provision is currently seen as sufficient.

Health Provision

Ledbury has the following medical facilities:

- Ledbury Market Surgery, employing 5 GPs
- St Katherine's Surgery, employing 7 GPs
- Ledbury Minor Injuries Unit
- Ledbury Market Lodge

The two GP practices in the town, Ledbury Market Surgery and St Katherine's Surgery have 4,628 and 8,738 registered patients respectively and neither is at full capacity given that they are both currently accepting new patients.

Care Provision

Ledbury has the following Care Facilities:

- Ledbury Nursing Home
- Leadon Bank Extra Care Housing
- Keeper's Cottage (residential care)
- Ledbury Intermediate Care Unit

Population & Quality of Life

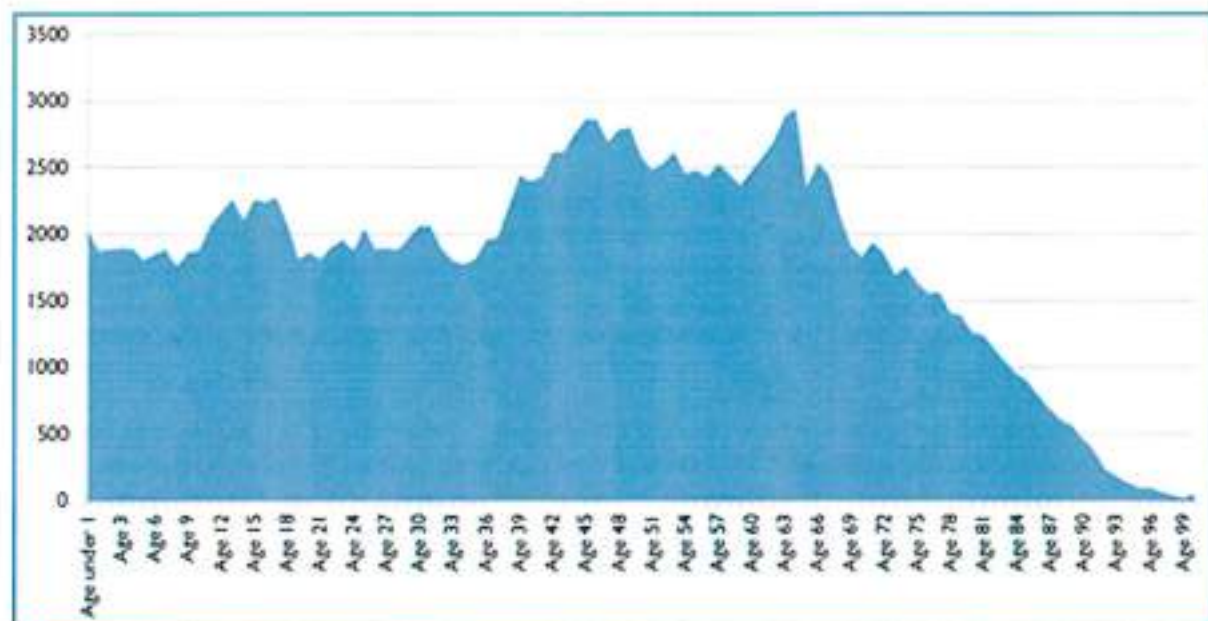
Population

The Ledbury Neighbourhood Plan Area has a population of approximately 9,400 people according to the 2011 Census while the town of Ledbury has a population of 8,862.

Population	1991	2001	2011
Ledbury Urban	6,216	8,491	8,862

The town has grown significantly since the middle of the 20th Century and the population has increased by 43% since 1991.

There are 7,626 people classified as being in their 'adult lifestage' (aged 16+) in the town and 1,742 under the age of 16. The proportion of children in Ledbury is lower than the national average but comparable with the average for the County. The number of young adults, i.e. those between the ages of 16 and 34 is also lower than the national and Herefordshire average. Not surprisingly, therefore, Ledbury has a higher proportion of older people (those aged 75 or over) than both the national and county averages. In Ledbury 36.7% of the population are aged 55 or over compared to 34.6% in Herefordshire and just 27.3% of the population of England as a whole.



Ledbury has an ageing population and the older person population is expected to increase. Estimates from the Herefordshire Housing Market Assessment report of 2013 suggest that not only will the number of those aged 65 and over increase between 2011 and 2031, the number of those younger than 65 will actually decrease. Indeed the numbers of people aged 55 or less will decrease by nearly 5% over that 20 year period. The numbers of those aged 85+ will increase by over 90% by 2031.

Religion & Ethnicity

The population of Ledbury is predominantly White British (92.4%) with Asian the largest minority, making up just over 1% of the population.

Over 70% of the population of Ledbury identify themselves as Christian. There is no other significant religious grouping while over 20% of the population consider themselves to have no religion.

Table 11		
Ethnicity	Number	% of Pop.
White	9425	97.8%
Mixed	58	0.6%
Asian	108	1.1%
Black	33	0.3%
Arab	0	0.0%
Other	12	0.1%

Crime

The map to the right indicates the postcode area H8, which the table below displays crime statistics for. The postcode area does not match exactly with the Neighbourhood Plan Area, however it does cover it and much of the remaining area is rural so will not have a great impact upon the statistics.



One can clearly see that vehicle crime, violent crime and robbery have been between 80% and 100% lower in Ledbury than the rest of England and Wales since 2010. Burglary is also lower in H8 than the rest of the country, antisocial behaviour is actually worse in the Ledbury area than nationally, as is 'Other crime'. Overall Total Crime is 11% lower in Ledbury and the surrounding area than in the whole of England and Wales, which is not surprising for a small town and surrounding rural area.

Table 12 - No. criminal offences per 1,000 population

Criminal activity	HR8*	National*	Local crime rate
Vehicle/car crime	0.0294	0.153	81% Better than nat. average
Violent crime	0.0294	0.2989	90% Better than nat. average
Burglary	0.1765	0.1976	11% Better than nat. average
Robbery	0	0.0297	100% Better than nat. average
Antisocial behaviour	1.1765	1.0531	12% Worse than nat. average
Other crime	0.7941	0.7553	5% Worse than nat. average
Total crime	2.2059	2.4876	11% Better than nat. average

Soil

The land falling outside of the built-up area of the town is largely made up of open fields, with a significant amount given over to grazing and some arable.

Agricultural land is classified on the following basis:

Grade 1 - excellent quality agricultural land

Land with no or very minor limitations to agricultural use. A very wide range of agricultural and horticultural crops can be grown and commonly includes top fruit, soft fruit, salad crops and winter harvested vegetables. Yields are high and less variable than on land of lower quality.

Grade 2 - very good quality agricultural land

Land with minor limitations which affect crop yield, cultivations or harvesting. A wide range of agricultural and horticultural crops can usually be grown but on some land in the grade there may be reduced flexibility due to difficulties with the production of the more demanding crops such as winter harvested vegetables and arable root crops. The level of yield is generally high but may be lower or more variable than Grade 1.

Grade 3 - good to moderate quality agricultural land

Land with moderate limitations which affect the choice of crops, timing and type of cultivation, harvesting or the level of yield. Where more demanding crops are grown yields are generally lower or more variable than on land in Grades 1 and 2.

Subgrade 3a - good quality agricultural land

Land capable of consistently producing moderate to high yields of a narrow range of arable crops, especially cereals, or moderate yields of a wide range of crops including cereals, grass, oilseed rape, potatoes, sugar beet and the less demanding horticultural crops.

Subgrade 3b - moderate quality agricultural land

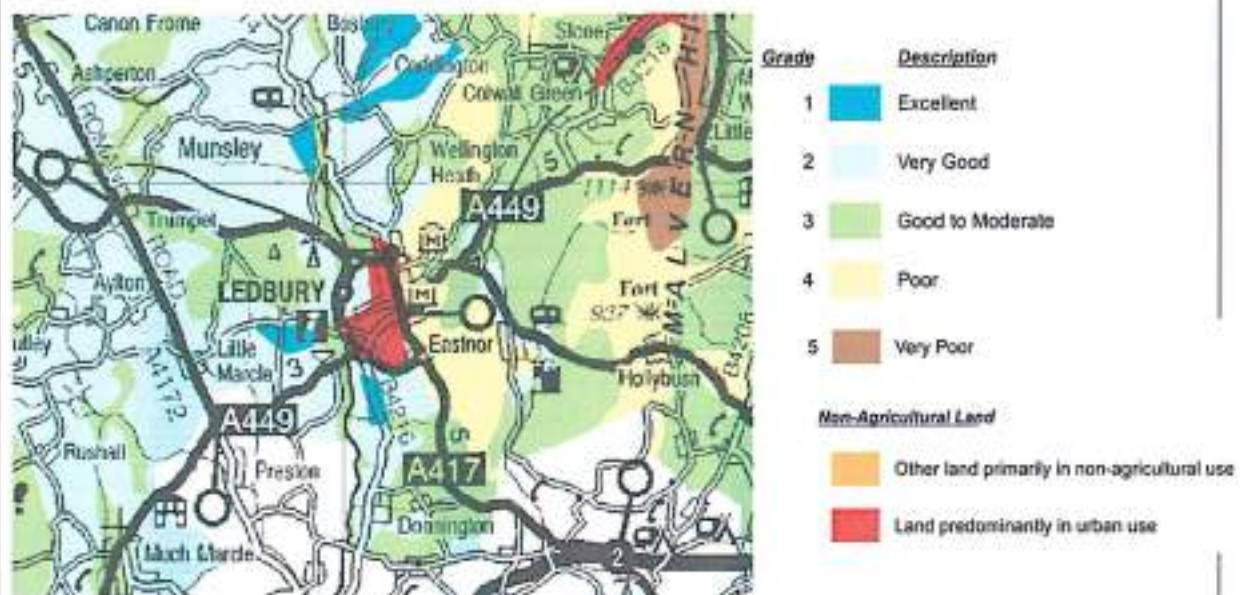
Land capable of producing moderate yields of a narrow range of crops, principally cereals and grass or lower yields of a wider range of crops or high yields of grass which can be grazed or harvested over most of the year.

Grade 4 - poor quality agricultural land

Land with severe limitations which significantly restrict the range of crops and/or level of yields. It is mainly suited to grass with occasional arable crops (e.g. cereals and forage crops) the yields of which are variable. In moist climates, yields of grass may be moderate to high but there may be difficulties in utilisation. The grade also includes very droughty arable land.

The land to the north, south and west of Ledbury is classified as Grade 1 to 3; predominantly Grade 2.

The land on which Herefordshire council has proposed to build 625 homes and 3 hectares of employment land is classified as Grade 3, whilst much the remaining land to the south and west is Grade 2. There are areas of Grade 1 land which, although not directly adjacent to the town, are potentially close enough to be in danger of development should the town expand to the south.



Soil Type

The soil around Ledbury is described by Landis as:

- Soilscape – *Slightly acid loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage*
- Texture – *Loamy, some clayey*
- Drainage – *Slightly impeded*
- Fertility – *Moderate to High*
- General cropping - *Reasonably flexible but more suited to autumn sown crops and grassland; soil conditions may limit safe groundwork and grazing, particularly in spring*

Transportation & Accessibility

Transportation Infrastructure

Ledbury is served by a railway station, one of only three in the county of Herefordshire. It connects the town to Hereford, Malvern and Worcester locally, Bromsgrove and Birmingham regionally and

Oxford, Reading and London nationally. The station is a huge asset to the town but is in a poor state of repair.

Bus services in the town are less impressive with routes serving the local area, but very few providing a regular service.

The map below indicates the only formal cycle paths in the town.



Mode of Transport

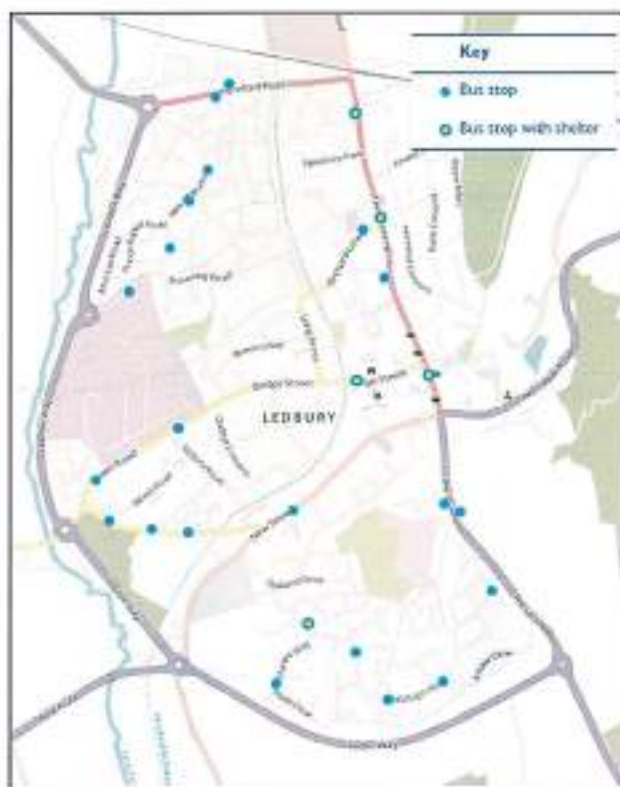
According to the 2011 Census data, of the residents of Ledbury that work, nearly 65% travel to work by car or van. Of this figure 5% identified themselves as passengers and 59.5% as drivers. This is 3 times the number of the next biggest group, i.e. those that walk to work. Just 2.2% cycle to work, slightly below the national average of 3%, and this is perhaps reflective of the relative paucity of specific cycle paths or lanes in the area.

Few people travel by rail to work- just 1.7%, 3 times lower than the national average of 5.3%.

Table 13 Method of travel to work	Ledbury	England average
Work mainly at or from home	7.2%	5.4%
Underground, metro, light rail, tram	0.1%	4.1%
Train	1.7%	5.3%
Bus, minibus or coach	1.4%	7.5%
Taxi	0.0%	0.5%
Motorcycle, scooter or moped	0.6%	0.8%
Driving a car or van	59.5%	57.0%
Passenger in a car or van	5.0%	5.0%
Bicycle	2.2%	3.0%
On foot	21.8%	10.7%
Other method of travel to work	7.2%	0.6%

Mode of Transport

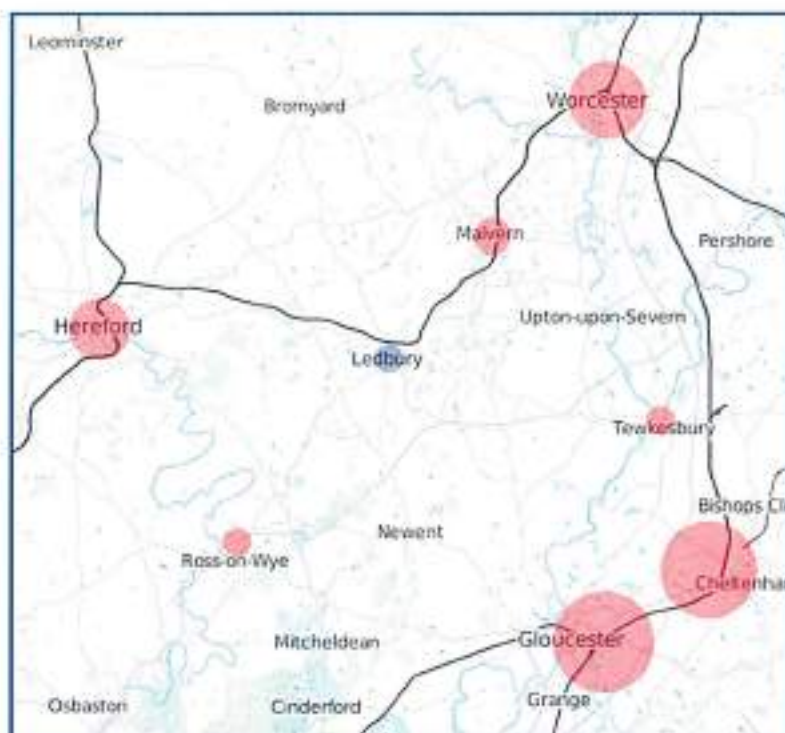
According to the 2011 Census data, of the residents of Ledbury that work, nearly 65% travel to work by car or van. Of this figure 5% identified themselves as passengers and 59.5% as drivers. This is 3 times the number of the next biggest group, i.e. those that walk to work. Just 2.2% cycle to work (compared to 2.9% nationally), perhaps reflecting the relative paucity of specific cycle paths or lanes in the area.



Bus No.	Destination	No. per day
45	Ross-on-Wye	1
132	Gloucester	19
417	Worcester	4
459	Ross-on-Wye	1
476	Hereford	13
479	Much Marcle	1
600	New Mills Estate	4
672	Bromyard	2
673	Bromyard	2
674	Bromyard	1
675	Great Malvern	7
679	Newent	1

Accessibility

There are a number of small villages within a few miles of the town, however the nearest significant settlements are Ross-on-Wye, Hereford and Malvern, all within reach of a 25-minute drive from Ledbury.



Destination	Approx. distance (by road)
Malvern	9 miles
Ross-on-Wye	9 miles
Hereford	12 miles
Gloucester	17 miles
Worcester	17 miles
Cheltenham	27 miles
Birmingham	50 miles
Bristol	50 miles

Water

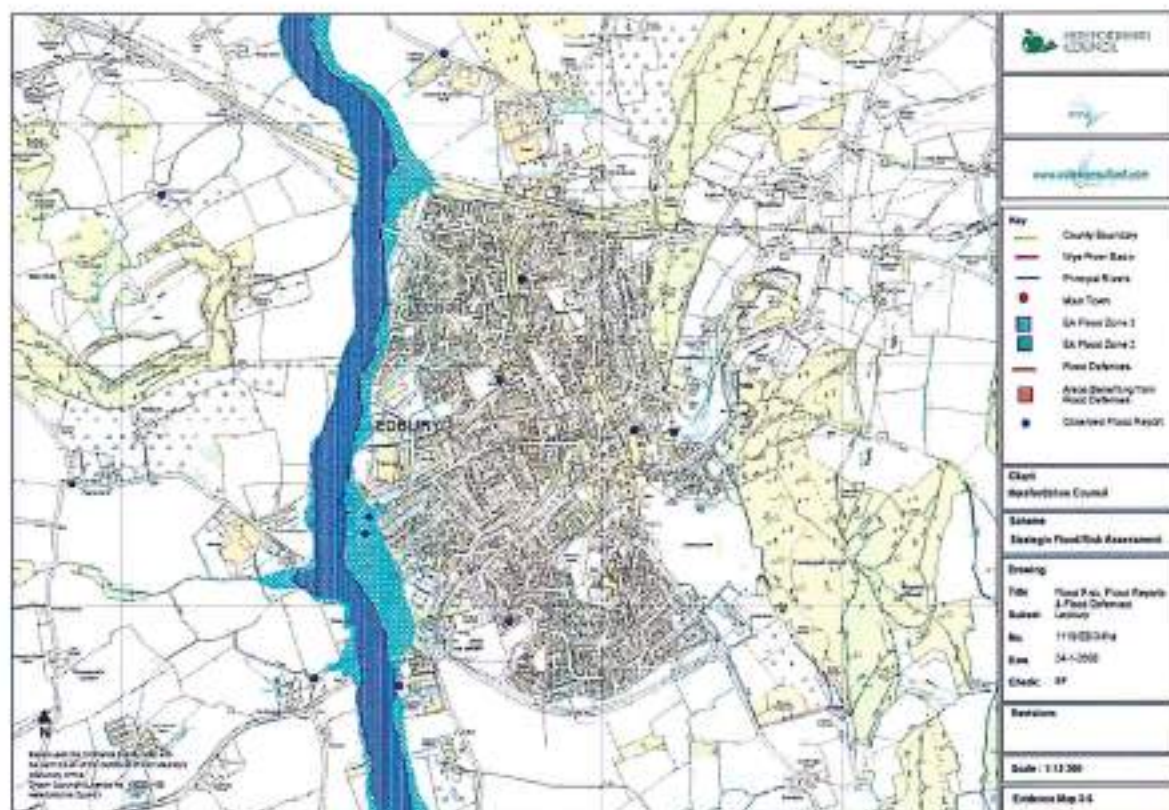
Flooding

This is an important issue due to the risk of flooding in the town. The River Leadon is the only watercourse that flows through the Neighbourhood Plan Area. The Leadon creates the Flood Zone that effectively forms a barrier to development along the western edge of the town. The properties that abut Leadon Way to the west of the town are most at risk of flooding.

Water pollution

The quality of water in the UK is governed by the EU Water Framework Directive and its translation into national regulations. These are being implemented by the Environment Agency by

means of Catchment Management Plans. Neighbourhood Plans need to be compatible with these large-scale plans, and if possible assist in achieving their objectives.



A3 – Key Sustainability & Environmental Issues & Problems

Theme	Sustainability Topic	Issue/Problem
Housing & Population	Lack of the right housing	<p>Housing Needs Studies have identified the need for affordable housing of various types in the parish to meet the needs of a range of people. The cost of existing housing stock in the area is high in relation to gross income.</p> <p>The ageing population of Ledbury means that smaller dwelling units, with good accessibility to the main services amenities, are required in the town.</p> <p>The Consultation indicated that family homes (3+ bedrooms) are required for many of the growing families in Ledbury.</p>
Employment & Economy	Employment opportunities	<p>The town has a 'good balance of employment provision which is primarily focussed on the industrial and warehouse sector'. The town does not function as a key office location- doing so would bring higher paid jobs to the area and boost the local economy.</p>
Employment & Economy	Employment land supply	<p>There is a good supply of employment land in and around the town however the condition of some of it is poor and unsuitable for many modern businesses. There are few high quality, modern employment units available in the town.</p> <p>Access to the M50 and M5 makes Ledbury well located for business.</p>
Employment & Economy	Agriculture opportunities	<p>Ledbury is surrounded by 'Excellent' and 'Very Good' soil and has long been a centre for food production and sale, meaning the opportunity to reinforce and expand this sector is there.</p>
Employment & Economy	To develop and enhance the visitor/tourist economy	<p>Ledbury has a small but burgeoning tourist economy and a number of heritage assets that are a draw to visitors.</p>

Natural Environment	Maintenance and enhancement of the natural environment and biodiversity	<p>A key positive feature of the area is its rich biodiversity and the natural environment. It is important to protect and, where possible, enhance existing habitats.</p> <p>Consideration must be taken of legally protected and priority species.</p>
Heritage & Built Environment	Protection of heritage assets	<p>A significant part of the plan area lies within a designated conservation area. There are 173 listed buildings in Ledbury and 18 Grade II* listed buildings within the Historic Core, including many that are vulnerable and in need of protection.</p>
Heritage & Built Environment	Protection and enhancement of the landscape and townscape, maintaining local distinctiveness	<p>Ledbury does have a specific character that is important to reflect in new development.</p>
Heritage & Built Environment	Design of new development	<p>Consultation responses indicated that matching the style of the built-up area should be a priority for new development.</p> <p>A Design Guide is seen as necessary.</p>
Natural Environment	Maintenance and enhancement of the natural environment and biodiversity	<p>A key positive feature of the area is its rich biodiversity and the natural environment. It is important to protect and, where possible, enhance existing habitats.</p> <p>Consideration must be taken of legally protected and priority species.</p> <p>Protect and enhance land and soil quality.</p>
Natural Environment	The sensitive AONB landscape setting	<p>The quality of the landscape in the plan area contributes to local distinctiveness and is of one of national importance given the proximity of the AONB designation. Conservation is a priority.</p> <p>There are a number of sites in the neighbourhood plan area considered to be of medium-high sensitivity.</p>
Natural Environment	Flood risk	<p>Parts of the west of the town lie adjacent to, or in some cases within, areas designated by the Environment Agency as the River Leadon flood risk zone and through the Flood Risk Assessments commissioned by the local authorities.</p>

Natural Environment	Impact of climate change e.g. rising energy prices	Concerns about climate change together with national and local policy objectives, provide an opportunity through sensitive local approaches to land use and buildings (new and existing).
Community Facilities	Community facilities and services	The need to retain and improve community facilities and accommodation of them is acknowledged as a key for community cohesion and wellbeing.
Community Facilities	Park, garden and sports pitch under-provision	The town suffers from extensive under provision of parks and gardens and outdoor sports facilities, while the sports pitches inside the town boundary are coming under threat from housing development.
Community Facilities	GP surgery capacity	The existing GP provision is sufficient for current numbers but may struggle to cope with an increase of approx. 2,000 people.
Transport & Infrastructure	A lack of infrastructure and support for local businesses	The need for high speed broadband is considered to be important- speeds in the town are currently reasonable for home recreational use but inadequate for the needs of many businesses.
Transport & Infrastructure	Inadequate facilities at railway station	<p>The plan area is well served by a railway station but the station is under-utilised and in a poor state of repair.</p> <p>A bridge across the tracks is required to enable disabled people to travel east without first having to travel to Hereford.</p>
Transport & Infrastructure	Maximising sustainable transport links	<p>Just 2.2% of residents cycle to work despite the Ledbury Town Trail running through the centre of Ledbury.</p> <p>Town trail and riverside trail are both currently inaccessible to disabled people and hazardous for the elderly.</p>

A4 - Sustainability Appraisal Framework

Theme	Related Sustainability Objective	Appraisal Criteria / Sub-Objectives
Housing & Population	Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing, and ensure an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures.	Does the Ledbury NP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help to deliver enough housing to meet current and future local needs? • Encourage a range of housing types to meet the needs of a range of different households?
	Improve the health of the residents and reduce crime in the town.	Does the Ledbury NP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote healthy living and lifestyles? • Reduce and prevent crime
Employment & Economy	To encourage office and hi-tech employment through the provision of high-quality employment land.	Does the Ledbury NP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support ways of reducing the skills gap? • Support and strengthen the local employment base by protecting and providing employment land?
	Encourage a vibrant and diversified economy and provide for long-term sustainable economic growth.	Does the Ledbury NP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help attract a wide variety of new businesses to Ledbury?
	To promote Ledbury as a centre for food production.	Does the Ledbury NP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage food producers and manufacturers to base their operations in Ledbury?
Heritage & Built Environment	Protection of heritage assets	Does the Ledbury NP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and enhance historic assets in the town?
	Protection and enhancement of the landscape and townscape, maintaining local distinctiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make the most of the towns cultural and architectural merits? • Promote the efficient use of land and resources?
Natural Environment	Protect and enhance biodiversity throughout the Plan area and seek to avoid irreversible losses.	Does the Ledbury NP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and promote Ledbury's sites of ecological and conservational importance? • Provide opportunities for the conservation of local habitats and species?

	Conserve and enhance the character and quality of the landscape, maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and a sense of place.	Does the Ledbury NP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and reinforce Ledbury's landscape setting? • Help to enhance the provision of green infrastructure in the town
	Protect and enhance the setting of the AONB.	Does the Ledbury NP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make the most of the setting of the Malvern Hills AONB?
	To minimise the risk of flooding.	Does the Ledbury NP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the risk of flooding occurring within the development boundary and avoid development of areas at risk of flooding?
	To reduce energy consumption, promote energy efficiency and increase the use of energy from renewable resources.	Does the Ledbury NP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help to result in more efficient use of natural resources? • Promote the use of secondary/recycled building materials? • Encourage an increase in the proportion of building materials from sustainable sources?
Community Facilities	To ensure community facilities and amenities are appropriate for a growing population.	Does the Ledbury NP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the development of the appropriate facilities to meet the needs of a growing and changing community?
	To encourage the provision of new parks, garden and sports facilities in order to promote healthy living.	Does the Ledbury NP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the provision of new public open spaces? • Seek to deliver adequate sporting facilities to meet the needs of a growing population?
	To ensure community facilities and amenities are appropriate for a growing population.	Does the Ledbury NP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the provision of new community facilities, especially alongside new residential development?
Transport & Infrastructure	To encourage the provision of high speed broadband throughout the NP Area.	Does the Ledbury NP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the provision of high street broadband?
	To promote sustainable transport modes within the town.	Does the Ledbury NP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the provision and use of public transport? • Encourage the provision and use of sustainable transport methods such as walking & cycling?

	Protect and enhance biodiversity throughout the Plan area and seek to avoid irreversible losses.	Does the Ledbury NP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect existing biodiversity in the plan area? • Encourage the enhancement of biodiversity?
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