

each week. Guided tours during the summer around the surprising richness of Ledbury's historical background are always popular, yet the town has an immediate ambience of lack of pretention as an obviously lived-in, working town, quietly aware of its charms without making an obvious show about it.

- 5.15.24 Important as all of these public and social amenities in the town are for its economy and quality of life, its sustainability is clearly threatened and vulnerable to potential out-of-town developments, the changes in shopping practices, and a lack of ready access for people to easily get to the shops. They are not destination stores like in the larger nearby city of Hereford, which is both a strength and a weakness. Many similar market towns have failed to sustain such a delicate social fabric, with a decline in the number of shops and reduction in the visitor economy.
- 5.15.25 The town still maintains an aesthetically-pleasing appearance which is sustained throughout the town centre, even some of its housing developments and employment sites, but protecting all these public amenities whilst growing to meet increasing need is a challenge that the revised NDP aims to rise to. The example of the hideous Hawk Rise development on the by-pass, incompatible with the spirit and ambience of the rest of the town, is a stark reminder of what is possible if the plan does not adequately address the development need while retaining what gives Ledbury its current jewel-in-the-crown status and which makes people want to come here in the first place.
- 5.15.26 In addition to the considerable attractions of Ledbury town centre, within easy traveling distance there is a host of public attractions that contribute to the high-quality resident and visitor experience of Ledbury, and people's quality of life.
- 5.15.27 Very close to the town to the east is Grade I listed Eastnor Castle and its extensive Grade II* RPG historic parkland (see Section 5.12), where regular sporting events such as Land Rover off-road experiences are held, and annual music / other festivals. Further north east there is Great Malvern, an historic spa town nestling in the Malvern Hills with a variety of hotels, antique shops, and other attractions for visitors. These can all be reached via a variety of PRsoW, many people choosing to walk or cycle along quiet winding lanes through the stunning AONB countryside. A great deal of information about Ledbury's neighbouring landscapes was gathered during preparation for the viaduct site public inquiry: the documents for these and other studies carried out for the same purpose will be a useful source of reference in future.
- 5.15.28 South of Ledbury there are several fascinating originally Chartist settlements with their single-storey houses which date back to the working-class male suffrage movement for political reform in Britain in the middle of the 19th century. There are also local Mormon-related sites of historic interest; Brigham Young, former leader of the movement, preached at the Market House, and the oldest Mormon chapel in the world is located at Gadfield Elm, near the local village of Redmarley.
- 5.15.29 Nearby also lies the Gloucester village of Dymock, famous for the six Dymock poets who lived there for a few years at the beginning of World War I, including in their company Rupert Brooke, famed the world over for his poem *The Soldier* (see Cultural Associations section). The houses where they briefly lived, and which they had intended to be a creative idyll, can still be seen around the village. As noted in previous sections, it is also recognised as being home to some of the best indigenous wild daffodil displays in the British Isles during the spring.
- 5.15.30 To the west we have Hellens Manor, also known as Hellens House or simply Hellens, which is located in the village of Much Marcle: it is one of the oldest dwelling houses in England. It is primarily composed of Tudor, Jacobean, and Georgian architecture, but with foundations dating from the 12th century and some elements older still. It hosts many regular musical and artistic events, and is set in beautiful gardens. Also nearby is the very popular Westons Cider visitor centre offering tours of the factory, a shop and café.

Recreation and Access

VEHICULAR ACCESS TO THE TOWN

- 5.15.31 In addition to offering easy nationwide vehicular access with close proximity to the M50 motorway, Ledbury is served by one of only four railway stations in Herefordshire. Its location is of strategic importance to the town, sitting as it does on ancient trackways that position Ledbury at the very gateway to the Marches and beyond to the west. It allows for regular commuter and visitor journeys to Hereford city to the west, and access to the national railway network, running to the east through Worcester, to Birmingham to the north and Bristol to the south, and on to London and the south east.
- 5.15.32 Ledbury is also served by fairly regular bus services to the equidistant cities of Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester, as well as to its sister Herefordshire market towns of Ross-on-Wye, Leominster and Bromyard, then beyond to Kington. The town is therefore reasonably well-provided with a range of powered transport access options to get into the town for its residential, employment and recreational facilities.
- 5.15.33 As background to producing this section of the LVBA study into this revision of the current Ledbury NDP, it should be noted that the 'Place Shaping – Ledbury' policies section of the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011-2031, in the 'Green infrastructure and open space' paragraph 4.5.11 on page 87, says that the plan *'recognises the value of the environment as an economic asset, as the urban extension will create better access to and enjoyment of new green infrastructure for residents and tourists alike'* and that *'A review of open space needs and existing designations in Ledbury will be undertaken as part of a Neighbourhood Development Plan'*.

SPORT & ACTIVITY

- 5.15.34 As regards sport, both for outdoor and indoor access, Ledbury is recognised as being overall short of facilities and the appropriate land to provide them. Although it has excellent modern and well-equipped cricket, tennis and rugby club grounds with up-to-date clubhouse facilities, there is a dire shortage of football club grounds. despite two very active and successful clubs in the town.
- 5.15.35 The long-established adult-teams Ledbury Town Football Club resides on a very old site within the existing built-up area with antiquated facilities. It is owned by a property company keen to develop the site for housing, but with an obligation to fund like-for-like facilities on a new site.
- 5.15.36 The junior Ledbury Swifts Football Club, however, despite a large and growing membership, currently has to share the rugby club pitches and clubhouse, and although the working relationship is excellent, this puts a considerable strain on being able to accommodate increasing demand for both sports.
- 5.15.37 Despite over eight years of HC-supported effort by planners to find to find new land for football, all potential avenues to date have, for various reasons, not proved fruitful. A major factor is that Sports England, which has to approve authorised new pitches, will only sanction new facilities which provide a combined centre for all forms of football.
- 5.15.38 Both the rugby club and the football clubs, despite limited facilities for the latter, are particularly very successful in catering for youths' and women's teams, with thriving junior membership in each case catering for literally hundreds of local young people. The clubs need and deserve opportunities for growth, so helping to secure the provision of new football facilities is a prime objective of the revised NDP: success at last now seems to be near.
- 5.15.39 Other outdoor sporting and fitness sites include a bowling green and an LTC-owned outdoor gym on the LTC-owned recreation ground (the Rec). There is also a teenage skate-park near to the Rec. In addition there are outdoor sports clubs for cycling, archery and running, and Ledbury Tennis Club use the courts at Underdown.

- 5.15.40 Indoor sport facilities include a central swimming baths and gym (run for HC by a contractor, currently Halo) and which has recently had extensive modernisation. There is also a private gym in the town centre, a rifle range by the rugby club off the Ross road, and an indoor sports hall at John Masefield High School, although since the school has converted to Academy Status the future use of facilities by the community is unclear. Indoor sports clubs for badminton, boxing and table tennis also exist.
- 5.15.41 HC's Open Space Study (entitled PPG17⁶⁶ *Open Spaces Assessment - A report by Herefordshire Council and Strategic Leisure Limited November 2006*) included an assessment of outdoor sports facilities, defined as sites that provide for participation in outdoor sports such as pitch sports, tennis, bowls, athletics or countryside and water sports and which showed nine such sites in Ledbury.
- 5.15.42 Following this report, HC then published an update on its Pitch Playing Strategy to add more detail, including a specific and separately-published strategy for Ledbury (*Herefordshire Playing Pitch Assessment Strategic Overview 2012* and *Section 3 Playing Pitch Strategy Ledbury Area Herefordshire Playing Pitch Assessment 2012*). All three documents have been overtaken by events since being published so are out-of-date in some key areas such as football in Ledbury, but they still serve as a good guide to the current level of sports provision in the town.
- 5.15.43 However, the Playing Pitch Strategy report particularly highlighted the potential for The Swifts if provided with the facilities needed. The report referenced the Football Association (FA) accreditation system known as the FA charter standard award which has three echelons, the highest FA award being that of the community award. The FA has set a target nationally to have 75% of all youth football being played in a Chartered Standard Club and at the time, 80.95% of youth football in Hereford was played in such a club; however, as part of this figure, within the Ledbury Area, Ledbury Swifts was identified as a Chartered Standard Club with the potential to become a Community Club.
- 5.15.44 The Open Space report gave a current standard average across Herefordshire for community accessible outdoor sport of 1.76ha per 1,000 population (although if schools with no community use are included, the standard of provision becomes 2.45ha per 1,000 population). This compares with the overall minimum standards of open space provision set by the National Playing Fields Association for outdoor playing space of 2.4ha per 1,000 population, comprising 1.6ha for outdoor sport, 0.8ha for children's playing space, and for public open space, 0.4ha per 1,000 population.
- 5.15.45 So although Herefordshire as a whole is near to the recommended standard, the report recognised that Ledbury has a lack of sufficient and accessible land for sporting facilities, and as is well known locally, falls short of the recommended requirement. The report showed that at the time, Ledbury had twenty four accessible pitches for rugby, football, cricket and hockey.
- 5.15.46 Overall the report found that Ledbury had an extensive under-provision of parks and gardens and outdoor sport. It recommended that a review of outdoor sport was needed across Herefordshire and concluded that given an estimated shortfall in football, cricket and hockey provision, there is a need to:
- protect and preserve existing pitch sites
 - improve the quality of existing pitch sites
 - seek to provide additional pitches e.g. securing formal community access to additional school pitches.
- 5.15.47 The Open Space Study also looked at the provision of activity areas for children and young people (aged 2 - 19), defined as areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people such as equipped play areas, multi-use games areas, skateboard areas and teenage play zones. The county population of children and young people aged 2 - 19 at that time

⁶⁶ PPG17 is Planning Policy Guidance Note 17

was 38,065 (ONS 2001). The provision for children and young people equated to 12.55ha, or 0.33ha per 1,000.

5.15.48 In Ledbury, the number of 2 -19 year-olds at that time was 3,020, and the town had nine 'stand-alone activity sites' totalling 0.577ha, and just seven play areas covering 1.006ha, with a total of sixteen sites over 1.583ha. This equated to 0.52ha per 1,000 and above the Herefordshire average. Nevertheless, locally, the play areas in Ledbury in particular are felt to be inadequate, with people saying there are too few in their local area, particularly since they are recognised as being concentrated in the north of the town and very sparse in the south. That is why the NDP revision is seeking the community's views about the future provision of good quality play areas throughout the town.

5.15.49 In fact there are now eight known play area sites:

- In the north:
 - John Lee Road play area
 - Yeoman Close
 - Kempley Brook Drive junior play ground
 - Kempley Brook Drive kickabout area
 - Prince Rupert Road
 - Browning Road Infants
- In the south:
 - Childer Road
 - Villa Way

5.15.50 The Open Space report recommended a review of the provision of play areas including overcoming the main barriers to use of play provision, these mainly being dog-fouling, vandalism, and people's perception of not feeling safe when using the sites. The security of play areas would be improved through introduction of CCTV or staff presence and expanding signage on all sites with site details and contact numbers.

5.15.51 Despite there being active youth provision in the 1st Ledbury Scout Group, a Ledbury Platoon ACF (Army Cadet Force) and the TS Ledbury Maritime Cadet Unit (which is linked to the town's association with the Hunt-Class mine ship HMS Ledbury which has the Freedom of the Town), there is a recognised dearth of facilities and suitable locations for them to provide much needed leisure, recreation and contextual safeguarding accommodation for the many young people in the town. A recent twice a week youth centre (Ledbury Youth Activities Support or LYAS) which was popular with a regular volunteer network, unfortunately lost its premises before the COVID pandemic and has yet to be reinstated because suitable premises cannot be found. The Maritime Cadet Unit is also seeking a new location to allow for growth.

5.15.52 Other relevant activity groups in the town include an amateur dramatic society, an angling association, bell ringers, a country-and-western club, horticulture and allotment societies, community brass bands and choral societies, several walkers' clubs, and a skittles league.

5.15.53 The key recommendations for improving or enhancing sporting and activity amenities are documented in Section 7.2 of this LVBA.

ACTIVE TRAVEL

5.15.54 As regards active travel, as noted in the heritage and landscape history sections above, many of Ledbury's roads, footpaths and bridleways follow ancient trackways which date back to when Ledbury was founded, at the intersection of key routes from all points of the compass. By the 11th century it had become the principal gateway from England to the Welsh Marches. The choice of

location for Ledbury as a market town and trading-post goes back over a thousand years, and is due to it being strategically sited at a place where well-used existing trackways crossed. This strategic importance still applies today.

- 5.15.55 Two long-distance footpaths connect Ledbury to the wider countryside. The first of these is the Geopark Way, a project launched in 2006 with the aim of creating a trail which highlights geology, landscape and associated heritage, and to make these accessible to all. It is a waymarked trail that runs a total of 109 miles from Bridgnorth to Gloucester. It is the first long-distance footpath to be created with the purpose of demonstrating the special qualities of a Geopark. The 1,250 square kilometres of the Geopark span four counties: Shropshire, Worcestershire, Herefordshire and Gloucestershire, in a strip of countryside that is at most 18km wide and 83km long.
- 5.15.56 Approaching Ledbury from the north after leaving the Malvern Hills, the trail explores the 400 million-years-old Silurian hills and valleys which form this part of the Earth's crust, and which has resulted in some of the best rural scenery in England. It traverses the south-western sector of the Malvern Hills AONB, passing through Wellington Heath, along the base of Frith Wood, into the east side of Ledbury above Upperfields and down steps into Church Street to the Market House. It then sweeps east, crossing over the Worcester Road, up into Conigree Wood, down into Eastnor, and from there up to the Malvern Hills ridge line via Colwall (where some sections are along an ancient pilgrims' trail between Hereford and that part of the Hills).
- 5.15.57 Several other long-distance walking trails pass through the Geopark and cross the Geopark Way trail, including the second long-distance footpath in Ledbury, the Herefordshire Trail. This is a 154-mile-long walking route which circuits the county via the five market towns. The trail arrives in Ledbury from the north, running through lovely countryside and historic rural settlements, via Bromyard, Bishops Frome, Bosbury and Wellington Heath (traversing Hope End RPG and cresting Oyster Hill on the way), joining the Geopark Way in the town centre. It then veers west along Bye Street and Bridge Street, through Lower Road Trading Estate, across the by-pass and the River Leadon, arriving eventually in Hereford City.
- 5.15.58 The Geopark Way going east towards Malvern connects to the Three Choirs Way on the Malvern ridge. This is a popular 100-mile-long circular route linking Gloucester, Worcester and Hereford through countryside of hop-yards, vineyards and orchard with a theme linking the walk to the ancient music festivals still celebrated annually in the three Cathedrals (the three choirs are all that remains of a Druidic perpetual choir said to be centred at White-leaved Oak). In turn, the Way connects with the Worcestershire, Gloucestershire, Wysis and Severn Ways, and the Wye Valley Walk.
- 5.15.59 Footpaths south from Ledbury, and in particular LR7, form a continuous connection to the village of Dymock. Famous for the six international poets that came to live there in 1914, the village church is the centre of a scenic and history-packed clover-shaped network of three paths dedicated to their poetic importance - Poets Path I and II and the Daffodil Way.
- 5.15.60 Ledbury has a number of publicly-accessible open spaces, one of the most notable being the popular and well-used council-owned town-centre recreation ground, or Rec, as mentioned above. A fairly large area of community-maintained public green open space, redolent of old village greens, is situated off Prince Rupert Road at the centre of a housing estate on the west side of the town - it is also an important community asset.
- 5.15.61 Other well-used publicly-accessible areas are: the Town Trail, north of the Little Marcle Road; behind the new residential care home to the west of Martin's Way, a small triangular area of council-owned land at the bottom of Jubilee Close; an enclosed area of land to the east of the footpath connecting Mabel's Furlong to Biddulph Way, also accessed from Orchard Place; and a largeish green area behind the Aldi supermarket with paths connecting to Browning Road and Barnett Avenue.

- 5.15.62 Other significant publicly-accessible space exists along the council-owned Dog Hill Road above and to the north east of the town. Further north, there is an extensive, well-used area of Open Access land (CROW Act 2000) covering the long ridge of Frith Hill, which features Bradlow Knoll and Frith Wood. The southernmost point is the railway (at the tunnel, east of the station), the northernmost point is just south of the lane which runs between Petty France and Wellington Heath. It is accessed via a public footpath from the town centre which is also the route of the Herefordshire Trail - see above - and which continues along the west side of Frith Wood to Oyster Hill via Wellington Heath. Another public footpath crosses the Open Access land, running north - south through Frith Wood between Bradlow and the Petty France - Wellington Heath lane.
- 5.15.63 This area of Open Access land is a highly-valuable resource for the local community and visitors alike, not just in terms of its provision of high-quality informal recreation, but because of the many other GI assets it contains and GI functions it performs - see Section 5.16 Green Infrastructure below - especially providing good access to very high-quality habitats for nature which support great biodiversity, and forming the town's landscape setting and context; it also contributes to flood attenuation and water resource management, and cooling, which helps mitigate the impacts of climate change.
- 5.15.64 Given its long history you would expect a wealth of public footpaths to exist in and around the town, but in fact, apart from to the north, which is relatively well-served, there is a dearth of footpaths connecting Ledbury to the east, south (especially) and west. Often this is due to private land-owners having stopped-up strategic ancient trackways which crossed the area, usually during periods of enclosure (see heritage sections above).
- 5.15.65 A good example can be found in the landscapes east of Ledbury: in the late 16th century, the extensive Eastnor and Bromesberrow estates were established either side of the Herefordshire / Gloucestershire border, which here runs between White-leaved Oak and Clencher's Mill (on the lane south of Eastnor). County and parish boundaries were often established along old routeways since they were well-established features in the landscape - usually well-vegetated along their length and some having become holloways - and easy to patrol; this section of the Herefordshire / Gloucestershire border is no exception.
- 5.15.66 However, whilst many county and parish boundaries were later to become formal PRsoW, in this case only certain sections of the boundary are dedicated rights of way (public footpaths), meaning it is no longer possible for the local communities to walk the whole of their parish boundaries, or 'beat the bounds' (although this could potentially be rectified by the communities concerned if they wished - see Recommendations).
- 5.15.67 Note here, that as part of the LVBA evidence-base-gathering work (as previously mentioned, initially this was to be a full LSCA, but as circumstances changed it was agreed that a more limited LVBA would be more appropriate to the aims of this NDP revision on the grounds of objectives, time frame and cost), volunteers undertook to carry out a large proportion of the work themselves.
- 5.15.68 They visited the 14 LSCA areas which had been identified (see Section 4 and Figures 2A and 2B), and recorded and analysed the baseline situation for each area, especially noting its character and significant natural / cultural features and highlighting key views from / towards them (see Section 6 Views and Visual Amenity). These baseline assessments would help guide the proposed line for the town's settlement boundary.
- 5.15.69 In addition to a detailed assessment of each LSCA Area, an analysis of PRsoW and other active travel connectivity options was carried out. Details of this work can be found in Appendix E: LSCA Area Schedules for Public & Social Amenity Topic (Footpaths). A number of recommendations were made in those studies, and they have been included with the other recommendations made for public and social amenity in Section 7.2.
- 5.15.70 The public footpaths in the town / urban area are numbered ZBxx and those in rural Ledbury, LRxx. A number of these connect with footpaths to the surrounding parishes of Wellington Heath

(numbered WHxx), Little Marcle (LMxx), Eastnor (EAXx), Colwall (CWxx) and Donnington (DNxx) (see HC's *Location Plan – Public Rights of Way Parish of Ledbury* (at 1:30,000 scale and last published in 2012) on HC's website⁶⁷).

- 5.15.71 The key footpaths, and those which are currently most well-used by walkers to, from or through the town, are as follows:
- i) to the east, ZB17, which takes the Geopark Way towards the Malvern Hills;
 - ii) to the south, LR7, which connects to Gloucestershire;
 - iii) to the west ZB2 and LR10 (route of the Herefordshire Trail);
 - iv) to the north, ZB19, leading to LR18 and from thence north east onto LR21 (which between them also take the Herefordshire Trail from the north);
 - v) from the end of LR18 going due north; and
 - vi) LR17 into Wellington Heath and beyond.
- 5.15.72 Large new housing developments by Barratts and Bovis south of the by-pass and Bloor to the north of the viaduct will create new demand for active travel routes.
- 5.15.73 The Bloor development will include new footpaths and cycleways to the west under the viaduct to the Hereford Road roundabout, with a new toucan crossing over Hereford Road into New Mills Way and on to cycle and walkways into the town. Another crossing will be under the viaduct onto Ballard Close half-way up the Hereford Road, to again cross the Hereford Road via another new toucan crossing and onto footpath ZB18 alongside and to the west of the Town Trail on the disused canal / railway line. These should provide safe routes for children going to school, and for shoppers and commuters.
- 5.15.74 Similarly, as a condition of planning, both Barratts and Bovis (the latter now called Vistry) will be developing new footpaths and cycle ways to cross the by-pass with new toucan crossings. The Town Council is currently negotiating with Bovis not to use their planned route for active transport, but to consider a more appropriate and logical alternative. The Bovis proposal is that having crossed over the bypass, the route would go alongside Jubilee Close, entering the close on LR7, and then east along the close onto the Gloucester Road. In fact, this route is totally unsuitable and unsafe for walkers and cyclists who need to access the town. Instead, the aim is to offer part of the public open space ### TBC at the bottom of Jubilee Close as a much safer and more accessible alternative, then onto Biddulph Way, and then onto a number of footpaths into various parts of the town. A long-term plan is to build an active travel footbridge over the by-pass (ideally a green bridge that will allow terrestrial mammals to cross safely as well). The south side of the bridge would be sited on the POS proposed between the Bovis and Barratts developments, the north side would lead into Shepherds Close and then on to Biddulph Way (the area is already earmarked for such, with green space being left for bridge footings in due course).
- 5.15.75 Recommendations on these and other footpath enhancements and / or additions referred to in this section and Appendix E can be found in Section 7.2. The Town Council is mindful that any changes to existing PRsoW, or applications for new ones, need to be applied for and registered on the Definitive Footpaths Map before 2026.
- 5.15.76 In terms of cycling, there are few major national cycle routes in this part of Herefordshire. The nearest National Cycle Network (NCN) route is a short section in Great Malvern (as yet unconnected to the wider network, but a new NCN route to Worcester is currently being planned). Otherwise, the closest routes to Ledbury in the region are i) NCN 45 on the east side of the Malvern Hills taking in parts of the Severn Valley and Cotswolds, and NCN 46 which runs between Hereford and the Wales / England border to the south west.

⁶⁷ <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/travel-transport/highways-public-rights-way-map>

- 5.15.77 However, Sustrans' *Herefordshire, Worcestershire & North Gloucestershire Cycle Map (15)* does include a Ledbury Circular Day Ride route of 23.5 miles, and HC publishes a *Herefordshire Leisure Cycle Guide* with six routes, one of which comprises 17 miles of the well-signposted Ledbury Loop. The latter is part of the National Byway, a 3,000-mile-long leisure cycling route around Britain that links places of geographic, historic and cultural interest. The Ledbury Loop starts and finishes in Ledbury and takes in Eastnor, Bromsberrow, Ryton (with its Poets-based Garland Hut 'resource' facility) and Dymock.
- 5.15.78 HC also produces a *Ledbury Walking & Cycling Guide* which includes several practical commuting routes suitable for cycling including Green Lane and the Town Trail, with a connecting cycling route from the Trail around the Primary School leading down to the industrial estate on Lower Road and along Browning Road onto the length of New Mills Way.
- 5.15.79 In addition, the Malvern Hills AONB Partnership has sign-posted routes shown in their publication *By Bike in the Foothills of the Malverns*. The *British Camp & Bromesberrow Route* is a 20-mile on-road loop ride around the eastern, southern and western parts of the Malvern Hills, with sections running from British Camp to the eastern outskirts of Ledbury via Eastnor, and on to Upper Colwall (just below the Wyche Cutting) via Petty France, the railway bridge junction and Old Colwall⁶⁸.
- 5.15.80 An aspiration that has been discussed and agreed with neighbouring Dymock Parish Council, who are also producing their own NDP, is to extend the River Walk, which runs alongside the proposed route of the reinstatement of the old Herefordshire and Gloucestershire canal (see Local Green Spaces below) to construct a walk and cycle way from the hamlet of Staplow (north of Ledbury), through the viaduct, along the River Walk and then along the proposed route of the canal to Dymock and potentially onto Newent where part of the reinstated canal has already been implemented. The aim is to provide a safe, quiet and scenic route for active travel and recreation that would then form the canal towpath once it has been reinstated (see map *Ledbury NDP revision key paths green infrastructure and amenities aspirations July 2021* which will be published on the Ledbury NDP website Maps section. See also references in sections 5.2, 5.11, and the public and social amenity recommendations in Section 7.2).
- 5.15.81 Bisecting the town from north to south and suitable for walkers and cyclists is the important Town Trail, which follows the line of the disused canal / raised disused railway line from the railway station past the town recreation ground (the Rec) across Bridge Street to the Little Marcle Road and then through woods to the Ross-on-Wye road roundabout on the by-pass. This is not a PRoW, but a public access trail owned and maintained by HC.
- 5.15.82 The trail connects across the by-pass to the River Walk, going north alongside the east side of the River Leadon up to the Hereford Road roundabout. Together these two paths form a 4.4-mile-long circular tour of Ledbury, suitable in most places for walkers and cyclists, and accessible in parts by people in mobility scooters and families with prams or buggies. More detail on the Riverside Park is provided in previous sections and the GI section which follows; see also the public and social amenity recommendations.
- 5.15.83 It is an aspiration to improve the Town Trail facilities by widening the current narrow bridge on the Town Trail over Orchard Lane to make it more accessible for all active travel user groups, and to make the River Walk more accessible by, for instance, improving the current steps-only access on to the Walk by the Little Marcle Road to allow cyclists, buggies and prams to also access to the walk here and so allow a continuous walk and cycleway currently not possible for all.
- 5.15.84 The above trails, paths and other routeways form a highly important resource for the local community. Many are used by people visiting from outside the area, tourists who have come to explore the lovely countryside (much of which is within the Malvern Hills AONB) with its steeped-in-history heritage. Thus, they make an important contribution to the local economy, and significantly contribute to people's health, well-being and quality of life.

⁶⁸ See http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/MalvernsCycleGuidemapinsiderevisedOct10_000.pdf

- 5.15.85 Local roads, lanes and footpaths are used to varying degrees by local people for recreational, social and employment commuting purposes. Cyclists are in the most fortunate position, as it very easy to access local lanes via three main routes: along the Worcester Road to the Coddington Road; the Ross-on-Wye Road to the Leadington Road; and the Little Marcle Road. By contrast, the only lane easily accessible to walkers is the Coddington Road, off the Worcester Road. In other directions, the roads to Gloucester and Hereford have adequate verges, but the traffic is heavy enough to make them unattractive to recreational walkers, though manageable by experienced cyclists. A modified (wider and with an improved surface) Town Trail would make walking and cycling to reach the start point of a walk / run / ride through some of the lanes a much pleasanter experience.
- 5.15.86 Reaching both the allotments and the cricket ground means using main roads, respectively the Bromyard Road (which is quite busy and with no pavement after the Beggars Ash junction) and the Ross Road (which does have a reasonably good pavement, but is on an even busier road so neither an enjoyable cycling or walking experience).
- 5.15.87 A toucan crossing across the by-pass on the Ross Road pavement, which also needs widening to allow both cyclists and walkers, is an urgent requirement and a recommendation in Section 7.2. In the event that land is developed for employment and / or sport and recreation to the south of the Little Marcle Road as proposed by HC and LTC, another toucan crossing across the by-pass and enhanced cycling and walking routes from the town centre will be required (also recommended in Section 7.2).

Ledbury's Green Spaces

- 5.15.88 The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends that every city should provide a minimum of 9 square metres (0.0009ha) of urban green space for each person (equating to 0.09ha per 1,000 population). The space provided should be accessible, safe and functional. WHO also suggests that an ideal amount of urban green space could more generously be provided, with as much as 50 square meters (0.005ha) per person, equating to 5ha per 1,000 head of population.
- 5.15.89 In England, consideration is given to English Nature's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards, which suggest that at least 2ha of accessible natural greenspace per 1,000 population should be provided. HC's 2006 Open Space Study showed that the county has a current parks, gardens and recreation grounds average standard of 1.12 hectares per 1,000, with Ledbury just above the average at 1.13 hectares.
- 5.15.90 In addition, the Open Space Study showed what Herefordshire's quota by English Nature's standard of combined natural and semi-natural greenspace should be - equating to having at least 349.74ha of provision within the county. The county currently has 4,143.38ha of such space, or 23.69ha per 1,000 population, with Ledbury having 119 hectares of space, or 7.96ha per 1,000 population.
- 5.15.91 The study concluded that Ledbury had an extensive 'over-provision' of natural and semi-natural greenspace (although these days we understand so much more about the importance of access to natural green spaces for people's physical and mental health, so over-provision is perhaps the wrong term to use), but only an average provision for amenity greenspace, and for children and young people. It recommended that new provision of parks and gardens was needed.
- 5.15.92 The study also pointed out that English Nature's standard is very much based on urban figures, whereas Herefordshire is a very rural county. It therefore recommended that the LPA should consider the provision of greenspace within each of the identified areas (mainly the individual market towns) to ensure that any proposed change in use is acceptable in open space impact terms, that countryside habitats are protected, and that the economically-valuable rural nature of the county is not compromised.
- 5.15.93 This is recognised as being very much the case in Ledbury, since although the town theoretically currently exceeds the standard, when viewed in the rural context, it is very much under threat from significant growth promoted by developers wishing to capitalise on the town's attractiveness and

good access, to the detriment (as demonstrated by the unplanned and visually-harmful Barratt's development) of the rural setting in terms of protecting open space provision and the open, rural and tranquil nature of the town's surrounds, which are as deeply interconnected as they were when the township began to establish.

- 5.15.94 The study also assessed the different uses and potential purposes of amenity greenspace (although as noted above, many of the other highly valuable GI functions that amenity spaces do or can perform have only recently begun to be recognised). Sites within this typology have been divided into four categories – local amenity, village green, civic space and allotments, and the countywide provision of amenity greenspace. The county has a provision of 80.89ha or the equivalent of 0.46ha per 1,000 population, with Ledbury on 6.03ha or 0.40ha per person, but notably, at the time, zero allotment space. PPG 17 is very much about setting local standards of provision, that in this case need to be specific to Herefordshire.
- 5.15.95 If it is necessary to benchmark against any national standards of provision, then the only national standard for amenity greenspace provided is 0.5ha per 1000 population. This is based on the current UK average of all applicable local authorities' provision standards, as highlighted in the Government's *Rethinking Open Space* report (2001). The current provision across the county equates to 0.46ha per 1,000 population and therefore there is a countywide deficiency of amenity greenspace. Ledbury falls below the country average and below the national standard. The Open Space report therefore recommended that Ledbury needs to protect its amenity green space.
- 5.15.96 This recommendation will be reflected in the public consultation stage of the NDP revision, giving residents the opportunity to comment on the green space areas they value and what they would like to see protected for the future. The consultation, and suggested green space areas to consider in and around the parish (see local greenspace below), has been designed to help prepare for future iterations of the NDP, to help inform the emerging new Local Plan, and to allow for the possibility of further changes in the planning system (planning 'zones' may yet still feature). A predisposition for built development not being considered appropriate unless specifically for the benefit of nature and recreation (Nature and Recreation Areas (NARAs) would be in NDP-recognised local greenspace areas.

LOCAL OPEN GREENSPACE NEEDS / DESIGNATED LOCAL GREEN SPACES

- 5.15.97 It is important to differentiate between 'local green spaces' generally, and Local Green Spaces (LGSs), which is a specific term used in the NPPF for places which are considered to be of high community, landscape or other value and thus require protection through LGS designation (which currently confers the same level of protection on the land as Green Belt). For the avoidance of doubt, in this section we use the expression 'local greenspace(s)' to differentiate them from formal LGSs.
- 5.15.98 Whether or not the proposed planning reforms are adopted (as variously mentioned in Sections 1 - 3, adoption as currently proposed now seems highly unlikely), this NDP revision aims to encompass local greenspace needs as a guide for later versions of the NDP to cover in more detail, but with existing and new greenspace areas being recognised and outlined in this version. Ledbury does not currently have any formally designated LGSs and none are currently being considered in this revision of the NDP, but it is strongly recommended that this is considered sooner rather than later - see recommendations for this topic in Section 7.2.
- 5.15.99 Responses about local greenspace requirements will be gathered from the consultation exercises; also, there are three known requirements for increased local greenspace amenity already highlighted in this report.
- 5.15.100 The first is the need to consider the planned reinstatement of the former Herefordshire and Gloucestershire canal during strategic / feasibility / other studies being carried out to inform plans for future development proposals / applications. As noted previously, the canal route is protected; there is also an opportunity to create a new long-distance footpath and cycleway along the

towpath well in advance of the canal being restored. This would bring significant economic and health benefits to the town and its community.

- 5.15.101 The second is the need to provide allotments in the parish (those that exist and which are regarded as Ledbury allotments are not actually in the parish, they are in Wellington Heath parish off the Bromyard Road about a mile from the centre of town to the north). Proposed sites for allotments in Ledbury are mentioned in this report (see Section 7.2), having been requested through an earlier public consultation phase of the NDP revision.
- 5.15.102 The third is the need for more public gardens, another key NDP consultation area. A local business, Haygrove Ltd, is a large soft fruit grower near Ledbury which is keen to develop a community garden in the town (similar to a successful one already created in Ross-on-Wye). Some consultation with the NDP and Haygrove, and with the owners of a large garden that used to be the kitchen garden of Underdown near the Gloucester Road to the east of Ledbury, have already taken place, including the scope for both parties to work together to meet this need.
- 5.15.103 A large area of scrubland (thought to be owned by HC) by the Hereford Road roundabout, accessed to the south off the Hereford Road and bounded by the River Leadon and a small brook, was identified some time ago by Haygrove as a possible site, and this possibility is also part of the green space aspect of the public consultation exercise.
- 5.15.104 The photograph below shows the Hereford Road access to this scrubland at GR701386 looking south.

Access to current scrubland south of the A438 Hereford Road



5.16 Green Infrastructure

Introduction

- 5.16.1 Green Infrastructure is commonly referred to by its acronym 'GI'. Although some people differentiate between green i.e. terrestrial infrastructure, and blue i.e. aquatic, the term GI is almost always used to cover both unless stated otherwise.
- 5.16.2 Natural England's definition of GI is as follows:
- 'Green Infrastructure is a strategically planned and delivered network comprising the broadest range of high quality green spaces and other environmental features. It should be designed and managed as a multifunctional resource capable of delivering those ecological services and quality of life benefits required by the communities it serves and needed to underpin sustainability. Its design and management should also respect and enhance the character and distinctiveness of an area with regard to habitats and landscape types.'*
- 'Green Infrastructure includes established green spaces and new sites and should thread through and surround the built environment and connect the urban area to its wider rural hinterland. Consequently it needs to be delivered at all spatial scales from sub-regional to local neighbourhood levels, accommodating both accessible natural green spaces within local communities and often much larger sites in the urban fringe and wider countryside.'*⁶⁹
- 5.16.3 The Government's recently-revised (July 2019) version of the Natural Environment PPG para. 006 explains that GI 'assets' and 'functions' can help achieve the following planning goals:
- building a strong, competitive economy
 - achieving well-designed places
 - promoting healthy and safe communities
 - mitigating climate change, flooding and coastal change
 - conserving and enhancing the natural environment.
- 5.16.4 GI assets are physical / natural / historic / recreational features and elements, individually and in combination. Examples of those which are present in the study area are listed in Ledbury's GI section below.
- 5.16.5 GI functions include the provision of:
- access to nature, recreation, movement and leisure (for humans)
 - habitats for nature and support for biodiversity
 - landscape setting and context for development
 - energy production and conservation
 - food production and productive landscapes
 - flood attenuation and water resource management
 - cooling effects to mitigate the impacts of climate change.
- 5.16.6 Amongst its many benefits, GI has a vital role to play in people's health and wellbeing. Evidence shows that those who live near nature generally cope better with the stress of everyday life and are considered happier than those who do not have easy access to green spaces. *'Proximity to greenspace is generally associated with increased levels of physical activity. This effect is particularly marked in the under 25s, who are more likely to be obese if they do not have access to greenspace. Regular participation in physical activities has been shown to improve physical and mental health. Increasing physical activity through access to high quality greenspace has the potential to save the NHS £2.1 billion a year... The green infrastructure approach therefore integrates consideration of*

⁶⁹ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/35033>

*economic, health and social benefits to ensure that delivery against both environmental and socio-economic objectives is central to the planning, management and delivery of these spaces.*⁷⁰

- 5.16.7 The Landscape Institute's publication *Green Infrastructure An integrated approach to land use*⁷¹ is also a very useful source of reference on the subject. GI can improve the community's experience and understanding of natural and historic places. Integrating access to green spaces with natural, cultural and heritage value into people's everyday lives can help to develop a connection with the local area and increase community participation. It can provide learning opportunities, reduce crime and encourage social activity. Education involving the natural environment and green spaces can positively influence the functioning of communities through reducing anti-social behaviour, increasing self-esteem and improving skills.
- 5.16.8 It can also benefit the natural and historic environment by creating and enhancing biodiversity, connecting wildlife corridors and networks, protecting and enhancing landscape character, and improving the quality of rivers and streams as well as conserving and enhancing heritage assets such as historic landscapes and archaeological features, and improving the setting of historic buildings and monuments.
- 5.16.9 GI is factored in to judgements about landscape value, and should form an integral part of planning for the future (it is an important aspect of both national and local, and often neighbourhood planning policy - see below). It should be the subject of focussed studies if and when required, especially as part of planning applications. Landscape assessments *'will often need to address the effects of proposed development on green infrastructure as well as the potential the development may offer to enhance it'*⁷².

Ledbury's Green Infrastructure: Background

- 5.16.10 HC's Green Infrastructure Strategy⁷³ dates from 2010, and forms part of the evidence-base for Herefordshire's Core Strategy. The strategy's stated aim is *'to place a framework of natural and culturally important features and functions at the heart of planning for a sustainable future for development within Herefordshire'*.
- 5.16.11 It divides existing GI into two groups: natural systems and human influence. Within these two groups there are subdivisions: geology; biodiversity; hydrology; land use; access and movement corridors; historical, cultural and archaeological value; landscape character; and formal designated and accessible open space. These divisions are dealt with at three levels: county, district and local or ward. Within each division, resources, issues and opportunities are identified.
- 5.16.12 It identifies deficiencies and needs at a county-wide level, the key findings being the fragmentation of the natural systems, their vulnerability to change, and their inaccessibility to residents. Large-scale resources are located on the edges of the county, with the interior predominantly arable agriculture. Para. 4.3.1 of the strategy states, *'Many of the most diverse and valued sites and corridors within the county are constricted and limited to small or narrow components of the landscape'*. The agricultural areas are significantly less biodiverse.
- 5.16.13 It recognises that *'ecological systems need to function at broad spectrum across whole landscapes'*. At a countywide level, the River Wye forms the core part of the strategy; the hill ranges of the Malverns, the Brecon Beacons / Black Mountains and north west Herefordshire hills / southern Shropshire Hills/Mortimer Forest are also of countywide importance.

⁷⁰ Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Strategy 2013 – 2018 (WCC)

⁷¹ https://landscapewpstorage01.blob.core.windows.net/www-landscapeinstitute-org/2016/03/Green-Infrastructure_an-integrated-approach-to-land-use.pdf

⁷² GLVIA3 para. 2.10

⁷³ *Green Infrastructure Strategy Herefordshire Local Development Framework* (February 2010) Herefordshire Council <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/2063/herfordshire-green-infrastructure-strategy>

- 5.16.14 Within settlements of medieval origin there is often little provision of green or open space: this is true of Ledbury town centre, where gardens are small or non-existent. Green space in new developments can often be isolated islands disconnected from other green spaces. The most deprived areas in towns are the areas with the least green space: again, this is true in Ledbury where there is little play space in the south of the town.
- 5.16.15 Relevant to Ledbury is the identification of the Malvern Hills AONB as a County Strategic Area, recognition that development in this area may impact on assets and features beyond county boundaries and may be of national importance.
- 5.16.16 A network of District Strategic Corridors (DSCs) links the six major towns (Herefordshire GI Strategy p 106). These corridors feature: nationally and locally recognised and protected sites; sites of GI significance (rivers, ranges of hills) and functional landscapes (for example river basins and woodlands which minimise the effects of flooding). Ledbury's DSCs connect to Hereford, centred on Woolhope Dome, and Bromyard following the River Frome and the upper catchment of the Leadon. There is no complete connection to Ross-on-Wye. At a district level, strategic District Enhancement Zones (DEZs) have been identified where landscapes could provide GI goods – public amenity, biodiversity, flood mitigation, but there are currently no DEZs near Ledbury.
- 5.16.17 Within each town, Local Strategic Corridors (LSCs) have been identified showing the framework of connected GI within the settlement and adjacent to the settlement. The area around sites identified for urban expansion in the Core Strategy have been designated Local Enhancement Zones (LEZs) where there is an opportunity to enhance GI alongside development. Finally Fringe Zones (LFZs) surround each town, covering the transition between town and country and indicating the local importance and sensitivity of these transitional areas (Herefordshire GI Strategy pp 143-149).
- 5.16.18 The Regulation 16 draft of the Ledbury NDP (pp 45 and 46) contained a GI policy – CL1.1. The Examiner in his report stated that: *'no substantive evidence is provided in respect of how this will occur, how it will be paid for, how it will be managed, or who by. There is nothing to demonstrate that Policy CL1.1 is deliverable...'* Following the Inspector's recommendation, the policy and accompanying map were deleted and there is no policy in the existing NDP covering GI.

Ledbury's Green Infrastructure

- 5.16.19 Ledbury is the only major town in Herefordshire which does not lie within the catchment of the River Wye. Its own river, the Leadon, is a tributary of the Severn, joining it at Over near Gloucester. In terms of district / county-wide GI connections, the Hereford - Ledbury road is a main corridor; District Zone 3 follows this route which encompasses the distinctive Woolhope Dome and Marcle Ridge on the way. *'The Dome has a unique geological background and for the most part, its eroded hills and valleys have not been intensively farmed. As a consequence, the Dome is a rich mosaic of ancient oak and mixed woodlands, species-rich hedgerows, wildflower meadows, traditional orchards and streams, all supporting a wealth of wildlife.'* [Ledbury Naturalists Field Report May 2015]
- 5.16.20 Many of Ledbury's GI assets and functions have been identified and are described in the previous topic sections, for example Heritage, Biodiversity, Significant Vegetation and Public and Social Amenity; see also Key Landscape Functions in Section 5.17. Some are also identified in HC's Green Infrastructure Strategy, including strategic corridors running east of the town through Dog Wood, west of the town along the Leadon Valley, and through the town along the Town Trail. The strategy also identifies enhancement zones where new development is expected or planned to the north of the town (the viaduct site), and to the south west of the town where the Hawk Rise / Catherine's Grange development is being built, also the Old Wharf Industrial Estate and town end of the Ross Road.
- 5.16.21 Some of the area's key GI assets and functions are shown on Figures 10A and 10B. Where relevant, more detail about GI within the core study area is provided in the GI topic LSCA schedules in Appendix F. In summary, within the wider study area, GI assets include:

- Natural and semi-natural rural and urban green spaces – includes woodland and scrub, grassland, meadow, marsh / wetlands, open and running water, brownfield sites, bare rock / geological habitats (for example quarries).
- Parks and gardens – urban, country and historic parks, formal / public and private gardens, and institutional grounds (for example schools).
- Amenity green spaces – informal recreation spaces, play areas, outdoor sports facilities, housing green spaces, domestic gardens, community gardens, roof gardens, village greens, commons, living roofs and walls, hedges, civic spaces, and highway trees and verges.
- Allotments, orchards, suburban and rural farmland.
- Cemeteries and churchyards.
- Green and blue corridors – watercourses (including their banks and floodplains), railways, road verges, old trackways.
- Public rights of way network -roads, lanes, footpaths, bridleways, cycle routes and trails, including long-distance / themed trails.
- Sites of nature conservation value / importance (designated / undesignated); also designated local geological sites.
- Green spaces (designated / undesignated) selected for historic significance, scenic beauty, recreation, wildlife, tranquillity etc.
- Archaeological, historic and cultural sites / features (designated / undesignated).
- Functional green spaces such as sustainable drainage schemes (SuDS) and flood storage areas.
- Built structures – living roofs and walls, bird and bat boxes, roost sites.

5.16.22 For the LVBA, Ledbury's GI assets were grouped into four broad categories based on the predominant use and associated character:

- 1) The Hills and woods
- 2) The river and flood-plain
- 3) Farmland to the north, west and south
- 4) Green space within Ledbury Town.

The Hills and woods

- 5.16.23 The hills and woods in the area are intrinsic to Ledbury's GI, providing most of the beneficial functions listed above, especially access to nature, recreation, movement and leisure (for humans).
- 5.16.24 Chief among the hills and woods are those at the western edges of the Malvern range, especially the town woods: Frith, Conigree and Dog Hill Wood; also, the nearby Hospital and May Hill Woods, and Wall Hills Camp. Frith Wood and Conigree lie within the AONB; Dog Wood lies adjacent to the AONB boundary between the other two, and is owned by LTC.
- 5.16.25 Woolhope Dome and Marcle Ridge, although outside the parish, also contribute to the area's GI, with important links and physical / natural / cultural associations between all of them.
- 5.16.26 Direct pedestrian access to the countryside via ancient woodlands is a highly important aspect of Ledbury Town's special sense of place, and it makes a highly important contribution to the community's health, well-being and quality of life. Throughout many of the woods there are good networks of footpaths (Conigree, Dog and Frith Woods in particular - Frith Wood is also Open Access land), and bridleways, which provide access to the wider area. The network is well-used by local people and visitors alike (see Public and Social Amenity section for further information).
- 5.16.27 The hills and woods provide important habitats for nature and support great biodiversity, as set out in Sections 5.9 Significant Vegetation and 5.14 Biodiversity. They are also an integral and important

part of the town's character and its unique and special landscape setting and context (another contributor to human well-being), forming the backdrop to the settlement in many views.

- 5.16.28 In addition, the woods have cultural and historic links, containing several archaeological sites and ancient boundaries. Ledbury Park, an unregistered park within the AONB boundary, slopes up to Conigree Wood from The Southend, forming an historic transition between the town and the Hills.
- 5.16.29 Furthermore, these areas make important contributions to climate change mitigation (cooling and water management), primarily provided by trees; and energy production (timber) – parts of the woods are owned by the Forestry Commission.
- 5.16.30 The Forestry Commission has published a *Plan for Conigree and Frith Woods 2021-31*. It explains that '*Frith and Conigree will be predominantly native broadleaf woodlands, with small pockets of conifers remaining to add diversity of structure and habitat, resilience to pests and diseases and opportunities for timber production*'. The vision includes clearing a percentage of the conifers in Conigree to leave open space for wildlife, ground flora and planted or regenerated broadleaves, and an ambition to establish a programme of coppicing in Frith.
- 5.16.31 Public access to the woods is allowed '*for low key recreation and connection with nature and wildlife*' – despite public requests that routes for mountain bikers be established, it is judged that these woods are vulnerable, and that both woods are rich in biodiversity, and therefore cannot accommodate mountain biking. Camping and campfires are also not allowed. The Commission have committed to working with Ledbury Naturalists to audit and monitor biodiversity and wildlife.

The River Leadon

- 5.16.32 The Leadon is a small river which rises 9.6 miles to the north of the town near Evesbatch, it flows north/south through the Parish, around the settlement to the west and on into Gloucestershire (see Hydrology in Section 5.6 for more information). The Leadon's most important GI role is water management: along with its flood plain it absorbs and filters run-off from the surrounding hills. As noted previously, it is important to monitor the river's capacity for managing water from its catchment, especially factoring in climate change.
- 5.16.33 As mentioned in Section 5.4, the Malvern Hills NCA 103 profile refers to land north / north east of Ledbury town which is of relevance to ecosystem services and the regulation of water flow. It states that whilst regulating water flow is a relatively low issue for NCA 103, '***it is an important area for its potential contribution to attenuation of flooding in downstream Ledbury, particularly through land management which increases vegetation cover (particularly trees/scrub) and surface roughness to increase evapotranspiration and infiltration and slow flows. These actions will also increase biodiversity, water availability and improve soil quality through the expansion, restoration and siting of semi natural habitats, which have a higher water storage potential***' (emphasis added).
- 5.16.34 Many of the local soils are clay, including on the surrounding hills: this means rainwater is absorbed slowly, and with increasingly heavy rainfall, the amount of run-off can be high. Trees and vegetation on the hills bordering the town are an important means of attenuating / controlling this.
- 5.16.35 The river also provides a valuable leisure and recreational resource, and vital habitats for wildlife and biodiversity; however, currently, water quality levels are only 'Moderate' due to pollution (see Section 5.14).

Farmland

- 5.16.36 The town is surrounded and characterised by farmland, which dominates much of the Parish. It is generally good agricultural land (mainly Grade 2 with a small amount of Grade 1 to the east and fragments of Grade 3 – see Section 5.6).
- 5.16.37 Farmland's chief contribution to GI is food production and occasionally energy production (for example timber and bio-energy). If managed well, agriculture can also contribute to water resource

management; however, as set out in previous sections, often, agriculture contributes to excess run-off and flooding, with associated pollutants.

- 5.16.38 Also, if subject to good, sensitive management, agricultural land can benefit biodiversity and provide a variety of healthy habitats. Farmers are the main stewards of our hedgerow network and much of our woodland, and they will be subsidised in the future for managing land for environmental benefits (for example through Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes⁷⁴). It is now widely recognised that understanding and working with the land's Natural Capital brings economic benefits to farmers / landowners as well as local communities, along with social and environmental benefits.
- 5.16.39 Access to farmland in the local area is, however, quite limited, with a sparse network of fragmented footpaths.
- 5.16.40 The farmed landscape contributes greatly to Ledbury's setting. Rolling, hedge-bound fields, traditional and modern orchards, livestock and farmsteads are important to the character of the parish. Some forms of modern farming, however, can be intrusive or even polluting if poorly-sited / -planned and / or irresponsibly-managed. For example, polytunnels (of which there are many in this traditional fruit-farming area) can be highly visually-intrusive (see photo below), do not make the best use of high grade agricultural land if sited on it (most polytunnel fruit is grown on table-tops not using the soil), and have a significant and often negative impact on the character and appearance of the countryside.

POLYTUNNEL PHOTO/S

- 5.16.41 On the other hand, polytunnel farming can be highly efficient and very sustainable in terms of water, pest and disease management, enabling local food production and supporting local industry. This is a working landscape and polytunnels are one aspect of that, so a balance needs to be struck. Intensive livestock units are also on the increase as farms diversify: as noted in Section 5.14, they are responsible for a wide variety of pollutants and adverse environmental effects, and can be unpleasant neighbours.

Ledbury Town

- 5.16.42 The town has a good range of green spaces, including the large historic parklands at Ledbury Park, Underdown and Upper Hall (there is no public access to these parklands). There are two recognised town centre recreation areas: the Walled Garden and the Recreation Ground, along with a cemetery, a churchyard, school grounds and a bowling green. There are rugby, cricket and football pitches, mostly on the western fringes of the town.
- 5.16.43 The 20th century housing areas have pockets of informal green spaces, wide verges and play spaces. Gardens in the very centre of town are generally small, becoming larger at the town's edges. These spaces do not, however, form a network - many are isolated, and their ability to support GI provision, such as biodiversity and wildlife habitats is limited. On the other hand the Riverside Walk, the Town Trail and the green space network on New Mills do a good job of linking spaces together, to the benefit of human users as well as nature.
- 5.16.44 Whilst green space within the town provides recreation and leisure to human beings, it has the potential to provide more and better GI goods than it currently does. If it were less fragmented and managed for biodiversity and wildlife it could also contribute to water resource management, as denser vegetation will absorb more rainfall and prevent run-off. Some larger spaces may benefit local people if used to grow vegetables or for community gardens.

⁷⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-land-management-schemes-overview>

- 5.16.45 The town has many mature and semi-mature trees (see Significant Vegetation section), notably the lime avenue on the recreation ground, trees lining the Town Trail, parkland trees at Upper Hall, stands of trees on New Mills, and semi-mature buffer planting along the river and by-pass. This buffer planting is almost continuous from the Hereford roundabout to the Gloucester roundabout; the belt forms a highly important and valuable multi-functional GI corridor.
- 5.16.46 Street trees are not generally a feature in the centre of town as roads are narrow. Where there are town trees (many in gardens) they are a valuable GI resource, close to where people live and available to all, protecting homes (cooling and water resource management) and contributing to human well-being as well as providing habitats for wildlife and supporting biodiversity.

PLANNED FUTURE GI WITHIN PARISH / TOWN

- 5.16.47 New developments, especially residential, can affect GI positively and negatively. To the south / south east of the town, agriculturally-productive land (Grade II) outside the by-pass is being built on which is an unfortunate loss. The developments also damage the visual integrity of the town and the setting of the AONB; the visual impact may lessen as the vegetation matures and in the seasons when trees are in leaf, but the majority of adverse effects on character and amenity / biodiversity cannot be mitigated. Hedgerows and mature trees have been / will be lost, and replacement planting will not provide equal GI benefits for many years if at all (see Significant Vegetation). The houses on these estates have small gardens and the public green spaces, although sometimes connected to each other and to the countryside they border, are not and will not be well-connected to the town's GI, being surrounded / cut off by roads.
- 5.16.48 To the north, the viaduct site will eventually enable the reinstatement of a section of the Hereford to Gloucester Canal, a much anticipated county-wide asset which is being implemented section by section. As well as a leisure facility the canal could provide an opportunity to boost the local network of cycle routes and footpaths both to the south (Dymock) and to the north (Staplow) (see Public and Social Amenity above).

5.17 Key Landscape Functions

- 5.17.1 The baseline assessment identified certain areas of land which perform highly important functions within the landscape, and / or make valuable contributions to landscape character and visual amenity. These are factored in to judgements about landscape and visual sensitivity.
- 5.17.2 The most relevant are in relation to an area's contribution to / function as, and / or forming an integral and important part of:
- National and / or local landscape character
 - Rural open countryside (location and character / use)
 - Historic (pastoral / ornamental) context and setting of settlement
 - Historic landscape character (pastoral / ornamental - current land use)
 - Characteristic / historic landscape patterns
 - Heritage asset / context and setting
 - Aesthetic / perceptual qualities
 - Biodiversity
 - Significant vegetation
 - Key approach / gateway (see next section)

- Green gap (especially where preventing coalescence), and / or buffer / transition zone (desirable between densely and sparsely-settled area, and areas of tranquillity and activity, for example, and to protect wildlife and other 'sensitive' sites)
- Green corridor / link (these often perform a wide variety of functions including ecological and recreational)
- Social amenity
- Green Infrastructure asset / function
- Ecosystems / natural capital / catchment
- Views and visual amenity.

5.18 Key Constraints

5.18.1 Landscape assessments can identify some, but not all of the constraints which may have to be considered in determining the feasibility / viability of the future development of certain areas. Many of the designations and features identified in the assessment are potential constraints to development at one level or another, although they do not preclude development *per se*⁷⁵.

5.18.2 The main constraints include:

Land covered by designation and / or specific planning policy: for example AONB, SSSI, Open Access land, LGS.

Land in Flood Zones 2 and / or 3⁷⁶: As well as being a constraint to development, building in the flood plain may be uncharacteristic in terms of local landscape character (see hydrology in Section 5.6).

Land with covenants: Occasionally, certain parcels of land are the subject of covenants which specifically preclude development of the land, or access to it.

Land on steep or very steep slopes: Although it may not be uncharacteristic in steeply-sloping areas, building on steep slopes usually requires extensive / intrusive engineering works which could give rise to significant adverse effects on landscape character, visual and social amenity in order to achieve modern-day standards. Even if building can be achieved, it may not be possible to get access to the land without cutting into the slope, removing roadside vegetation to achieve sightlines and so on.

No direct access from public highway: Access to some areas may be possible through adjacent developed land which does have direct access to a public highway, either now or in the future; others are perhaps only reached via fields, or narrow lanes / tracks which would require widening / 'improving' which would almost certainly give rise to adverse landscape and visual effects.

⁷⁵ In the case of AONBs, recent revisions to the Natural Environment PPG have clarified the NPPF's intentions and requirements for how development within them (and other designated landscapes) should be approached. The PPG states that '*The National Planning Policy Framework makes clear that the scale and extent of development in these areas should be limited, in view of the importance of conserving and enhancing their landscapes and scenic beauty. Its policies for protecting these areas may mean that it is not possible to meet objectively assessed needs for development in full through the plan-making process, and they are unlikely to be suitable areas for accommodating unmet needs from adjoining (non-designated) areas. Effective joint working between planning authorities covering designated and adjoining areas, through the preparation and maintenance of statements of common ground, is particularly important in helping to identify how housing and other needs can best be accommodated. All development in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Beauty will need to be located and designed in a way that reflects their status as landscapes of the highest quality. Where applications for major development come forward, paragraph 172 of the Framework sets out a number of particular considerations that should apply when deciding whether permission should be granted.*' (Paragraph: 041 Reference ID: 8-041-20190721 Revision date: 21 07 2019)

⁷⁶ Within Flood Zone 1 there is a very minimal risk of flooding (less than 0.1% chance of flooding in any year, sometimes known as 'having a 1:1000-year chance'). There are very few restrictions in terms of flood risk to development on Flood Zone 1 areas, although applications for proposed development on land over 1ha in area must be accompanied by a flood risk assessment, which should consider areas deemed to be at high risk of flooding from rainfall (known as Critical Drainage Areas).

- 5.18.3 It should be noted that there are other matters beyond the scope of landscape and visual assessments which have to be factored in to judgements about whether development of a site is feasible and / or viable, and whether it can be achieved without giving rise to unacceptable levels of adverse effects.
- 5.18.4 For example, land-ownership and / or the protection and / or management of land may have to be considered where relevant to landscape and visual value / sensitivity to change in terms of how a landscape looks and / or functions; however, land-ownership / management *per se* is not of relevance to sensitivity and capacity, especially as the situation can change over time. From a neighbourhood planning perspective, any sites which are considered for future development would have to be feasible, viable and deliverable.
- 5.18.5 Another constraint is the former Herefordshire and Gloucestershire canal, which runs north - south though the study area, mainly within the Leadon valley except where it traverses the town. The canal is the subject of an active restoration scheme being run by the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust - see Section 5.2. The route is now protected. However, once restored, the canal is likely to present many opportunities and benefits, for example by boosting the local economy through tourism, and by providing a significant new long-distance recreational / GI corridor.

6 Visual Baseline

6.1 Introduction and Overview

- 6.1.1 As explained above, the assessment of views and visual amenity entails separate processes, distinct from, but related to, those used in the assessment of landscape character.
- 6.1.2 The Landscape Institute's guidance (GLVIA3) explains that the two distinct components of the assessment of landscape and visual effects are:
- i. Landscape effects: assessing effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right [i.e. regardless of how visible it is, or who can see it]
 - ii. Visual effects: assessing effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people.
- 6.1.3 It is very important to understand the difference between landscape and visual effects, and although they are interrelated, they *must* be assessed separately. Unfortunately, even experts in the field conflate the two. In summary, a landscape's character can be adversely affected by development regardless of whether anyone can see it or not.
- 6.1.4 As explained in Section 4, LVIA is normally used to assess the effects which could arise from a specific development in a defined location with known parameters; however, the principles are also applied in LSCAs, as when making judgements about sensitivity / capacity it is necessary to establish the nature of the effects likely to arise from the type of development which is the subject of the assessment, for example residential, industrial or recreational.
- 6.1.5 Both LVIA and LSCA processes involve determining a certain landscape's level of visual sensitivity (which, as with landscape character, is established by combining levels of visual value and visual susceptibility to change - see visual assessment criteria in Appendix G). The studies identify places from which it is likely that change in the landscape would be visible, who is likely to be affected by that change, and establish *How and to what degree the changes would affect what is there and those who see / experience it* (see Section 4).
- 6.1.6 The visual baseline assessment relies heavily on the findings of the baseline landscape character assessments set out and illustrated in the previous sections, which include the mapping and analysis of physical features, designated sites, heritage / cultural assets, settings / areas of influence, important wildlife habitats, public and social amenity, access, well-known / well-frequented viewpoints and so on. The LCA also identifies the landscape's aesthetic and perceptual qualities.
- 6.1.7 These inform the nature of the view, and make a major contribution to visual value and susceptibility to change. However, often the value / importance of what one is looking at is not obvious on the ground - a good example is a nationally-protected wildlife site, a registered battlefield, or a view painted by a famous artist / described by a well-known poet (see cultural associations above).
- 6.1.8 The nature of a view is also influenced by matters such as how well-cared for and / or well-used the landscape is, what its character tells us about the area's sense of place, and what contribution it makes.
- 6.1.9 The visual assessment takes into account any landscape functions assigned during the LCA process, for example gap / buffer / setting / green corridor / gateway (see Section 5.17), and identifies visual functions as well.
- 6.1.10 The numbers of people experiencing the view and the reason for the visit is taken into account, and their sensitivity as visual receptors is established by combining their susceptibility to change and the value of the view.

- 6.1.11 The local footpath network is considered to be especially important and of very high value in terms of the visual amenity it provides.
- 6.1.12 In assessing views and visual amenity, it is important to understand the landscape context of the view. For example, many views looking outwards from high ground are characterised by extensive panoramas which extend to the far-distant horizon. Looking down, the individual elements and features are perceived as forming a vast, integrated patchwork of patterns, textures and colours, creating the impression of green and tranquil rural landscapes, or discordant and chaotic urban townscapes.
- 6.1.13 As a result, the viewer tends not to focus on individual features unless they draw the eye for some reason. Examples include tall structures (e.g. church spires and pylons); large blocks of built form / colours / patterns / textures which contrast with the surrounding landscape / townscape context (e.g. red brick housing estates, fields of rapeseed, white-roofed agricultural / industrial buildings); surfaces / materials which glint and glare (water, glass, plastic, metal etc. - polytunnels, solar panels and certain modern roof tiles are particular culprits); and movement (road and rail corridors, wind turbines, and large numbers of people and / or cars can create a noticeable contrast / disturbance in an otherwise relatively 'calm' landscape).
- 6.1.14 Areas of built form which are physically separated on the ground may appear to coalesce from certain viewpoints, whereas from others, the contribution made by an open, rural gap to landscape and townscape character may be very clear and visually highly important.
- 6.1.15 The assessment may take into account whether mitigation measures could be employed that would avoid / reduce probably high levels of adverse visual effects - for example by planting trees to screen views or restricting the height of any new built form - and whether such mitigation would be appropriate or not, in terms of landscape character (uncharacteristic mitigation measures can in themselves give rise to adverse visual effects, for example planting Lombardy poplar trees to screen polytunnels).
- ### CT PHOTO
- 6.1.16 It must be noted that when low levels of visual sensitivity are ascribed to certain areas, this may be due to views to / from the area currently being fully-screened by dense, mature vegetation. However, the nature, density and likely permanence / longevity of the vegetation needs to be considered, especially if without it, visual sensitivity would be higher and capacity lower. As explained above, existing vegetation may not remain in place in the short-term, let alone the long-term future for a wide variety of reasons. For example, a dense, coniferous plantation woodland may provide full year-round screening, but the species are relatively short-lived and the trees are likely to be felled for timber at some point, so the screening function is temporary.
- 6.1.17 Thus, much of Ledbury's significant vegetation is vulnerable to change, and cannot be relied on to continue to perform its highly important visual (and other) functions.
- 6.1.18 Note that in this assessment, 'near-distance' views are categorised as being up to 0.5km away from
- 6.1.19 Many of the photographs in this section of the report were taken by local residents, using both cameras and mobile phones.

6.2 Wider Views and Visual Amenity

Study Area Visual Overview

- 6.2.1 The LVBA considered views within, into and out of the parish, noting the edges of the visual envelope as far as possible.

6.2.2 Ledbury lies in the river valley of the Leadon. The river flows from north to south, and the valley has formed between two regionally-important landscape features, both of which are within wider AONBs - the Malvern Hills in the Malvern Hill AONB to the east, and the Woolhope Dome in the Wye Valley AONB to the west.

6.2.3 Whilst there is a relatively high degree of interinfluence and intervisibility between Ledbury and the Malvern Hills, there is none between Ledbury and the Woolhope Dome itself due to the presence of Marcle Ridge, which forms the easternmost edge of the Dome (and lies c. 1.7km east of the Wye Valley AONB boundary).

PHOTO

6.2.4 The Malvern Hills form a highly distinctive and iconic feature in the wider region, and exert a strong and widespread influence on the landscape in all directions and on all approaches to Ledbury. The Hills' 13km long, hump-backed ridgeline is oriented north-south; approaching Ledbury from the south and north therefore, the silhouette changes relative to the location of the viewer - this is one of the local landscape's distinctive qualities (and is also a very useful aid to orientation on the approach).

6.2.5 The Hills are only visible from places further away from the town and approaching from the south, north west and west, disappearing behind the woods as you enter the town.

PHOTOS

6.2.6 Ledbury town is orientated north – south along the contour of the western base of three heavily-wooded hills - Dog Hill Wood, Frith Wood, and the Conigree. All are within the Malvern Hills AONB. Frith Wood is Open Access land, and a highly important recreational resource for locals and visitors alike. There are also public footpaths / bridleways through the woods. However, even in winter, trees screen most views of the town and wider landscapes, which only become visible at the woodland edge.

6.2.7 Since Ledbury lies below these steeply-sloping hills, built form and vegetation are seen to a greater or lesser degree from above, which makes them highly visible. The higher the viewpoint, the more the angle of view becomes two-dimensional, or 'plan-form': this has the disadvantage of exposing unsightly roofscapes and other detracting elements, features, patterns and activities which may not be visible at lower levels.

PHOTO?

6.2.8 In fact, views from even the most elevated of locations, including the summits of the Malvern Hills, are rarely if ever completely plan-form, something which is often forgotten when designing roofscapes - nowadays roofs are often 'camouflaged', but the elevations end up being pale or brightly-coloured. However, from most higher-level locations the elevations are just as visible as the roofs, and the contrast can be a major visual detractor.

6.2.9 From the town's High Street, only glimpses of the hills and countryside beyond can be seen, but the settlement has developed eastwards up the sides of the hills and down into the valley, and as you climb up Bank Crescent or Knapp Lane, westward views open up across the valley to Marcle Ridge, May Hill (Gloucestershire) and Wall Hills Camp.

PHOTO

- 6.2.10 As you move westward down Bye Street and New Street, into New Mills, Deer Park and Leadon Way, looking back, views of the town are revealed, with the woodlands to the east forming the setting and context.

PHOTO

- 6.2.11 Views looking west from the town tend to be long, connecting the town to its county. In good light conditions, hills further west into Herefordshire can be seen from high points in the town and the woods above it.

PHOTO

- 6.2.12 The nature of the mature vegetation in the area has a significant effect on views and visual amenity: lack of it often means that long, open views are available; it can also fully screen, filter and frame views.

- 6.2.13 As noted in the landscape baseline sections (and shown on the baseline figures, especially Figures 3A and 3B Aerial Photographs, and Figures 6A and 6B Significant Vegetation), many of the areas to the south, west and north of the town are characterised by open agricultural land. Mature woodland is relatively sparse here, much of it having long-since been cleared for agriculture, although there are a few good blocks and belts of ancient woodlands around Wall Hills hillfort and along the ridge adjacent to Falcon Lane to the west of the town. Also, watercourses are often lined by sinuous belts of mature trees, and mature trees which have escaped from their hedgerows, or which have been left standing as isolated specimens in fields, are highly characteristic in Ledbury's landscapes, even close to the town. In addition, roadside hedges are often too tall to see over, and some of the lanes are deep holloways lined with trees.

PHOTO/S

- 6.2.14 The above factors mean that visually, in the lower-lying areas, the landscapes can appear very well-wooded, views often being intimate and near-distance, with few outward views to help with orientation and sense of place.

- 6.2.15 Seasonally, views can vary as trees lose their leaves and vegetation dies back revealing views hidden the rest of the year and exposing the bare bones of the landscape (the best time to carry out environmental colour assessments). Changing weather conditions affect the extent, nature, quality and experience of the view (see also Section 5.10 Aesthetic and Perceptual Qualities).

PHOTO/S

- 6.2.16 Views have been noted from footpaths, lanes and roads. The rural lanes are often deserted, mostly narrow, winding and undulating. Journeys along these lanes can give tantalising views of this varied rural landscape. Particularly good views can be found in the lanes to the west and north east of the study area.

Nationally-Important Views and Viewpoints

- 6.2.17 As noted in the cultural associations section above, many world-famous writers, artists and musicians have been inspired by the Ledbury and Malvern Hills areas' scenic qualities and other attributes. For millennia, and for different reasons, the Hills have been a key destination, and today, each year the Malvern Hills AONB attracts over a million visitors from all around the world. The viewpoints and views associated with the AONB, both from and towards it, are of international importance.

- 6.2.18 In 2009, the Malvern Hills AONB Partnership commissioned a study of views to and from the Malvern Hills, which formed the basis of the publication *'Guidance on Identifying and Grading Views and Viewpoints'*⁷⁷.
- 6.2.19 The guidance emphasises that key views and corridors are a material consideration in planning and decision-making, and that their protection is a priority in this respect. It also makes clear that effects on the AONB can arise, and therefore must be considered, beyond its boundaries (i.e. within its setting) as well as within the designated area: *'In 2012, Defra and Natural England advised those carrying out management plan reviews that there is a greater imperative to consider the effect of development in the setting of protected landscapes. The setting of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is the surroundings in which the area is experienced. If the quality of the setting declines, then the appreciation and enjoyment of the AONB diminishes. Construction of a distant but high structure; development or change generating movement, noise, odour, artificial light, vibration or dust over a wide area; or a new understanding of the relationship between neighbouring landscapes may all impact on/extend the setting'.*
- 6.2.20 The AONB Unit's guidance on views, and the LVBA's preliminary desktop and on-the-ground studies, only provide an indication of theoretical visibility, and over a wide area. The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) of a particular area or feature is often based on bare terrain mapping only, which does not take into account built form, vegetation, or localised topographical variations. Actual visibility must therefore be determined as far as possible through on-the-ground assessment, driving and walking around the study area, to establish the Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI).
- 6.2.21 The eastern side of Ledbury parish lies within the AONB, along with part of the east side of the town (Horse Lane Orchard, south of the A449). Much of the rest of the parish forms an integral and important part of the AONB's setting.
- 6.2.22 A recent (2019) revision to National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) for the Natural Environment also clarifies how development within the setting of AONBs and other nationally-designated landscapes should be dealt with; it states:
- 'Land within the setting of these areas often makes an important contribution to maintaining their natural beauty, and where poorly located or designed development can do significant harm. This is especially the case where long views from or to the designated landscape are identified as important, or where the landscape character of land within and adjoining the designated area is complementary. Development within the settings of these areas will therefore need sensitive handling that takes these potential impacts into account.'* Paragraph: 042 Reference ID: 8-042-20190721 Revision date: 21/07/2019
- 6.2.23 The visual studies carried out for Ledbury's LVBA followed the Malvern Hills AONB Unit's guidance on views, and used the same system for grading the level of quality of the views, namely 'Exceptional', 'Special' and 'Representative' (see guidance for definitions); however, whilst the principles of the criteria were the same as the AONB's, they were adapted to reflect the neighbourhood (as opposed to national) value of the views, and without the focus of the view being the Malvern Hills - see following sections.
- 6.2.24 The LVBA criteria for Exceptional, Special and Representative views are as follows:
- Exceptional Views:** views which are unique / highly characteristic of the wider area / landscape / townscape, with few or no detractors. May have national and / or local cultural and / or historic significance. Encompass important landmarks / key focal points.
- Special Views:** views which are locally unique and / or special, characteristic of the local area / landscape / townscape, few detractors. May have local cultural or historic significance. Encompass locally-important landmarks / key focal points.

⁷⁷ http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/KEYVIEWSFinalreport-lowreswebsite_000.pdf

Representative Views: views which explain the history / culture / character of the area / landscape / townscape, and which include local landmarks / focal points and locally-distinctive features.

- 6.2.25 The key views study for the AONB identifies two views which feature Ledbury – one from Marcle Ridge (Exceptional VP27), and one from Durlow Common (Special VP45). These long views are described in the following section.
- 6.2.26 The viewpoints and associated view corridors were marked / noted on the base plans (see Figures 12A and 12B), and the information was factored in to judgements about visual value and susceptibility to change.

6.3 Local Views and Key Viewpoints

- 6.3.1 As well as considering views of the parish from the nationally-important VPs, this study assessed more local key views, especially those to and from the settlement, in order to determine the nature of the views, their value and susceptibility to change, and the degree of visibility from different locations.
- 6.3.2 The key viewpoints (KVPs) and associated views were identified by the volunteers carrying out the baseline surveys and analysis, all of whom are members of the local community.
- 6.3.3 As well as KVPs, the study identified Key Viewpoints (KVPs), Key Focal Points (KFPs), and Key View Routes (KVRs). The assessment of the latter factored in the findings of the landscape baseline studies for the town's approaches and gateways (see Section 5.8).
- 6.3.4 As noted above, the key views were graded as per the Malvern Hills AONB's guidance on views, i.e. Exceptional, Special and Representative.
- 6.3.5 It is not always possible to fully assess views on the ground, as usually only places which are publicly-accessible are visited during the surveys. However, a few people were kind enough to allow us access to private land so that views could be considered from all angles. Where necessary, Google Earth was used to gain an impression of a certain view.
- 6.3.6 Key view points and view routes are identified below. Whilst there are key views at viewpoints along the routes, inevitably levels of visual interest / quality vary from place to place along them, and depend on the direction of travel and angle / elevation of view, light, weather and season. It must also be remembered that a view can be experienced even by those without sight – other sensory experiences, such as sound, smell, temperature and light levels come into play (these are also important factors to consider when evaluating levels of visual and social amenity quality / value / susceptibility to change / sensitivity / capacity).

Key Focal Points

- 6.3.7 The KFPs identified were as follows:
- The Barrett Browning building on the northern corner of the Bye Street / Homend junction (distinctive and taller than the surroundings).
 - Ledbury Viaduct
 - St Michael's Church spire
 - Ledbury and Underdown Parks (parkland landscapes on the hill slopes)
 - Dog Hill, Conigree and Frith Woods
 - The Malvern Hills
 - May Hill (in Gloucestershire)
 - Wall Hills Camp

- Marcle Ridge (especially the highly visible radio mast which punctuates the skyline).
- Last but not least, Ledbury itself (as a settlement, when viewed from longer distances)..

Long Views

- 6.3.8 The majority of KVPs and KVRs are within the parish / on its boundaries. The locations of the KVPs, KVRs and KFPs are shown on Figures ### and ###.
- 6.3.9 Two KVPs with views towards the parish were identified beyond the boundary.
- 6.3.10 **KVP1** is an 'Exceptional' view; it is also the location of the AONB's Exceptional VP 27, which is at a point along the Herefordshire Trail which in this area runs along a footpath / the lane running along the crest of Marcle Ridge. This route was also identified as a KVR (KVR15).
- 6.3.11 The Trail turns eastwards at The Wonder, zig-zagging down the slopes into the valley via Putley and Aylton, crossing the River Leadon just west of the Leadon Way by-pass, and traversing Ledbury town centre (see Section 5.15 Public and Social Amenity). Just below the radio mast, the Three Choirs Way long-distance trail joins the Herefordshire Trail, also with views over the Leadon valley and Ledbury towards the Malvern Hills. There are views over Ledbury towards the Malvern Hills from these routes as well, but at lower elevations the views are less panoramic.
- 6.3.12 The view corridor from this VP covers most of the study area. The view is panoramic, high quality, and very lovely at all times of year.
- 6.3.13 The view clearly shows the town's wider landscape context and setting - its close association with the Malvern Hills is more easily appreciated from this vantage point, since closer to Ledbury, the Hills are screened by the wooded hills to the east of the town.
- 6.3.14 The landscape is characterised by traditional mixed farming with arable, horticulture and pasture predominant. It is sparsely populated. Polytunnels can clearly be seen, particularly the extensive coverage on land north and north west of Ledbury; otherwise, the landscape is rural, well-hedged, and displays a traditional field pattern - see photos overleaf

View from Marcle Ridge looking east over Ledbury, with Malvern Hills on skyline



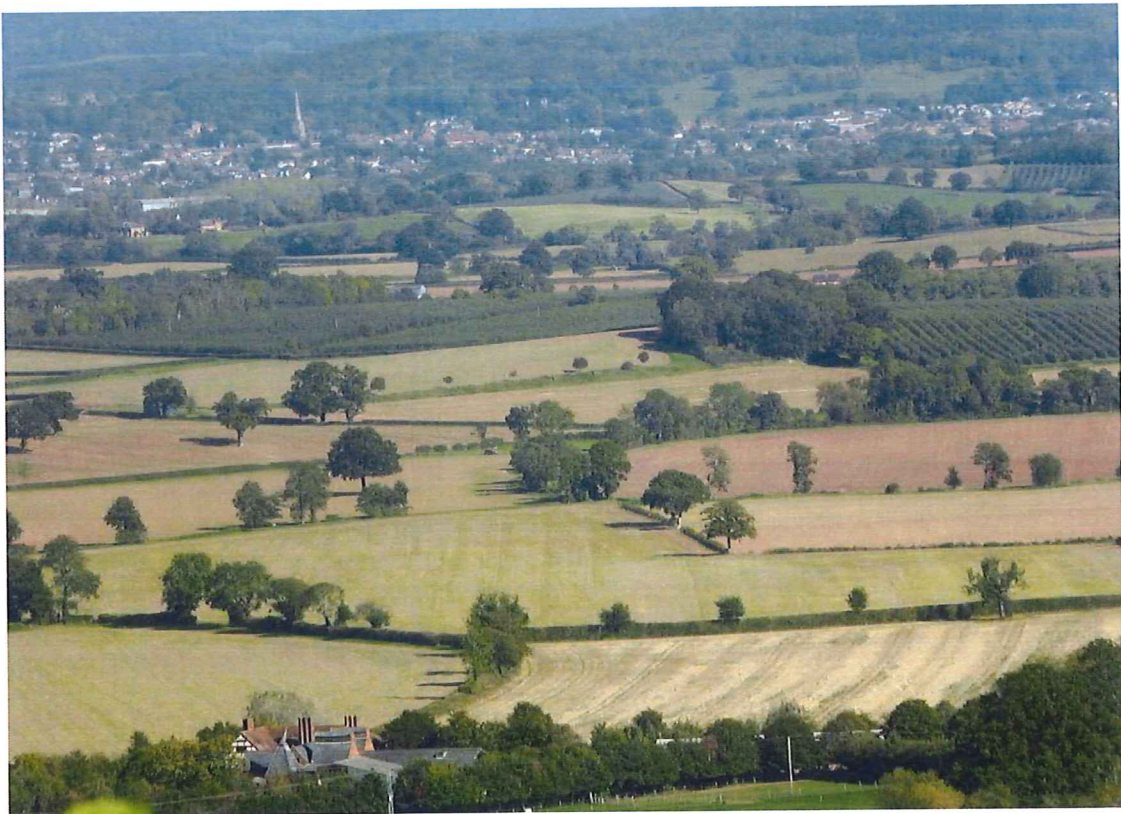
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- 6.3.15 **KVP2** is on Durlow Common, in the vicinity of AONB Special VP45.
- 6.3.16 This is an elevated, open view across good quality rural countryside with undulating land in the fore / mid-ground and hills in the background (from the VP, the skyline features the Cotswold Scarp to the right, Titterstone, Clee Hill and Clent Hills to the left, the Malvern Hills' central spine, with the wider AONB on the intermediate skyline at the centre of the view).
- 6.3.17 Ledbury is at the foot of the hills in the midground. The view encompasses most of the typical local landscapes: agricultural (arable and pastureland), associated agricultural buildings / industry (farmsteads, barns, polytunnels, and food processing plants), and woodland on the hill slopes.
- 6.3.18 The tapestry of open fields and woodland cover, scattered farmland buildings and houses give an impression of a rural but settled, inviting and accessible landscape.
- 6.3.19 This is a 'Special' view, featuring both Ledbury and the AONB in their wider settings. The agri / industrial landscape features (polytunnels, modern farm complexes and the industrial units around Ledbury) counter the tranquil nature of the view, but Ledbury is a working, productive parish and in many ways is relatively modern.

View looking south east from lane between Putley Common and Woolhope Cockshoot



- 6.3.20 **KVP3** is categorised as a 'Special' view. It is located north east of Ledbury, just outside the study area boundary, along the road linking the Coddington Road to Wellington Heath via Hope End. The view is a panoramic vista, broadly looking south west towards the far horizon from Marcle Ridge to May Hill, over undulating, good quality rural landscape. Although the bulk of Ledbury town is not visible from here, the fine railway viaduct north of the town can be seen in the centre of the view, although it is hard to distinguish, being surrounded by hedges, trees, and the light-industrial buildings of the Bromyard Road Industrial Estate.

View looking south west from Loxter near Wellington Heath - viaduct barely visible in mid-ground



Approaches to the Town (KVRs)

- 6.3.21 Approaching the town from the south, east and north west, you see the town below the Malverns and the local hills: Frith, Conigree and Dog Hill Woods. If you are travelling by road, you glimpse the town fleetingly through gaps in hedges and gateways as the roads wind, rise and fall. Ledbury is a working town and from these approaches, light industrial buildings at the edge of the town (and more recently housing on the Dymock Road) block clear views and dominate the nearer you get to the town.
- 6.3.22 The church steeple is the focal point. But other high structure such as the UBL plant on the Little Marcle Road and brewery silos on Orchard Business Park, Bromyard Road, also draw the eye. These are Representative views which could be Special if the industrial buildings in the foreground didn't detract.

View looking towards town from Little Marcle Road



View looking towards town from the Ross Road



- 6.3.23 Approaching the town from the south, east and north west, you see the town below the Malverns and the local hills: Frith, Conigree and Dog Wood. If you are travelling by road, you glimpse the town fleetingly through gaps in hedges and gateways as the roads wind, rise and fall. Ledbury is a working town, and from these approaches, light industrial buildings at the edge of the town (and more recently, housing south of the town along Leadon Way / the Dymock Road) block what were once clear, fine views, and dominate the nearer you get to the town.

PHOTO

- 6.3.24 The church steeple is the focal point, as it would have been for centuries; however, today, other tall but modern structures such as the UBL plant on the Little Marcle Road and brewery silos on Orchard Business Park, Bromyard Road, also draw the eye. These are Representative views which could be Special if the industrial buildings in the foreground didn't detract (there is considerable scope for improvement - see Recommendations).

ADD PHOTOS BELOW

- 6.3.25 **KVR1** is a 'Special' KVR. It is along the A417 Gloucester Road on the approach to Gateway A(i) at the A417 / Leadon Way roundabout (see Section 5.8). It is a fast road with wide verges, and from it, there are good views both leaving and approaching the town - looking east towards the Malverns across rolling farmland which is well-hedged and sparsely-populated, and west towards Marcle Ridge and May Hill. As you approach the town, the land (fields and parkland) to the east slopes more steeply upwards to Conigree, May Hill and Hospital Woods. To the west are open views across the Leadon Valley. The new housing developments to the south / south west of the town will adversely affect this approach, but the land closest to the road has been identified as visually sensitive (especially in terms of the setting of the AONB and Underdown, and it being remnant historic parkland - see character baseline sections) and should not be developed.

- 6.3.26 **KVR2** is also along the A417 but north of the roundabout; it is also a 'Special' KVR. As the road continues into town along the Southend, there are tempting glimpses of the heart of the town, framed by the black-and-white buildings of Ledbury Park, the boundary brick wall to Ledbury Park to the east, and the attractive buildings (mostly Georgian or earlier) which line the west of the road. Finally you reach the Top Cross and view the town centre with the High Street descending to the Middle Cross and Market House and then rising up the Homend.
- 6.3.27 **KVR3** is a 'Representative' KVR. It is along the Dymock Road which leads to the Full Pitcher Roundabout, also Gateway B (Section 5.8). This was once a lovely approach, the town and hills behind, within the AONB, revealed from quite a distance. However, the recent housing developments damage the view, and from a distance are very dominant as the land is flat. Hopefully vegetation will go some way to softening this view with time.
- 6.3.28 **KVR4** is a 'Representative' KVR, along the Ross Road. This is a slightly oblique approach to the town: until you reach the rugby pitches and auction sites, you are travelling through lovely countryside and, as with the other approach roads, attractive views of the town and hills are revealed at intervals.
- 6.3.29 **KVR5** is a 'Special' KVR. The approach along Little Marcle Road to Gateway C has a rural character, despite the UBL silos which are of a scale and isolation to signify heavy industry rather than the urban feel a more well-planned and sensitively-designed industrial site might create. Large-scale soft fruit grower Haygrove is also sited on this approach, and groups of fruit-pickers making their way on bicycle or foot into town or back to their lodgings are a frequent summer sight. The road is narrow and winds significantly with high hedges on either side occasionally revealing views of the town and hills; none are stunning (telegraph poles and rural industrial buildings detracting) but all are highly characteristic and pleasant. The Little Marcle Road is the only remaining approach road with a truly rural feel. This is slightly detracted from by the light industry in the first section, but the road still has a countryside character.
- 6.3.30 **KVR6** is a 'Representative' KVR, along the Hereford Road A438. The road passes through open countryside, with Wall Hills to the east and high hedges to the west, giving brief glimpses of traditional orchards and the viaduct. The long views are of Frith Wood and the town with the Malvern Hills behind and, further to the south east, of May Hill. These are attractive views detracted from somewhat by the large industrial buildings and silos on the Bromyard Road trading estate beneath Frith Wood. The road reaches Gateway D at the Hereford roundabout, the surrounds of which are suburban in character, although the very good tree planting which lines the by-pass (now about 20 years old) does a lot to mitigate the impact. If it matures as it should, helped by good management and assuming no loss from pests / diseases or other factors, its beneficial qualities should also grow.
- 6.3.31 **KVR7** is also a 'Representative' KVR, along the B4214 Bromyard Road, approaching Gateway E. As it runs through a valley, the Bromyard Road has few vistas, but it is characteristically rural (winding, not too wide, not too busy) and quite pleasant. There are no good views of the viaduct from the road due to intervening built form and vegetation. The first sign that you are approaching a town is the presence of industrial buildings on the Bromyard Road trading estate. From here onwards the feel is more urban and certainly not picturesque: you finally pass under the railway bridge and enter the town. The character of the road will undoubtedly change when the viaduct site is developed: everything possible should be done to avoid further urbanisation here and mitigate the worst of the adverse effects, but the narrowness of the road and the need for extreme traffic measures to deal with the high levels of traffic unfortunately mean that this is unlikely to be achievable.
- 6.3.32 **KVR8** is another 'Representative' KVR, along Knapp Lane approaching Gateway F. This is a lovely road - too narrow to take a lot of traffic and with a pinch point at the town end which only allows single vehicles to pass. The road cuts west from the Worcester Road rising behind Dog Wood, over Knapp Ridge then descends to the town, offering views down to the river valley and up to Bradlow Knoll. Woodland and pasture in the foreground are succeeded by the 20th century developments

of Bank and Homend Crescents, Knapp and Homend Rise, and Lark Rise. There are near views to the east down to the railway station with Frith Wood alongside.

- 6.3.33 **KVR9** is also a 'Representative' KVR. It is along the A449 Worcester Road approaching Gateway G. This road leads to Ledbury Town from the Malvern Hills with very fine, high-quality open views to both sides until you reach Conigree Wood to the east and the Coddington Road to the west. Here, the road winds and slows down. A raised pavement to the west is bordered by a low brick wall and the mature trees of Upper Hall behind. To the east is Horse Lane Orchard housing. Quickly you are in a built-up area lined on both sides with housing and walls. The brick and black-and-white buildings of Ledbury Park at the Top Cross give you a first glimpse of the historic character of the town. Just beyond, looking down New Street, you can see Marcle Ridge, which makes an important contribution to the town's wider context and setting.

From the Local Hills

- 6.3.34 There are outstanding and varied views from the edges of all local hills. The best views of the town are from Bradlow Knoll (Frith Wood) and Dog Hill Wood.
- 6.3.35 The best middle-distance panoramic view is from the western edge of Frith Wood towards the viaduct and Wall Hills Camp, and the best long-distance view is from Dog Hill Wood's western edge towards Marcle Ridge and May Hill. The key views / view routes are described and illustrated below.
- 6.3.36 **KVR 10** is a 'Representative' view along a well-used footpath on the south-western edge of Conigree Wood, from which there are good, long-distance views to the south and west. Ledbury Park's historic parkland features in the near ground, sloping down to the boundary wall and the Gloucester Road. Few mature trees remain; the parkland is often grazed by beef cattle. Moving northwards, the historic parkland of Underdown (Grade II listed building in unregistered park and garden) comes into view; historic features remain but are hard to distinguish in what is now conventional farmland. From here there is also a very fine long view over the settlement to Marcle Ridge across the valley to the west, and to the distinctive dome and tree-clumped summit of May Hill to the south west.

TITLE



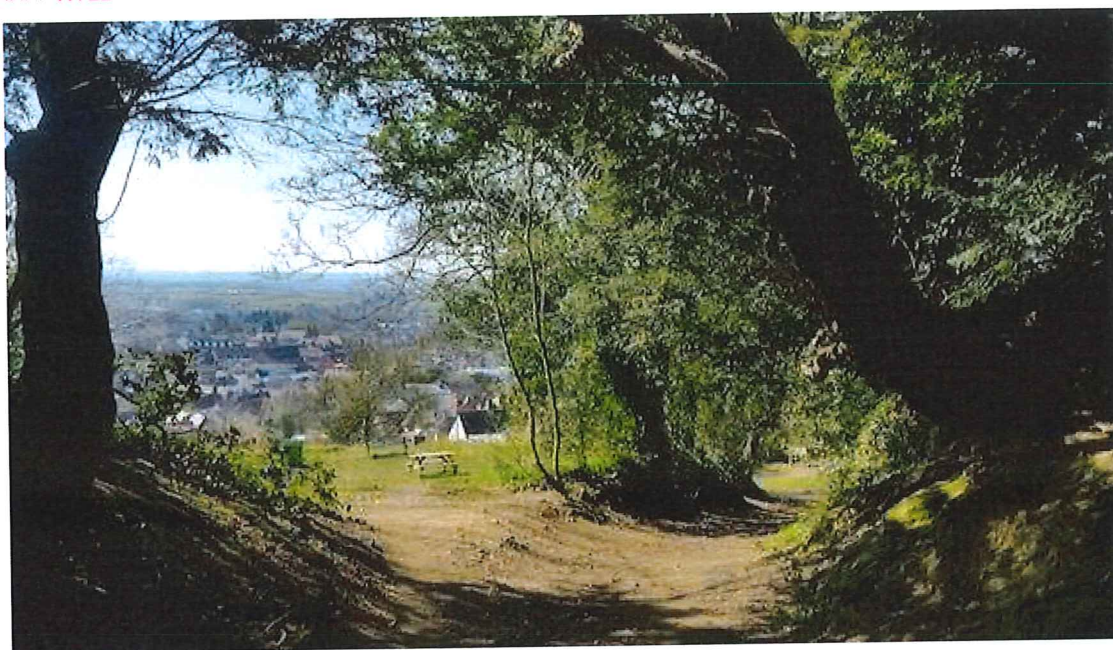
- 6.3.37 **KVR 11** is a 'Special' KVR, along footpath LR21 on the western edge of Frith Wood. There are many 'Special' KVPs along the route, mainly looking west down the slope, with fine panoramic views to Wall Hills Camp (scheduled monument) and across the valley to Marcle Ridge and May Hill in the

south west. There are also 'Exceptional' views of the viaduct (Grade II listed), although the Bromyard Road trading estate is a detractor.

PHOTO / TITLE?

- 6.3.38 **KVP4** is a 'Special' KVP, from a viewpoint known as 'the Cricket Pitch' at the southern tip of Dog Wood. From here there is a fine view looking over the town, with the High Street in the mid-ground and May Hill beyond, across the valley. It is an important view as this wood is very much part of the town and very popular with local walkers; it also forms the beginning of many walks which go on to Frith Wood, Conigree Wood and the Malvern Hills beyond.

TITLE



- 6.3.39 **KVR12** is categorised as being between 'Exceptional' and 'Special'. It is along the footpath which delineates Dog Wood's western edge. From multiple points along the path there are fine, panoramic views over the town towards May Hill (south west), Wall Hills (west / north west), and beyond to Marcle Ridge. On clear days it is possible to see even further into Herefordshire, as far as the Welsh borders. These are important views which, despite detractors such as industrial parks on the edge of the town, are highly valued by the local community.

PHOTO / TITLE?

- 6.3.40 **KVR13** is a 'Special' KVR on Dog Wood's eastern edge, along Green Lane, which is a wide footpath / bridleway with the character of a promenade. There are 'Special' views at multiple points along the lane, including looking across to Conigree Wood. Some of the best views are from the north-eastern end of the lane looking north east to the hills of Frith Wood with Bradlow Knoll in the foreground, and the Grade II* listed obelisk in Eastnor Castle RPG beyond. The obelisk was carefully situated so as to be a key focal point in many views in the area; it is also the location of AONB Exceptional VP40, which is looking north / north east towards the Malvern Hills. Looking east, Conigree Wood blocks further views, but to the south east beyond Conigree you can see May Hill, with Ledbury church spire in the middle-ground. In summertime when in full-leaf, vegetation along the edge of the lane screens or filters many of these views

PHOTO / TITLE?

6.3.41 **KVR14** is a 'Special' view route, with fine eastward views from Coddington Road, which runs parallel with the hills, and footpath LR25 at the exit from Frith Wood. From the north east of the parish beyond the local hills looking eastwards, the Malvern Hills dominate the views. ### PHOTOS / TITLES?

6.3.42 **KVR15** is a 'Representative' view route along Footpath LR11, beyond the Riverside Walk in the west of the study area as it heads north through pasture grazed by cattle and sheep and then across arable, crop-sown land. Looking south and west there are fine views towards Wall Hills, and to the east, good views of the town and Frith Wood.

PHOTOS / TITLES?

6.3.43 **KVP5** is an 'Exceptional' view from Bradlow Knoll. The Knoll is on the south-eastern side of Frith Wood to the north east of Ledbury, within Open Access land. The viewpoint is where you enter Frith Wood on Footpath LR24. From the Knoll there are fine, panoramic views across to May Hill with Ledbury in the near middle-ground. This is arguably the best view of the town, looking down the steep slope across unspoilt fields to the church spire with the town behind.

TITLE



Within the Town (KVPs)

6.3.44 Ledbury's High Street is distinctive – fairly straight and widening in the middle of the town at the Market Cross; sloping down from the Southend to the Market House, then rising gently to the Homend, giving long views which encompass the whole street.

6.3.45 **KVP6** is categorised as being between 'Special' and 'Representative'. The view is from Top Cross looking north. Looking towards the Homend with the Market House and Barrett Browning building in the middle distance, you can see Bank Crescent / Upperfields just showing above the High Street. This view is highly characteristic of the town.

PHOTO / TITLE?

- 6.3.46 **KVP7** is also categorised as being between 'Special' and 'Representative', and is also highly characteristic of the town. The view is from the Market Cross / Homend looking north towards Top Cross. The multitude of fine historic buildings along the High Street, including medieval / black-and-white, Georgian and Victorian (many with rendered and coloured facades), are displayed in this view. Beyond the Top Cross you can see the Ledbury Park yew trees.

PHOTO / TITLE?

- 6.3.47 **KVP8** is an 'Exceptional' view. The view is looking west up cobbled Church Lane to the church, and is iconic - probably the most photographed view in Ledbury.

PHOTO / TITLE?

- 6.3.48 **KVP9** is a 'Representative' view, looking east down Bye Street towards the open countryside beyond. It is a long view which anchors the town to its rural surrounds - not particularly attractive due to a few detractors, but still a good view of this small market town in its wider context.

PHOTO / TITLE?

- 6.3.49 **KVP10** is a series of viewpoints looking from within the town towards the key focal points of the Barrett Browning Building and Church Spire with the wooded hills behind. There are particularly good views from points on the town trail. The series of views is categorised as being between 'Special' and 'Representative', showing the compact, low-rise nature of the town in its rural setting and the importance of the historic built environment to the town's character.

PHOTO / TITLE?

- 6.3.50 **KVP11** is also between 'Special' and 'Representative'. The view is from footpath LR7 off Leadon Way looking east towards the hills with Underdown and Ledbury Parks in the foreground.

PHOTO / TITLE?

- 6.3.51 **KVP12** is another 'Special' / 'Representative' view. The VP is on the eastbound platform of Ledbury railway station, looking east up to Frith Wood. The station (which is modest), and its setting, epitomise the rural nature of the settlement.

TITLE



- 6.3.52 **KVP13** is an 'Exceptional' view from Footpath LR11. The footpath runs through fields to the west of the Riverside Walk between Little Marcle Road and the Hereford Road, and looking north there is a very clear view of the viaduct. In fact, this is probably the best view of the viaduct available in the area, and there is no development blocking it. A very special and fine view encompassing the town's rural nature and rural industrial heritage.

PHOTOS / TITLES?

- 6.3.53 In future, the community may decide that some or all of the KVPs / KVRs are worthy of protection through an NDP policy - see Recommendations in Section 7.2.

7 Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Conclusions

- 7.1.1 One of the NPPF's original 'fundamental objectives' was *'to put unprecedented power in the hands of communities to shape the places in which they live'*. This LVBA is a testament to the determination of the people of Ledbury to create an exceptional place in which to live and work.
- 7.1.2 They have grappled with, and ultimately embraced, the complexities of national planning policy, upholding the overarching aims which are to *'protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment'*, and ensure *'The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places'*, which is *'fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve'*.
- 7.1.3 The LVBA has taken over two years to produce. The findings will be used for a variety of purposes: most importantly, it will help the community to achieve the above aims.
- 7.1.4 In the short-term (i.e. up to adoption of the current iteration of the NDP), the studies will be used to inform and guide decisions about / proposals for the settlement boundary; allocating land for specified amounts and types of use (currently employment and sports only); Green Infrastructure (GI); and NDP policies and proposals.
- 7.1.5 The LVBA also makes recommendations for a variety of matters identified during the assessments, such as additional studies / information required; strategies, guidance, environmental and recreational projects and initiatives; and developing the long-term vision for Ledbury. These are set out in the following section.
- 7.1.6 In the medium-term (i.e. between this iteration of the NDP being adopted and the review of the Core Strategy), and subject to external factors, the LVBA will be updated to reflect changes to the baseline situation / circumstances, with full LSCAs being carried out for specified uses in specified locations if / when required. The findings will be used to make informed decisions about and draw up plans for LTC's input into the review of the Core Strategy, which is already underway, and the next round of revisions to the NDP. The aim is for previously-made recommendations - for example for Ledbury's GI - to be considered, prioritised, developed and delivered, and new ones put forwards. The long-term vision for Ledbury in 2060 will be further developed.
- 7.1.7 In the longer-term, the LVBAs, LSCAs and other forms of assessment will help to determine the direction of travel for Ledbury's growth over the next forty years. i.e. up to 2060 and beyond.
- 7.1.8 Most importantly, the assessments will be a highly valuable resource, both now and in the future, for the local community, decision-makers, stakeholders and developers alike. Also importantly, the findings will be relevant regardless of changes to planning systems and policies, as they are simply a record of what was there at that time.
- 7.1.9 Such assessments will help to ensure that when changes are proposed and / or imposed, they can be accommodated without causing harm to Ledbury's valuable features and qualities. In the case of new development, they will help those responsible to ensure high standards of quality: in planning, submissions, design, construction, operation and delivery.

Having undertaken to carry out much of the work required for the studies themselves, the community say that they now understand and value their environment far more than they did before. They have identified and described in detail the myriad features, factors and qualities which are integral to Ledbury's highly distinctive and very special natural and cultural character, and which contribute to unique sense of place. Many of the features are of high landscape and visual value, some are rare, only found in this part of the county. Several notable individuals are associated with the town and its landscapes, which for centuries have drawn and inspired poets, painters and

musicians. The vision is that they will continue to come to enjoy what will be a naturally beautiful and healthy place, supporting a happy and thriving community.

7.2 Recommendations

NB in draft v3, and time permitting, this section could be reorganised, with the recommendations set out under three headings: i) for the current NDP; ii) up to 2060; and iii) associated non-planning measures that would be useful for the NDP, public and Examiner.

- 7.2.1 During the LVBA process, several issues were identified which have formed the basis of specific recommendations, the purpose of which is to help ensure that in future, where new development of any type is planned, it both protects and enhances landscape character and visual / social amenity.
- 7.2.2 The LVBA's findings will also be used to develop detailed landscape strategies and future environmental and recreational projects / initiatives / enhancements / design guides for the local area, the settlement, and individual parcels of land / allocated sites.
- 7.2.3 Some of the recommendations could form the basis for specific NDP policies, for inclusion in the current review, or in future in the next iteration/s of the NDP; for example, where key views are identified, a policy with the objective of their protection / enhancement would need to be taken into account in any future development proposals.
- 7.2.4 A number of the recommendations for each of the environmental topics covered are shown on Figures 13A and 13B.
- 7.2.5 In summary, most of the key recommendations relate to the following:
- the line of the settlement boundary;
 - the protection and enhancement of valuable natural / cultural features, factors and qualities, especially the AONB and its setting, and views to and from it, biodiversity, and significant vegetation;
 - the protection and significant enhancement of the area's GI assets and functions, in order to maintain human quality of life and well-being, support biodiversity, and mitigate climate change - especially the creation of a multifunctional GI belt around the periphery of the town.
 - as part of the area's GI, protect, enhance and augment the network of cycleways, footpaths, bridleways and trails to improve access to nature, recreation, movement and leisure;
 - the protection and enhancement of key views; and
 - ensuring the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places through high standards of quality in planning, submissions, design, construction and operation.

Settlement Boundary

- 7.2.6 One of the main aims of this assessment was to provide the evidence-based information that would be used to make informed decisions about and justify where the line of the future settlement boundary should be drawn.
- 7.2.7 A settlement boundary is defined as the dividing line or boundary between areas of built / urban development (the settlement) and non-urban or rural development (the countryside). Boundaries are usually drawn around whatever is determined to be the integral 'core' of a settlement. Typically included within them are built form and land associated with existing employment areas, community facilities and services, and / or land allocated as such, and the bulk of a settlement's 'housing stock', including any sites identified as potentially suitable / allocated for housing (in Ledbury's case it is sites currently proposed for housing, because the NDP will not be allocating sites for housing, and will only show existing commitments).

- 7.2.8 Land outside them is defined as 'open countryside' and is usually oriented towards agriculture, tourism and / or outdoor recreational uses, although it may include parts of gardens, orchards, paddocks and other land not normally perceived as 'countryside'.
- 7.2.9 In planning terms there is a presumption in favour of built development within the settlement boundary whereas, beyond the boundary in open countryside, development is much more tightly controlled. The purpose of the settlement boundary is to act as a distinct, robust and defensible line between these areas, determining where certain types of development may be acceptable or, where protection of land is required, for a wide variety of reasons.
- 7.2.10 Theoretically, therefore, in principle it should be acceptable to build anywhere within the settlement boundary, although of course subject to the nature and scale of what is proposed, constraints, likely effects, compliance with policy / strategy / guidance, and other matters. Within settlement boundaries, policies should define where particular development might take place, with protections afforded to design, important open spaces, amenity and other considerations.
- 7.2.11 When considering the future settlement boundary line, is it very important to consider the line's relationship to local landscape and townscape character (especially historic), patterns, forms, qualities and so on. Where possible, the line should follow existing physical features / boundaries such as roads, watercourses and historic field boundaries (the latter may ultimately need restoring / reinforcing). If this is not possible, new, locally-appropriate and robust settlement boundary line features should be created where necessary.
- 7.2.12 In Ledbury's case, the following factors are relevant:
- topographical constraints (significant to the east and north, lesser extent to west and south);
 - hydrological constraints (River Leadon and flood plain);
 - need to protect key natural / cultural / visual features, factors and qualities especially the Malvern Hills AONB / its setting;
 - need to protect existing GI assets and functions, and to establish new ones.

Landscape Character and Design

- 7.2.13 The LVBA identified several factors which relate specifically to Ledbury's distinctive and in places unique character; these will be important considerations in the planning, design and delivery of new development within the parish.
- 7.2.14 Clearly, changes to a landscape's character are likely to affect views and other experiences, so many of the recommendations relating to character are relevant to visual and social amenity.
- 7.2.15 One important point to emphasise it that the difference between landscape and visual effects is often misunderstood, even by experts in the field (see Section 6.1). If not assessed separately, there is the potential for highly valuable landscapes to be damaged / lost because there are no places from which the development is visible. If landscape and visual effects are conflated, levels of adverse effects will be judged as being lower than they actually would be.
- 7.2.16 For this reason it is strongly recommended that the NDP emphasises that any landscape and visual assessment which is produced either to support the NDP or to accompany a planning application should follow current guidance on the subject, and in particular should clearly differentiate between the natural, cultural and visual aspects of character (baseline and effects).
- 7.2.17 Also, it must be remembered that 'landscape' *'results from the way that different components of our environment - both natural (the influences of geology, soils, climate, flora and fauna) and cultural (the historical and current impact of land use, settlement, enclosure and other human interventions) - interact together and are perceived by us. People's perceptions turn land into the concept of landscape'*. The various features, factors and qualities that are integral parts of landscape are shown

on the diagram *Figure 1 What is Landscape?* in Section 4.2. Thus, the recommendations for individual LVBA topics set out below are also integrally part of landscape character.

- 7.2.18 Problems with evaluating the effects of development can arise when planning applications are made in 'outline', to establish whether the principle of the proposed development is acceptable. Although the main constraints may have been identified at the pre-planning stage and do not give cause for concern, matters such as access, siting, layout, engineering operations and other 'details' including style, materials, lighting, colour and landscaping are either only illustrative or have not yet been considered in sufficient depth to be able to identify the likely effects.
- 7.2.19 In most studies accompanying planning applications, only 'significant' effects are considered; but as set out above, the many smaller changes which occur can accumulate to the point where they become significant. Even if a scheme is well-designed, and urbanising influences kept to a minimum, it is not generally possible to control what happens in private gardens where domestic paraphernalia - sheds, cars, washing lines, bins, play equipment, ornamental lawns and vegetation etc. - are likely to be highly visible.
- 7.2.20 The baseline information in this study can therefore be used to identify the potential for effects not dealt with, or not adequately covered, in a planning application, for example effects arising from night-time lighting and disturbance. It can also help to guide the community in terms of what types of environmental and other studies ought to be submitted with a planning application, and the level of assessment / nature of information required. These issues can be raised with the planning authority during the consultation period.
- 7.2.21 An assessment of the various cumulative environmental effects of the development of several sites within a certain area should also be part of the studies accompanying the application if relevant. The extent of the study area should be agreed beforehand with relevant bodies, and should include the possibility of effects at a landscape-scale, for example pollution within whole water catchment areas, increase in traffic and associated effects on wider highways networks, and night-time light pollution especially where it could affect Dark Sky Areas. This is especially important if, in combination, the threshold for EIA is likely to be breached by the accumulation of a number of separate developments. It is the LPA's responsibility to ensure this is carried out.
- 7.2.22 Many parts of the study area are highly vulnerable to certain forms of change, so some forms of development are likely to exacerbate the current situation, increasing the rate at which erosion and loss occur. However, it is also possible for this to act as a catalyst for environmental enhancement, for example the restoration / creation of new GI assets and links and the introduction of better management practices, especially if made a prerequisite of new schemes. The redevelopment of some poor quality brownfield sites can also potentially result in improvements to landscape / townscape character.
- 7.2.23 When planning applications are submitted, all these and other matters need to be covered in detail, especially how the long-term (ideally, 25 years +) management of the landscape will be secured, and who will be responsible for it. As noted above, this is especially important where existing and / or proposed vegetation is relied on to screen and mitigate adverse landscape effects, and / or to protect and enhance biodiversity, since there is no certainty that vegetation will achieve the required objectives, and it cannot be relied on in the long term. This must be factored into the decision-making process: if the effects without the vegetation in place would be significantly greater, a site's capacity / suitability for development could well be reduced.
- 7.2.24 Site-specific and detailed parameters / design codes for built form and landscaping should be produced wherever required, which developers would be expected to take into account.
- 7.2.25 The issues associated with inappropriate colours and materials in particular should be emphasised in any design guidance, and better solutions proposed. Attention to detail is essential, and the LPA should be alert to the problems of the specification of materials such as synthetic slate roofs, the glare from which can be highly visible and distracting under certain light conditions. Landowners

could perhaps be persuaded to change the colour of existing high-contrast pale roofs, walls and other highly visible surfaces to dark, or replace reflective materials with matte ones, during refurbishment.

- 7.2.26 Using colours which have similar tonality to the surrounding palette helps to visually integrate built form into the wider landscape. A grey / brownish render would be a better choice than white in many situations. White trims, gable ends and other features / apparatus should also be avoided where they give rise to unacceptable / uncharacteristic contrast.
- 7.2.27 Green roofs require special mention here. It is often assumed that if buildings proposed on lower-lying ground are constructed with grassed or planted flat roofs, they will be fully camouflaged when viewed from above.
- 7.2.28 However, firstly, even from high hills, buildings are rarely if ever seen in plan-form, they are viewed at an angle, so roofs and elevations are read together, along with surfaces. Even if the roof is planted with vegetation which is the same as that growing in the surrounding area, the mitigation will almost certainly be negated by the materials and colours used on the elevation, which are often white / pale due to the assumption that they are not going to be visible. Or, pale materials / colours are used for the hard edge / trim around the grass roof, which simply draws the eye to the angular shape in the landscape.
- 7.2.29 Secondly, architects and developers often specify sedum, because it is a cheaper solution than grass (more load-bearing construction is necessary for grass due to the depth of water-laden soil required). Also, it supposedly requires less maintenance. The problem is that sedum turns bright red in autumn (and when conditions are dry for prolonged periods), so a red angular shape becomes very apparent in what is usually a green or late-summer gold landscape. Furthermore, recent studies have concluded that grass roofs are ecologically richer and more diverse than sedum, and much better at attenuating water disposal; maintenance need not be at all onerous.
- 7.2.30 Developers could be obliged to select from a range of locally-appropriate colours and materials which have been identified through detailed studies such as Environmental Colour Assessment (ECA)⁷⁸. Ideally, ECAs should be carried out at an early stage in the planning and design process, alongside landscape, visual and other assessments.
- 7.2.31 MHAONB publications such as *Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development*⁷⁹, *Guidance on building design*⁸⁰ and *Guidance on how development can respect landscape in views*⁸¹ are the first point of call when matters such colour and materials are being considered, as well as location / siting / planting and so on.
- 7.2.32 Ideally, design parameters / strategies would be drawn up as part of the NDP process, and would be informed by existing published guidance. Important sources of information include Natural England's NCA profiles and SEOs, as well as the Malvern Hills AONB Partnership - the website has links to its publications⁸².
- 7.2.33 Another matter which needs to be considered is the style of new built form. It is sometimes desirable to mimic traditional / local styles in order for built form to properly integrate into its surrounding context without giving rise to adverse effects. However, styles change with the times, as is very evident in Ledbury - in fact the diversity of architectural styles is a defining characteristic. This period in the area's architectural history and evolution is being, and will continue to be,

⁷⁸ ### change ref = add LI TIN For examples of ECAs carried out in AONBs, see http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/guidance_on_colour_use_screen.pdf and <http://www.highweald.org/downloads/publications/uk-landscape-research-reports/2058-high-weald-aonb-colour-study/file.html>

⁷⁹ http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/guidance_on_colour_use_screen.pdf

⁸⁰ http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/MalvernBuildingDesignGuideLoRes_001.pdf

⁸¹ <http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/64339-MHAONB-Guidance-on-Respecting-Landscape-in-Views-v09.pdf>

⁸² <http://www.ccwwdaonb.org.uk/publications/planning-related-publications/>

marked by contemporary buildings, which are reflecting changing fashions, aspirations, social structures and so on.

- 7.2.34 Such buildings can certainly be accommodated, but ubiquitousness must be avoided - for example, there is a tendency for ecohouse designs to be systematic, resulting in long, rectangular buildings; timber cladding seems to be popular throughout the UK. It is very important that local character / vernacular influence siting, layout and design, and any proposals must be clearly demonstrated how this has been / would be achieved (without resorting to pastiche).

HYDROLOGY / FLOODING

- 7.2.35 The River Severn and Herefordshire studies (2009 and 2019 respectively) recommend best practice in land use and management to reduce run-off, and restore a more sustainable and natural floodplain. These measures include encouraging increased resilience to flooding in buildings, infrastructure and businesses, and ensuring that new development is steered to areas with the lowest probability of flooding.
- 7.2.36 The River Leadon and its tributaries have had a significant influence on the area's settlement pattern. The risk of flooding has been a major constraint to the development of Ledbury west of the A417 ring road **and should continue to influence the location of new development**. Settlement in the rest of the Vale of Leadon is rural, sparsely dispersed, often with single farmsteads.
- 7.2.37 The River Leadon and its tributaries form a highly important and strategic north-south green / blue infrastructure corridor with distinct biodiversity (see Section 5.14). However, recent studies show that this wildlife corridor is under threat because the river is not meeting required water quality standards, mainly due to pollution from intensive agricultural complexes operating in the local area. There is therefore a need for continued monitoring of water quality in the Leadon, and more proactive cross-county liaison and collaboration to support mitigation measures: advice to landowners / farmers; the creation of wetlands; understanding the implications for water quality; and taking appropriate care when planning new developments.

NIGHT-TIME LIGHTING

- 7.2.38 There are several national and international sources of guidance on reducing light pollution which should be referred to and followed when planning and designing new developments. They include:
- GOV.UK at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/light-pollution>.
 - Information from the Bat Conservation Trust on artificial lighting, and Eurobats guidelines for consideration of bats in lighting projects.
 - The Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE) – Society of Light and Lighting (SLL) Code for Lighting.
 - The Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE) – Society of Light and Lighting (SLL) Lighting Guide 6: The Exterior Environment.
 - International Dark Sky Association <https://www.darksky.org/our-work/lighting/public-policy/policy-makers/>
 - The Malvern Hills AONB Partnership's Guidance on Lighting (see Section 5.10). This guidance is especially useful for Ledbury, since new residential, commercial and industrial developments in the local area which are not within the AONB will still be within its setting.
- 7.2.39 The most important requirements for ongoing and new / proposed developments include the following guidelines, which should ideally be reflected in a policy in the revised NDP:
- i) All outside lighting should be minimised to ensure that no unnecessary lighting is installed.
 - ii) Lighting should be directed downwards and shielded / hooded to avoid sideways propagation.

- iii) There should be no light trespass in any lighting design or installation so that no light is propagated to adjacent properties.
 - iv) Lighting should not be switched on continuously but should be automatic and / or timed or operated by motion sensors.
 - v) Lighting intensity should be at the minimum required for the situation, avoiding glare.
 - vi) LED lighting is energy-efficient, but only warm LEDs (<3000K) should be used.
 - vii) Blue light emission should be avoided as it is scattered much more than red / yellow light.
 - viii) Lights should be turned off when not needed.
 - ix) All commercial lighting scheme proposals should be professionally assessed for minimum lighting levels, propagation directionality, scatter and light trespass.
 - x) All lighting installations should be assessed when installed, and lighting levels measured.
- 7.2.40 The adverse effects of lighting can and should be mitigated by good design. The most effective measures include i) reducing the area of glazing; ii) creating deep window recesses; iii) forming large external overhangs; and iv) louvres. Despite occasional requests from LPAs for it to be specified in buildings, as far as we have been able to ascertain, (lighting expert Chris Baddiley was consulted about the matter), there are no glazing products available that reduce night-time light transmission, only those which reduce day-time glare (another important consideration in planning and design).
- 7.2.41 As noted in Section 5.10, light spillage can be highly disruptive to fauna such as bats and birds. An example of measures recommended by ecologists to avoid / minimise levels of adverse lighting effects arising from a single dwelling house in a semi-rural area is given below, as all these measures are relevant to other forms of development, and would also reduce levels of landscape and visual effects:
- *Any lighting for the proposed development will conform to Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) guidelines. The lighting will be sympathetic to the needs of roosting, foraging and commuting bats and other wildlife such as badgers. Barbastelle bat, lesser horseshoe bat and brown long-eared bat are particularly light averse.*
 - *The hedgerows, scrub and trees on the site boundaries will be left in complete darkness. This will also ensure that adjacent habitats are also not illuminated, e.g. the woodland to the east. However, if lighting is required for security only shrouded down lights will be used or lights will be positioned close to the ground on posts or bollards and directed downwards. The lights will be activated by a time sensor with a low movement sensitivity, so as not to be triggered by wildlife.*
 - *The following measures are recommended:*
 - *All external lighting to be on timer switches, so lights go off after 'X' seconds.*
 - *There will be no lighting near the boundary hedgerows, trees and shrubs as these are especially important for bat commuting/foraging.*
 - *Use high quality infra-red lighting where security cameras are to be installed rather than actual lighting.*
 - *As low a Lux level as possible.*
 - *All lighting on the proposed development site will support the Dark Skies initiative (DEFRA/NPPF Guidance 2013). It will be essential that lighting will not illuminate any adjacent habitats (e.g. woodland in the SSSI), retained and newly planted trees, shrubs and hedgerows on the site and new bat roosting habitat on the site (e.g. bat voids on the new house and bat boxes in the trees).*

- *A full and detailed lighting strategy will be produced which is sensitive to wildlife. This will ensure that ecologically sensitive areas are not illuminated.*

7.2.42 New legislation amending the NPPF will probably be necessary to truly protect England's dark skies and night-time landscapes. The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Dark Skies has produced a policy plan⁸³ which can deliver Dark Skies for future generations, a summary of which is produced below:

- Strengthen the NPPF: for the first time ever, make extensive specific reference to the control of obtrusive light in the framework.
- Expand the scope of the planning permission process: introduce regulations for exterior lighting that are similar to those which currently cover advertisements.
- Strengthen Statutory Nuisance Provisions: remove exemptions to give local authorities a more effective method of preventing nuisance lighting.
- Create a Commission for Dark Skies and councils to enforce regulations.
- Set standards for the brightness and colour temperature of lighting: establish legal limits to the amount of blue light that luminaires can have in their spectrum and encourage manufacturers, distributors and installers of lighting to adopt best practice in this area.
- Set standards for the direction and density of lighting: introduce a legal requirement that all lighting units are sold and distributed with instructions for the control of obtrusive light and dark skies-friendly mounting instructions and issue penalties for non-compliance.
- Create 'best practice' use for lighting: design a national program of best practice 'Dark Sky Hours' in which categories of lighting can be either dimmed or turned off completely in consultation with the community, lighting professionals and local police.
- Create incentives for dark sky preservation and educate about the effects of light pollution as part of wider climate change awareness.
- Appoint a 'Minister for Dark Skies with the remit to control and prevent light pollution, as well as oversight of planning and environmental policies that concern dark skies.
- Create a 'Dark Sky Towns & Cities' initiative: give local government the power to go further to reduce light pollution by creating a voluntary 'Dark Sky Town/City'.

GEOLOGY

7.2.43 In future, the LGeoSs located in the area (Ledbury Tunnel Quarry, Knapp Lane Quarry, and Conigree Wood - Site 1) should be better known and enhanced to further protect both their geo- and biodiversity.

Approaches and Gateways

7.2.44 Each approach and gateway is different, reflecting its locality's natural, historic / cultural and social influences. The treatment and levels of quality of both vary from place to place. On the whole, they appear to be appropriate for their location and well-managed, although in some cases there is scope for improvement, for example at Gateway E, whether to the overall arrangement, or to the details.

7.2.45 This is especially the case at Gateway B: Full Pitcher Roundabout. It is in a highly important and visible location at an historic gateway to the town, and the presence of a new building here has the potential to significantly alter this gateway, for better or worse. Extra care needs to be taken with any future development in this vicinity to ensure that building design is appropriate for this location, especially in terms of its immediate association and relationship with a) other built form at

⁸³ <https://appgdarksdies.co.uk/policy-plan>

the roundabout / in close proximity, and b) its wider contextual landscape, in particular the neighbouring Riverside Park.

- 7.2.46 In principle, the design / treatment / management of all of the approaches and gateways should reflect and respect the character of their surrounding context. This is important, since as noted in Section 5.8, such features reflect key aspects of the host community's character - how Ledbury sees itself, and is, or wants to be, seen by others. With the exception of Gateways B and E where significant change is anticipated, the overall aim should be to maintain and / or enhance the existing quality of design and maintenance of Ledbury's gateways.

Significant Vegetation

- 7.2.47 Even though we are already tree-rich, many people would like to see more trees and shrubs, especially in the town centre, and plans are underway; there's always room for more!
- 7.2.48 However, while the presence of so many trees within the town is of great benefit, it is also true that trees can outgrow their space, and many of the mature trees in some of the public areas are species that can grow to a great size. It would be helpful perhaps to have a professional assessment / review of the trees within the town and consider where trees might be outgrowing the space and blocking too much light or even giving concerns about safety, and consider replanting with more suitable species.
- 7.2.49 This is also true of any new planting, and it would be good to ensure that not only is it 'the right tree in the right place' - especially in terms of landscape and settlement character - but that we have as wide a range of trees and shrubs as possible to provide year round interest with flowering and fruiting, leaf colour, shape and size, and certainly habitat for birds, pollinators and other wilder inhabitants of the town. Resilience to future climate change and pests / diseases is also an important factor in the selection of species for the future (see below).
- 7.2.50 An interesting community project / initiative would be to carry out surveys of trees in the town and parish, noting species, approximate ages, condition, and what they contribute to amenity / character / biodiversity and so on. Any ancient / veteran / notable trees spotted could be added to the Ancient Tree Inventory if not already on it; it is extremely likely that there are many trees which are special but not in the previous categories - these could be recorded; and, if there are trees which are not covered by a TPO but are good candidates, this could be brought to the attention of LTC's tree warden / LPA for further consideration.
- 7.2.51 For the purpose of this assessment, LTC's tree warden made enquiries to HC about the existence of a publicly accessible record listing the location and descriptions of all trees covered by TPOs. HC's Ecology and Arboricultural Officer explained that there is no comprehensive list available, and any details held on individual TPO trees would have to be individually requested and researched, and a GDPR redacted copy produced. This can be done but obviously would be very time consuming for all concerned and if there were more than one, they would need to charge.
- 7.2.52 Therefore, the only realistic way of LTC / others compiling information on TPO trees in the parish is to use HC's online map, which gives the location of the tree / trees and in some but not all cases, the species and perhaps some very brief description. LTC's tree warden has started off this process and has transcribed what she can find from the map, but has not had the time to visit all the trees to enlarge upon it. This is a project in itself, and maybe one to undertake in the future. In the meantime, the tree warden could write up the list as far as it goes (see Appendix H Ledbury TPO Summary), maybe with a view to such a project, or for people to investigate themselves if they are interested.
- 7.2.53 As noted in Section 5.9, some of Ledbury's trees are reaching the ends of their useful lives. Factors include old age, damage, pests and diseases. There is evidence of ongoing field boundary hedgerow removal. In many areas, the loss of tree / hedgerow cover would result in highly noticeable changes to both local and wider landscape character, and to views / visual amenity.

- 7.2.54 A striking example of how changes to the presence / absence of trees can affect character and views is the loss of British native elm trees to Dutch elm disease, which began its devastating spread in the 1970s. In Worcestershire, elm was widely planted throughout the medieval period and through to the 20th century, mainly in hedgerows but allowed to escape. The tree's distinctive scalloped outline was a highly important local landscape characteristic, but few remember that now. (Interestingly, there is a fine mature elm tree growing outside the Bluebell pub in Barnard's green, but it is an ornamental variety.)
- 7.2.55 Old photographs and postcards illustrate how the character and visual amenity of the Ledbury area has changed in the last couple of centuries, depending on the presence / absence of tree cover. One example is a view of the church bell tower drawn in the 1670s, which is now screened by a large yew tree growing in front of it (in fact, conifers in the vicinity now screen many once-fine views from several directions).

THEN & NOW PHOTO/S SHOWING DIFFERENCES IN AMOUNTS OF TREE COVER

- 7.2.56 Traditional orchards in particular are in rapid decline. These are highly important and characteristic historic landscape features in the local area, as well as being of significant value for their wildlife potential. Conservation of these habitats is especially important for biodiversity due to the maturity of the trees and wood decay within them. Furthermore, active management is crucial for their long-term survival. It would be an excellent project to revive or recreate one / some of these orchards in the parish as the Colwall Orchards project has done. Herefordshire's *Traditional Orchard Habitat Action Plan* is a good source of reference for this, and both HC and the Malvern Hills AONB Unit should be contacted for advice including sources of funding (developer contributions could be feasible).
- 7.2.57 Another worthwhile project, perhaps in conjunction with looking at existing and new hedges in the parish (as yet not surveyed), would be reviving the presence of damsons (and possibly other fruit trees) as hedgerow trees, with benefits for landscape character, visual amenity, and biodiversity.
- 7.2.58 Most importantly, there is no certainty that any of the existing vegetation will remain in place in the short-term, let alone the long-term future. Old age, deliberate (authorised / unauthorised) removal, pests, diseases, pollution and accidents can result in its decline and loss - the native trees and hedges in particular are highly vulnerable to change. There are currently concerns about the potentially devastating effects of acute oak decline and oak processionary moth, ash dieback, horse chestnut canker, the Asian longhorn beetle and *Phytophthora* amongst others.
- 7.2.59 Regarding Ash dieback, which as noted in Section 5.9 could potentially have a significant impact on trees not just within the parish but throughout the country, the Tree Council has prepared some detailed guidance for local authorities entitled *Ash dieback: an Action Plan Toolkit* and it is to be recommended. It covers all aspects of good practice concerning the management of ash trees relating to ash dieback disease, but, as importantly, addresses the issue of considering the future and strategies for replacing ash as an important tree in the landscape.
- 7.2.60 Forest Research's current position⁸⁴ is that '*there is no technical case and no purpose to retaining national measures against ash dieback. There is much more benefit to be gained from lifting the restrictions, so that tolerant ash trees can be bred, moved and planted*'.
- 7.2.61 Lists of species which are characteristic to different parts of Ledbury and resilient to climate change, disease and so on could be drawn up for future use by LTC / developers and others.
- 7.2.62 An example of a tree species which is usually considered problematic but which may in future be a deliberate and strategic replacement for ash / other native trees in future is sycamore. It is not a native tree, having been introduced to Britain in the Middle Ages from Europe, but it is now

⁸⁴ <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/fthr/pest-and-disease-resources/ash-dieback-hymenoscyphus-fraxineus/>

naturalised. It spreads and colonised very rapidly, to the point where it can successfully invade and dominate ancient woodlands at the expense of other species, thus reducing biodiversity; nor does it support as many faunal / floral species as other trees which have been present in the landscape for much longer. However, due to climate change and tree pests and diseases in native species, it may be necessary to tolerate sycamore up to a point. On the Malvern Hills, sycamore is amongst the species growing freely on the wooded hillslopes; MHT was consulted about their opinion on this and the response was that a decision had been taken that it would be allowed to remain, although the situation would be monitored over time.

- 7.2.63 An important point to note, perhaps in the NDP, is that for the reasons set out in this report, it is not advisable to rely on vegetation to screen views; and furthermore, if the NPPF's aim of increasing levels of quality of built form and making our environments 'beautiful', then it should not be necessary to hide a development from view because it is ugly.
- 7.2.64 As noted in Section 5.9, historic descriptions of parish and other boundaries made use of distinctive landscape features such as pollarded or otherwise recognisable trees. This suggests another potential project, which would be locating existing trees, or planting them, as boundary marker trees around the perimeter of the parish, and perhaps even revive the tradition of beating the parish bounds once a year!

Heritage

- 7.2.65 Local interest in Ledbury's history and cultural heritage has grown significantly in the last couple of years. This is almost certainly due to the community's input into a) the LVBA process, and b) the public inquiry for the viaduct site. The studies carried out for both purposes revealed enormous amounts of not just very interesting, but also highly significant information about the town and parish's past, the people who lived here, and why and how Ledbury is how it is today. Now, the high quality, value and beauty of the features and factors which make Ledbury's character and visual amenity so unique and distinctive - individually and in-combination - is better understood and appreciated, and there is a greater desire than ever before to ensure their long-term protection for the benefit of successive generations.
- 7.2.66 Importantly, whilst a good proportion of the large number of heritage assets in the town and surrounding countryside are nationally-designated and / or listed in the HER, many are not. This is no doubt in part due to them not having previously been identified, and / or their importance not recognised.
- 7.2.67 Given the importance of heritage not only to Ledbury and its people's sense of place but also the local economy, this is a good time to celebrate, protect and enhance the heritage assets which are of high local value as well.
- 7.2.68 There are some unlisted buildings in the town centre which make highly important contributions to character, visual amenity and our understanding of the past, which would benefit from some form of protection, for example inclusion on a local list:
- i. The Butcher Row House in Church Lane.
 - ii. Another part-survival of a Butcher Row house in Skippe Alley.
- 7.2.69 It is possible that some buildings are not listed because most listings in the town were made in the 1950s, long before the buildings were recognised as being important to the town's history; also, many were only renovated in / after the 1970s.
- 7.2.70 Within the AONB, Ledbury Park (also New House Park / Ledbury Deer Park) is one of the parish's most notable designed landscapes, and is of 13th century origin (possibly c. 1232). It currently comprises a green area of parkland plus a few fields. A site visit to Ledbury Park a quarter of a century ago revealed indications of historic agricultural activity and the remains of parkland features including a 'delicate' stone wall, which may no longer be standing. A further visit should be

made to update what now remains. Much of the woodland of coniferous, which is of lower quality and value than the other native broadleaved and ancient woodlands in the vicinity.

- 7.2.71 Other ways in which the community could celebrate and protect their heritage include: carrying out further research projects - perhaps in collaboration with local schools and interest groups; creating and publicising heritage trails around the town and parish; and designing / installing interpretation boards / other features along routeways, to explain / highlight key historic features.
- 7.2.72 Attempts to obtain HC's HLC data have proved unsuccessful so far, so the information has not been included or factored in to the LVBA. If it does become available in future, it should be incorporated into the LVBA / other assessment.

Biodiversity

- 7.2.73 All species of flora and fauna need a habitat that provides food, water and shelter. Obviously, some habitats are not going to be available to or suitable for certain species because of factors which may include land use, disturbance, and underlying geology - for example, as far as we have been able to ascertain, no adders have been recorded in the Ledbury area but are common on the Malvern Hills as they prefer habitats associated with acidic soils; lime-loving plants are scarce in Ledbury too.
- 7.2.74 Inevitably, erosion and loss of habitats such as woodlands, hedgerows, orchards, ponds and unimproved grasslands have resulted in the essential connectivity between them being broken in places. These are also highly valuable elements and features in the landscape; their erosion and loss lead to adverse effects on landscape character and visual amenity. However, many of these features and habitats could easily be restored (see also recommendations under Significant Vegetation heading above).
- 7.2.75 There are many farms in the parish, including a few near to / almost subsumed by the outskirts of the town, and over 4500 houses, the majority with gardens: these are important wildlife habitats, stepping stones and corridors, and where meaningful and valuable improvements in habitat can be made.
- 7.2.76 In fact, the ongoing widespread decline in environmental health and biodiversity generally has resulted in the UK's gardens becoming a highly valuable resource and refuge for numerous plant and animal species, some of which are at risk of extinction. The diversity of habitats and the densely-layered planting often found in gardens mimic what happens naturally in the wild, so, when resources in the wild dry up, wildlife can find succour in gardens. Complexity is the key to success.
- 7.2.77 What has become evident in recent years is that interacting with nature significantly benefits our mental and physical health and well-being, and gardening for / with wildlife is a great way of realising these benefits. This became clear to many people during the C-19 pandemic, resulting in more interest in what exists / happens in one's own back-yard, and a much deeper understanding of what is valuable and why.
- 7.2.78 Having said that, one cannot compare the species richness of domestic gardens with that of ancient woodlands or extensive wetlands, for example. The biodiversity of gardens compares well with farmland (which covers some 70 per cent of the entire country) simply because where intensively-cultivated / not well-managed, the latter is usually species-poor and of low abundance.
- 7.2.79 The matters of greatest importance and most relevance, especially for gardeners and farmers, are these:

AVOID PESTICIDES, INSECTICIDES AND TOXIC CHEMICALS

- o The food chains for so many species depend upon the small invertebrates that will flourish if allowed.

- o Organically-produced fruit and veg are so much better for human and environmental health. Clean soil, water and air are prerequisites for survival.

PROVIDE WATER

- o Use any size and design of container that will hold water - kept clean it will attract a whole range of species.
- o Safety is always a factor to consider, but ideally still ponds / pools should be deep in the middle with shallow sides / beaches.
- o Aquatic / semi-aquatic / marginal plants and oxygenators should be selected on the basis of the amount of space available, the nature of the site and surrounding area, the nature of the feature and future management / maintenance.
- o A wide variety of habitats should be allowed to establish. Even small pools of water soon attract and provide a haven for frogs, newts, dragonflies and damselflies.
- o Natural water courses should be left open and not closed / culverted.
- o The River Leadon is a valuable source for the various species around the Riverside Park and is home to otters, but levels of water quality are currently a grave concern (see hydrology).

PROVIDE FOOD

- o Install / hang bird feeders in the garden to supply food in the winter months (and for year-round entertainment!).
- o To gardeners, a good compost heap is worth its weight in gold, and is an excellent habitat for both micro- and macro species - hedgehogs will love helping themselves to the worms.
- o Flowers that have seed heads will attract goldfinches and bluetits. Butterflies, bees and other insects will love the flowers also. Shrubs with fruit / berries will serve the larger birds like blackbirds and thrushes.

PROVIDE SHELTER

- o Hedges are highly valuable ecological features, being the preferred habitat for so many species because of the food they offer, the shelter they provide from rain, snow and wind, and the protection they give from predators. Older hedges are almost always more biodiverse than recently-planted ones - hedge-bottom flora can be as important a habitat as the plants themselves. Try to interconnect hedgelines, new and old, as they are vital wildlife corridors.
- o Choose locally-characteristic hedging plants (native in most rural areas / on farms unless in gardens / historic parkland, for example, ornamentals usually appropriate in urban gardens) that flower in spring and develop berries for winter fodder, and evergreens / those which retain their leaves during the winter months such as holly, privet and beech.
- o Purpose-made shelters such as hedgehog houses and dormouse, bat and bird boxes will also provide homes for some of our native creatures. Refugia for reptiles / amphibians can be created by leaving a pile of clean rubble topped with soil and / or a piece of corrugated tin / old carpet in a garden corner. Leave lawns long, mowing paths through them if needs be - you may be amazed and delighted by the variety of flora and fauna which suddenly appear! Trees make a great habitat for many species and provide food, shelter and roosting sites for bats, the older the better. It is also good to leave deadwood standing, felled and / or stacked in log piles, which helps insects, fungi and lichen to develop. Even piles of small sticks left to rot are ideal.

- 7.2.80 Planning applications for future development should normally include an ecological survey in accordance with best practice (esp. BS 42020:2013 Biodiversity: Code of practice for planning and development or later version). However, such surveys are also useful at earlier stages, as they can be used determine levels of ecological sensitivity / capacity. Importantly, ecology surveys should

consider connectivity, and the potential for remedying indirect adverse effects on the wider landscape and well as on the area / site in question.

- 7.2.81 Another recommendation is therefore to carry out ecological surveys of areas which are currently undesignated / unprotected, particularly the River Leadon and areas in public ownership, including Dog Hill Wood, the Town Trail and the Riverside Walk and the larger public green spaces.
- 7.2.82 Improvements to these and other areas could be made easily through sensitive management.
- 7.2.83 Currently, small pockets of land within the town are being managed for wildlife by Ledbury Naturalists. These could be extended, particularly to the large housing estates at Deer Park and New Mills, which both have a number of green spaces.

NATURE RECOVERY NETWORK STRATEGY / BIODIVERSITY NET GAINS

- 7.2.84 ### TBC v3

ROAD VERGES, HEDGES AND LOCAL GREEN SPACES

- 7.2.85 Road verges can also make important contributions to biodiversity (in particular when associated with hedge-bottoms).
- 7.2.86 Here, it is worth mentioning the growing interest in managing road verges for wildlife. For example, there is an initiative in the county led by our local voluntary group Verging On Wild (VOW) to locate and manage all the verges with existing special flora. The wider aim is to encourage HC to develop and adopt a general verges management policy that maximises the flowering potential of all road verges in the county.
- 7.2.87 In 2021 following the recommendations of national champions for native wildflowers Plantlife, VOW will be carrying out surveys of verges in the parish and recruiting local volunteers to help with surveying and managing any special verges we find, or wish to improve.
- 7.2.88 These initiatives could potentially form the basis for an NDP policy, the aim of which would be to ensure that future development does not result in loss of or damage to high-value verges, and if it does, that any damage is made good and loss is appropriately compensated for. New development should also include species-rich verges wherever possible, using locally-appropriate / characteristic and locally-sourced species mixtures.
- 7.2.89 Likewise, there are plans to include hedges in this initiative, but this is not yet underway.
- 7.2.90 A recommendation would be to encourage local organisations (including Plantlife, HWT, LTC and HC) to work together to survey and identify important hedges and verges in the neighbourhood with a view to making recommendations about enhancement, connectivity and protection.
- 7.2.91 Green spaces which are identified as being special to the community, and have been so for a long time (have longevity), and which cannot be covered by other forms of protection such as playing fields, amenity open space, play areas, should be considered for designation as LGS.

NATIONAL POLLINATOR STRATEGY

- 7.2.92 'B-lines' is an initiative by the national charity Buglife⁸⁵, which aims to create a network of unbroken pathways of flower-rich habitats for pollinators throughout the UK. This will be achieved by creating new habitats that will link existing but isolated important sites.

⁸⁵ <https://www.buglife.org.uk/our-work/b-lines/>

Public and Social Amenity

- 7.2.93 In the Core Strategy, Ledbury is scheduled to accommodate growth, with some 1,200 new homes required over the next decade alone; this represents a 20% increase. The growth is mainly planned north of the town, but there are already substantial residential developments being built and / or with planning permission granted south of the town.
- 7.2.94 This revision of the NDP, alongside the policies of the Core Strategy, aims to achieve a balance between growth in the number of houses and the high susceptibility to change and high value of many of Ledbury's natural, cultural and visual assets, including its setting. Also, this revision of the NDP aims to help mitigate the effects of housing growth through the provision of more employment land and new community infrastructure, and by protecting, preserving and creating much needed new and accessible green spaces, sports and outdoor play areas (an integral part of a healthy multifunctional GI network), and protecting and enhancing the town's rural setting.
- 7.2.95 The Public and Social Amenity section (5.15) of the LVBA describes this setting and identifies opportunities for increasing green space, leading to these recommendations for new and improved GI amenities

SPORT AND ACTIVITY

- 7.2.96 There are two sport and activity recommendations – one for the provision of a modern and combined senior and junior football facility to the south of the Little Marcle Road, the other for play areas.
- 7.2.97 As set out in Section 5.15, in terms of sports provision / facilities, Ledbury is recognised as having a dire shortage of football club grounds despite there being two very active and successful clubs in the town. The long-established adult team Ledbury Town Football Club resides on a very old site within the existing built-up area with antiquated facilities and which is owned by a property company keen to develop the site for housing, but with an obligation to fund like-for-like facilities on a new site. The junior Swifts club currently shares increasingly-stretched facilities with the Rugby Club.
- 7.2.98 The recommendations for resolving these and other associated sports-related issues are subject to the findings of the LVSA which will be carried out in due course; however, the preliminary studies indicate that the land south of Little Marcle Road is likely to have the landscape and visual capacity to accommodate the type of sporting facilities which are required. In the event that it does, it is recommended that outline plans and current negotiations to provide a new combined football facility on land to the south of Little Marcle Road, now as consulted upon with residents in the public consultation with strong majority public support, should now be brought to a conclusion where the land size and location coordinates can be agreed with the landowner, the value formally appraised and the land acquired at the earliest possibility.
- 7.2.99 The Open Space report recommended a review of the provision of play areas. In order to bring about a better balance of provision across the town for different age groups, it is recommended that this is now conducted, taking into account the feedback on the agreed need from the public consultation exercises, and carrying out LVSA's as and when considered necessary (in the event that there are high-value features / factors that could potentially either be adversely affected, or could offer opportunities for the areas' design / use).
- 7.2.100 The review should include identifying ways to encourage wider use of the play area facilities by overcoming the main barriers to use of play provision, these mainly being dog-fouling, vandalism, and people's perception of not feeling safe when using the sites. The review should include recommendations for improved security of play areas, such as through the introduction of CCTV or staff presence and expanding signage on all sites with site details and contact numbers. In addition, the play areas should be designed and maintained as part of Ledbury's wider multi-functional GI

network, maintaining existing and / or creating new links (for people and wildlife) to and from this wherever possible.

ACTIVE TRAVEL

7.2.101 Key footpath improvements, reinstatements and / or potential new footpaths identified are shown on Figures 13A and 13B - LVBA Recommendations. They include:

- i) Making the current narrow footpath and pavement which is currently inaccessible to other than the most sure-of-foot, from the Southend in Ledbury to the centre of Parkway, to then connect to footpaths going south and into neighbouring parishes (in line with the aims of the Local Plan), including Dymock with its historic Poets Paths, the wider Gloucestershire countryside and beyond. This would provide a much-needed and safe cycle and walking route between the town and the hamlet.
- ii) Providing a long-desired safe cycle and walking route from Wellington Heath into Ledbury. Explored as a project and options documented in a 2016 PowerPoint presentation entitled *Ledbury Town Council for Wellington Heath NDP ideas for a safe route to Ledbury 2016*. Initiative strongly supported by the Malvern Hills AONB Unit, who have consulted and been consulted about the proposal. A copy of the presentation is attached as Appendix I.
- iii) There has long been an aspiration to reinstate the ancient footpath by extending LR6 coming out from the east onto the Dymock Road north of Highbridge Farm to skirt Highbridge Coppice and meet Orlham Lane with a bridge across the River Leadon. This would increase connectivity in the area and is recommended since it could connect with LR37 on the other side of the River Leadon - thus re-creating an important connecting link into north Gloucestershire and beyond and which used to be an important route for workers coming into Ledbury. This was long championed by the late local paths historian and map producer Barbara Davis, and in whose honour the new path is proposed to be named as 'The Barbara Davis Memorial Path'.
- iv) In 2020 Balfour Beatty issued a Definitive Map Modification Order ref M393 to add footpath LR39 (Ledbury Rural) to the south of Highbridge Farm, going south west to enter into Donnington and become DN8 and then stop at the River Leadon. This does not address the need to connect in this westerly direction into Gloucestershire, so the aspiration to do so by building another new bridge logically at the end of DN8 to achieve a connection to LR37 is also recommended (see Appendix J Definitive Map Modification Order).
- v) Widening ZB2 from its western end as it crosses the Lower Road Trading Estate road until it joins with ZB1 at the River Leadon. It is an important part of the Herefordshire Trail, but at this point it is very narrow and overgrown, passing between a hedge and a factory fence, making it impossible to be used for a cycle route and difficult for walkers.
- vi) ZB2 then crosses the by-pass to go over the River Leadon to connect with LR10, continuing west along the Herefordshire Trail and LR11 going north up to the Hereford Road. Provision of safe crossing / traffic calming measures for ZB2 across the by-pass at this point onto LR10 is also recommended, given its importance to the Herefordshire Trail.
- vii) It would be logical and it is recommended to re-route LR11 onto the Ledbury Riverside Park (also known as the River Park, and basically in 3 sections: Riverside Walk from the Hereford Road roundabout to the Homebase roundabout; Weir Gardens from the Homebase roundabout to the Little Marcle Road, and Riverside Park from the Little Marcle Road to the Ross Road roundabout) and add a southern section so that it extends the full distance of the Ledbury Riverside Park. This would confer a very high amenity value onto LR11.
- viii) This change and addition would have the important advantages of further preserving and protecting the Ledbury Riverside Park from development (as noted as being important in Appendix E) and also provide active travel connections to LR12 and LR8 which go respectively

west and south into the land south of the Little Marcle Road, which could eventually become home to new employment and sporting facilities. This would extend active travel routes beyond the already well-used paths in both directions. The change would also link the extended LR11 to ZB6 and ZB20, providing active travel routes north west back towards the town and south east to the Ross Road roundabout.

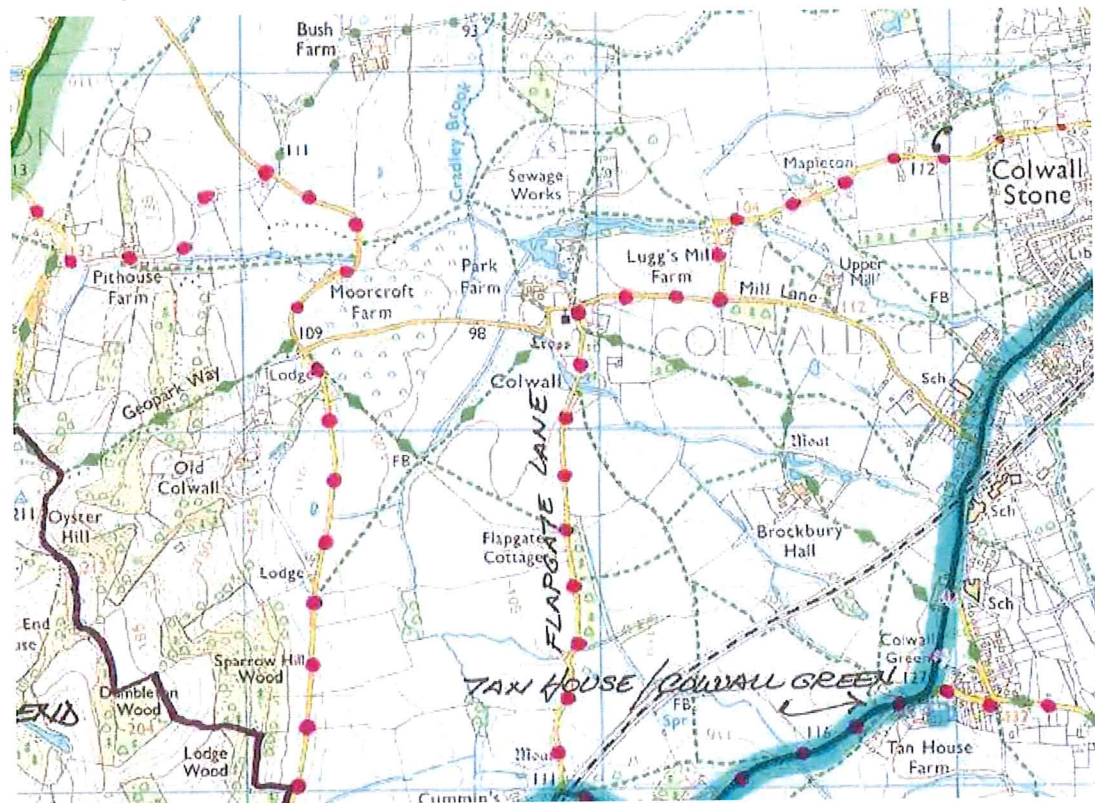
- ix) A very important and urgent recommendation, and particularly if the LR11 re-routing recommendation is implemented, but still necessary if not, is to install a cycling / mobility scooter / pushchair ramp to be built alongside the current steep steps up the bank from the Weir Gardens onto the Little Marcle Road roundabout, which presently make it impossible for continuous access along the whole Ledbury Riverside Park route for these potential path users.
- x) It is also an essential element in any future plan to implement the active cycling and walking route along the future towpath line of the to-be-reinstated Herefordshire and Gloucestershire canal, from Staplow in the north, via Ledbury to Dymock and Newent to the south, and which would pass through the Riverside Park.
- xi) A further important element of this re-designed PRow routing would be to protect the line of footpath ZB1 going south across current wasteland designated for employment development to ensure the connections to each end of the path remain in place and in particular, leading into Childer Road and from there to the Lower Road town and by-pass access road.
- xii) It is further recommended that the integrity of LR35, which currently goes across the old cricket club ground which is earmarked for affordable housing development, is protected, since it is an important link between the Full Pitcher / Ross Road roundabout and the by-pass / new cycle and walk ways installed as part of the Barratts' development, and has important town access links with ZB12 and ZB11.
- xiii) Although Green Lane, which marks the eastern boundary of Dog Hill Wood, is not a designated PRow, it could be incorporated into LR24 as a designated bridleway for continued connectivity.
- xiv) There is a good route through the northern edge of Hospital Wood which is not a designated PRow, but it would be good if it could be designated as it would connect EA1 to LR6.
- xv) Footpath LR7 crosses the by-pass below the Gloucester Road roundabout and enters a field which already has development permission. Traffic calming measures of some kind across the bypass are recommended for the well-used LR7. It is also important that LR7's integrity is maintained through the NDP since this footpath also provides connectivity out to Donnington, across to Eastnor and up to the Malvern Hills, so is an important footpath with high amenity value.
- xvi) The proposed development by Bovis / Vistry south of Leadon Way includes a new footpath link from their POS (south of the new estate) to the adjacent FP LR7. This would be of benefit to the new residents, as they would have direct access open countryside from that point; however, it appears that the proposed link would have to be over private / 3rd party land. It is not clear whether this proposal could be secured eg by way of conditions, or whether it is just an indicative 'aspiration'. This needs to be clarified / dealt with.
- xvii) LSCA Area 8 (see LSCA Area schedules for Public and Social Amenity in Appendix E) is a narrow but very important and effective east - west green corridor between the town's southern edge and Leadon Way. It is recommended that in future, it should be formally designated as a LGS (see below). The land is crossed by a public footpath, otherwise there is no public access, although there is evidence of regular informal recreational use in the area (mainly people walking).
- xviii) Until recently it was conceived that a new east - west PRow through the area could be created, potentially linking to the public footpath that runs from the north side of the Full Pitcher

roundabout to the town centre and also across the bypass onto the Ledbury Riverside Walk and the footpath up the Ross Road to the sports fields. However, with the building of a new residential care building to the west of Martin's Way, this continuous connecting path concept going further west is not now possible. So alternatively, it is recommended that the preservation of a green space area either side of the by-pass for a future active travel bridge to allow for a new active travel route between the current Barratts and planned Bovis developments to then allow active travel connections east and west behind these developments is preserved and allowed for, reflecting the Enhanced Green Infrastructure policies in the revised NDP which will then provide a viable alternative way to connect down to the Dymock Road and then onto the Ross Road to allow footpath access to the sports fields, to the Ledbury Riverside Trail, and to the route of the proposed new tow path.

- 7.2.102 Ledbury Town Council is very aware that the definitive map of footpaths in Herefordshire is currently being drawn up, with a view to completing the final version by 1st January 2026. The background to this is summarised below, but given what is in neighbourhood planning terms a tight deadline, it is considered very important that the above and other aspirations are documented for exploration in the lifetime of the revision of the Ledbury NDP which is now being undertaken.
- 7.2.103 The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 required every county council in England and Wales to survey their area and publish a Definitive Map and Statement (DMS) of PRsoW. The Definitive Map and Statement is the conclusive legal record of the PRsoW in the county. This means that if a route is shown on the DMS, it is conclusive proof that that route is a public right of way which the public are entitled to use.
- 7.2.104 The Definitive Map shows the position and status of each PRoW, while the accompanying statement is a list describing its location. It may also include additional information on widths and whether there are any gates or stiles across a route. The council has a legal duty to keep all of the PRsoW shown in the DMS open and available for the public to use. Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, councils are required to keep their DMSs under continuous review to incorporate changes made through legal orders such as diversions and modifications.
- 7.2.105 The information on the Definitive Map is used by Ordnance Survey to show PRsoW on their maps. However, their maps also show some non-definitive paths, and as a result, OS maps should not be used as a substitute for the legal record of PRsoW. The CROW Act 2000 introduced a provision for a cut-off date of 1st January 2026 for the recording of historic rights of way.
- 7.2.106 This was seen as an opportunity to bring more certainty for the public and landowners alike as to what and where the recorded PRsoW are. The cut-off date will have the effect of extinguishing certain routes not recorded on the Definitive Map by the deadline. The intention of the legislation is to prevent any claim being successfully made for the addition of a way to the Definitive Map after 1st January 2026 if the claim is solely based on documentary evidence that the rights existed before 1949.
- 7.2.107 Other initiatives for safe active travel options, including walking and cycling routes, that the NDP working party has been asked to review if possible in its recreation content considerations (bearing in mind that as a revision intended to be produced in a short time scale, it may not be practical to reflect them in detail in this plan, in which case they would be recommended for fuller consideration in the next version), include:
 - i) The Quiet Lanes legislation documented in The Quiet Lanes and Home Zones (England) Regulations 2006 and for which the CPRE publication *Quiet Lanes* (September 2006) is a comprehensive implementation guide.
 - ii) The Slow Ways project – an ambitious project led by National Geographic Explorer to recruit an army of 500 volunteers to create the most comprehensive network of walking routes in Great Britain.

- iii) The Ramblers' Association Lost Ways or Forgotten Paths project to identify and protect if possible, many past, but now 'forgotten' paths that may be lost for ever given the Definitive Map inclusion cut-off date.
- iv) Creating new connections between existing published cycle routes. This would require collaboration between LTC and neighbouring parishes / other stakeholders, but it would be of mutual economic and social benefit, and would help achieve the aim of transport being as sustainable as possible in future. One example is creating predominantly off-road cycle routes (for all types of cycles and abilities) between Ledbury and the Malvern Hills. In Ledbury, the cycle routes would link directly to the cycleway along the canal towpath when created. A new canal visitor / Ledbury cycle centre could be created in advance of the canal being fully restored as well, on land near to the canal south west of the Full Pitcher roundabout.
- v) Another example is a short connection along a lane in Colwall parish (Old Colwall, near the church of St James the Great that would link two routes both of which join well-used routes leading to / from / through Ledbury (see plan below) - the red dots are existing published cycle routes, the blue line is the boundary between Ledbury and Colwall parishes. Ledbury lies c. 5km to the south east of the lane.

Potential cycle route link (Colwall parish)



LOCAL OPEN GREENSPACE NEEDS / DESIGNATED LOCAL GREEN SPACES

- 7.2.108 As noted previously, whether or not the Government's currently-proposed planning reforms are adopted, this NDP revision aims to encompass local greenspace needs as a guide for later versions of the NDP to cover in more detail, but with existing and new greenspace areas, including any designated LGSS, being recognised and outlined in this version.
- 7.2.109 LSCA Area 8 (see LSCA Area schedules for Public and Social Amenity in Appendix E) is a very important and effective east - west green corridor, of value to wildlife and which also acts as a noise buffer between the Ledbury by-pass and the Deer Park estate. It is mainly privately-owned, but

such is its importance to locals it is recommended that it should be better protected (particularly the western end) through an LGS designation, and if not, recognised and protected by another form of policy in the NDP. See also recommendations for footpaths above.

- 7.2.110 Other potential LGS candidates include the Town Trail, Riverside Park, the walled garden, churchyard, the unregistered parklands, and in future, potentially, the canal towpath active travel route.
- 7.2.111 It is recommended that LSCA Area 14 to the north of the boundary of the proposed Bloor viaduct site development is designated as an Enhanced Green Infrastructure area. It is also an ideal site for the location of an allotment area which would be an extension of the current one just outside Ledbury Parish to the north east of the Bosbury Road, going into the area south west of the Bosbury Road which is in Ledbury Parish.
- 7.2.112 As a matter of principle, all greenspaces should be designed and maintained as part of Ledbury's wider multi-functional GI network, maintaining existing and / or creating new links (for people and wildlife) to and from this wherever possible.

Green Infrastructure

- 7.2.113 The aspiration is to build on HC's GI strategy, in particular, by identifying the key gaps in the parish's GI network / provision, including the areas / assets / functions which are subject to additional pressures due to climate change such as the river catchment. Ideally, such a network will serve the whole parish and be unfragmented, encircling Ledbury, based on existing natural features as far as possible and connecting into the county-wide network and beyond into Worcestershire and Gloucestershire.
- 7.2.114 A policy should be included in the NDP supporting measures and a plan to identify and improve the connectivity and capacity of local GI. This should be used to influence the revision to Herefordshire's Core Strategy.
- 7.2.115 Specific enhancement to the GI network and GI functions could include the following:

CREATING CONNECTIVITY

- 7.2.116 The fields to the south of the town, which now border the new housing development of Hawk Rise and the site to be developed by Vistry Homes, are a highly important and valuable GI link between the hills and the river. Although subject to change, this area provides many GI benefits, including landscape character, the setting of the AONB, the setting of the town, social and visual amenity, and wildlife habitats and corridors and other biodiversity.

GREEN GAPS

- 7.2.117 The settlements of Ledbury, Wellington Heath to the north and Parkway to the east are separated by good quality rural open countryside. Wellington Heath parish's adopted NDP has a policy to protect the gap in order to maintain the rural character of the area. This is particularly because a large area of land north of Ledbury and close to Wellington Heath (the viaduct site) will soon be intensively developed for housing and employment use. The area of Ledbury closest to Parkway is also subject to development pressure: this small settlement should be protected from coalescing with Ledbury by creating a policy-protected green gap here.

NEW DEVELOPMENT

- 7.2.118 New development can be an opportunity to enhance GI, particularly through creating better public access and connectivity. Where possible, new developments should be required to create a good GI infrastructure within the site and ensure it connects well to existing GI beyond, in accordance with other relevant policy and guidance. Developer contributions could be used to enhance GI within the town to help achieve this.

WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

- 7.2.119 Active water management at points north of the town (beyond the viaduct site), east of the town (managing flow from the local hills) and west in the floodplain of the River Leadon (see Biodiversity). This could take the form of ponds or water meadows and tree planting at strategic locations.

ACCESS TO GI RESOURCES

- 7.2.120 See also Public and Social Amenity. Measures should be put in place to support walking and cycling in the parish, including an audit of footpaths and identification of lost footpaths or sections of footpaths. This needs to be registered by 2026 (Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) if they are not to be lost forever.
- 7.2.121 Consider new cycle / pedestrian routes along major highways (the Hereford and Gloucester Roads have wide verges in some sections).
- 7.2.122 Better footpath links to nearby settlements of Wellington Heath and Parkway.
- 7.2.123 Projects to create pleasant areas in the town for people to sit and socialise or just sit – The Walled Garden provides this to the west of the town but the centre, east, north and south lack such spaces (the Millennium Garden, a 'pocket park' off Bye Street, is an exception). The Recreation Ground has a small area which is being managed for biodiversity – this could become such a space with a bit more landscaping and planting. The delayed landscaping project around the Master's House would be another such space.
- 7.2.124 Early establishment of the 'canalside' footpath / cycleway through the viaduct site and onwards towards Staplow and (via the Riverside Walk) to Dymock.
- 7.2.125 Work to better connect cycleways / footpaths / traffic free pathways throughout the town. Easy and attractive routes to the riverside park from the centre of town would be invaluable but these routes go through housing and industrial areas so will need to be carefully planned.
- 7.2.126 The entrances to Dog Hill Wood are inaccessible to buggies and those with limited mobility but once accessed Green Lane is a broad and attractive pedestrian route. A better laid access path from Church Road or some form of banister could be sensitively designed not to detract from the character of the pathway.

HABITATS FOR NATURE / SUPPORTING BIODIVERSITY

- 7.2.127 Encouragement and support is required for the management of public and private green spaces for biodiversity and nature. Sustainable Ledbury and Ledbury Naturalists are already working in this area, including on the Town Trail.
- 7.2.128 Ensure good working links with Plantlife and other groups championing hedgerow and verge management for biodiversity, and support for local groups who are working to improve the local environment (Ledbury in Bloom, Ledbury U3a Gardening Group, Herefordshire Wildlife Trust etc.) – encouraging communication and co-operation.
- 7.2.129 Keep abreast of national and regional initiatives and opportunities, for example Defra and Natural England '*are bringing together partners, legislation and funding to create the Nature Recovery Network. The NRN will be a national network of wildlife-rich places. Our aim is to expand, improve and connect these places across our towns, cities and countryside*⁸⁶.' This could potentially be used as the basis for neighbourhood-level initiatives as well.
- 7.2.130 Ensure that as far as possible (by monitoring and responding to planning applications) proposals for agricultural developments including polytunnels, intensive livestock units, solar farms and wind

⁸⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nature-recovery-network/nature-recovery-network>

farms do not visually detract from local and scenic beauty and character and will not harm the environment.

- 7.2.131 The Significant Vegetation recommendations include an audit of trees in the parish and in the town. In addition, new developments including housing, employment and leisure should include proposals to plant appropriate trees.

Views and Visual Amenity

- 7.2.132 The recommendations about not relying on vegetation to screen views set out in the recommendations for Significant Vegetation above are also relevant to views and visual amenity.

KEY VIEWS AND VIEW ROUTES

- 7.2.133 The LVBA identified two Exceptional key views. The first is from Marcle Ridge; however, the viewpoint lies outside the parish, and therefore it could not be included as an Exceptional VP in Ledbury's NDP, if such views were to be protected by policy in the future. The other exceptional view is from Bradlow Knoll. In addition, there are several Special views, especially those from viewpoints on the hills overlooking the town.
- 7.2.134 The majority of the key views feature Ledbury and / or the Malvern Hills as a focal point. Many have been categorised as Special and / or Representative, being good examples to use to show what kind of place Ledbury is: pretty compact and simply laid out. From the hills above the town you can see the straight line of the High Street; the river and the approach roads; and the landscape surrounding the settlement, appreciating the topographical constraints to the town's growth.
- 7.2.135 Because the most important focal points in the town are historic – the church spire and the Barrett Browning building for example - you can understand at a glance that this is an old town still dominated by its historic footprint: it hasn't been swamped by growth, but has grown organically. Also, the farming landscape and industrial buildings on the fringes of the town tell you this is a working landscape. These views make a highly important contribution to Ledbury's unique and very distinctive sense of place.
- 7.2.136 If new development is considered to be appropriate in a certain location but additional planting is found to be necessary to protect a key view, steps should be taken to try to incorporate this into the scheme layout and design, but subject to the previous comments about proposals being locally-appropriate, of maximum benefit to biodiversity, and the dangers of relying on vegetation as a screen.

NEW VIEWS

- 7.2.137 In some cases, high-quality views are screened by overgrown hedges and other vegetation. With landowner consent and subject to ecological assessment, selected vegetation could be removed / heights of hedges reduced, in order to allow, and perhaps frame, great views. Examples are at certain points along the eastern edge of Dog Hill Wood, and along the Hereford Road looking towards the viaduct.
- 7.2.138 The church steeple is a key focal point, as it has been for centuries; however, today, other tall but modern structures such as the UBL plant on the Little Marcle Road and brewery silos at Orchard Business Park on Bromyard Road, also draw the eye. They do not integrate at all well into their surroundings - in many views there is high colour contrast between the buildings and the darker background palette of wooded hills. Some Representative views could be Special if the industrial buildings in the foreground were improved. This could simply be a question of more appropriate choices of colours on surfaces, which could be determined through ECA - see landscape character recommendations above.

Carly Tinkler BA CMLI FRSA MIALE and the community of Ledbury ### date 2021

ENDPIECE: PHOTO / MAP / POEM / QUOTE?

**Ledbury Neighbourhood Development Plan
2021 –2031**

Working Draft

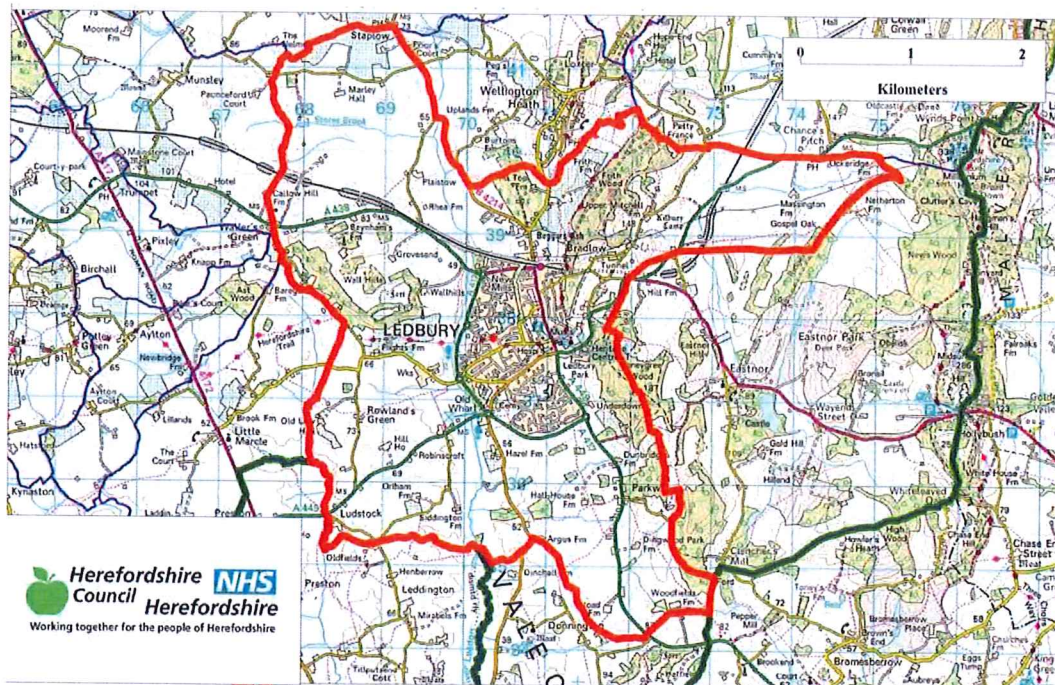
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Working Draft

MAP 1 – Ledbury Neighbourhood Development Plan Area



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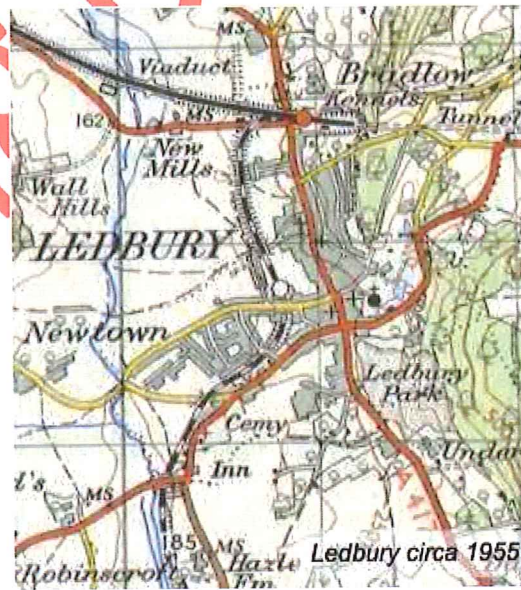
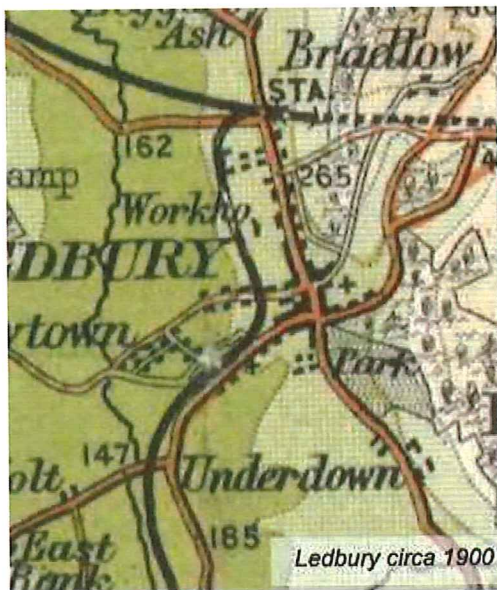
1. About Ledbury

Population

Ledbury is a market town with a population estimated to be 10,100¹ (source – Understanding Herefordshire, 2017) although this will have risen since that date through significant housing growth. It is a centre for some 20 parishes in Herefordshire, as well as several villages in neighbouring Gloucestershire and Worcestershire, making a catchment population using its services and facilities of over 20,000.

Historical Interest

Since its origins as an Anglo-Saxon settlement, Ledbury has been at the crossroads of trade routes between the Midlands and Mid and South Wales. Recognised as the gateway to Herefordshire and the Welsh Marches, it is a convenient stopover offering friendly hospitality and service. The town centre, originally formed in the 12th century, has developed around a core of 15th to 17th century buildings from the proceeds of the wool trade and to this day retains its medieval street pattern. These maps demonstrate the growth of Ledbury from a very small town reliant on agriculture in the early 20th century, to a small but prosperous town of traders. Walls Hill Camp Scheduled Ancient Monument sits within the Parish on the opposite side of the River Leadon overlooking the town.



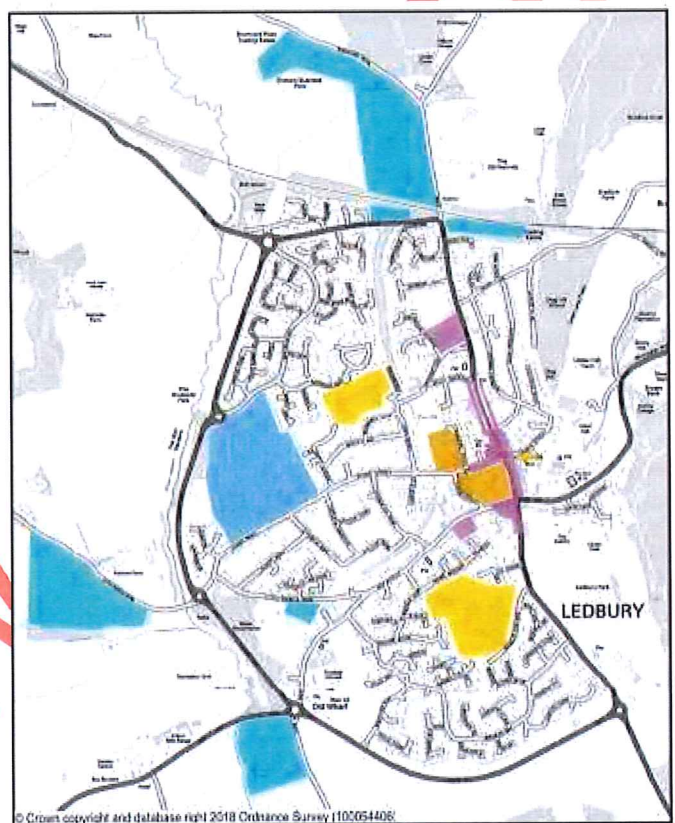
Source of maps: <http://maps.nls.uk/>

which holds events and festivals throughout the year and has excellent facilities for family celebrations. Although Ledbury is an hour's drive from Cheltenham racecourse, the town's hotels are much in demand during race meetings from visitors, owners and trainers. The Herefordshire Trail passes east-west through the Parish and town and the Geopark Way skirts its eastern edge. Ledbury has longstanding links with our armed forces and welcomes visits by the crew of HMS Ledbury, who were awarded the Freedom of the Town in 2011. There is a Tourist Information office in The Homend for information and maps of the area.

Shopping and Entertaining

The town is proud of its market, originally granted under a Charter by Queen Elizabeth 1 in 1584, and its thriving high street. Its independent shops feature local food, home interiors and clothing (modern and retro), as well as supporting general local needs. There are a number of specialist outlets tucked away in mews settings. Ledbury has some lovely pubs and a wide range of restaurants offering traditional British food and international menus. The Traders of Ledbury Association aims to promote independent shops and the economic prosperity of the town.

(Insert 1 photograph from current NDP)



Map 2—Major non-residential land uses in Ledbury

Land Uses	
Employment & Retail	Blue
Schools	Yellow
Other Community	Orange
Retail	Purple
Employment	Light Blue

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(From Current NDP – To be updated)

Housing

Ledbury Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 – 2031: Draft Version 1

Until the 1980s, the population was stable at around 3,500. In 1979 the bypass was built which led to sustained growth predominantly to the west of the town. The town has grown much larger since the Second World War and the 1970's in particular; building has extended along New Street and much of the building east of the Homend is post-war. The Langlands estate in the Homend was built in the 1960s and the quarter bounded by New Street, Gloucester Road and the bypass (called Deer Park—early 1980s) has been in-filled with well-spaced single and two-storey houses. Recent large developments include the New Mills estate (late 1990s) bordered by the bypass, Hereford Road and the disused Gloucester railway line, and an urban extension on the southern side of Leadon Way of some 400 dwellings. These comprise developments of high density 2, 3, 4 and 5-bedroomed houses. The average property price in Ledbury is the highest in the county. Ledbury has exceeded its Core Strategy housing requirement to a significant extent with new development at Hawk Rise, between Leadon Way and the Dymock Road, and new housing being built adjoining, also south of Leadon Way. Extensive further housing is planned north of the town at the viaduct site.

Ledbury is a popular place for people to retire to – 25% of the population is 65 and over, according to the 2011 Census – 4% more than the county average. Nearly a third of households (32.5%) consist of only one person, and many of these will be elderly people.

(Insert 1 photograph from current NDP)

Business

Although mainly agricultural, with growers supplying most major supermarkets and food outlets (both organic and mainstream) with plums, apples and pears, Ledbury also has a thriving light industrial base, with companies such as Amcor, Galebreaker, Ornua, Helping Hand, ABE, Heineken and Bevisol.

Ledbury has a flourishing town centre encompassing not only numerous (mainly independent) retail outlets and a twice weekly market, but also printers, accountants and solicitors. There are also health professionals such as dentists, osteopaths and physiotherapists.

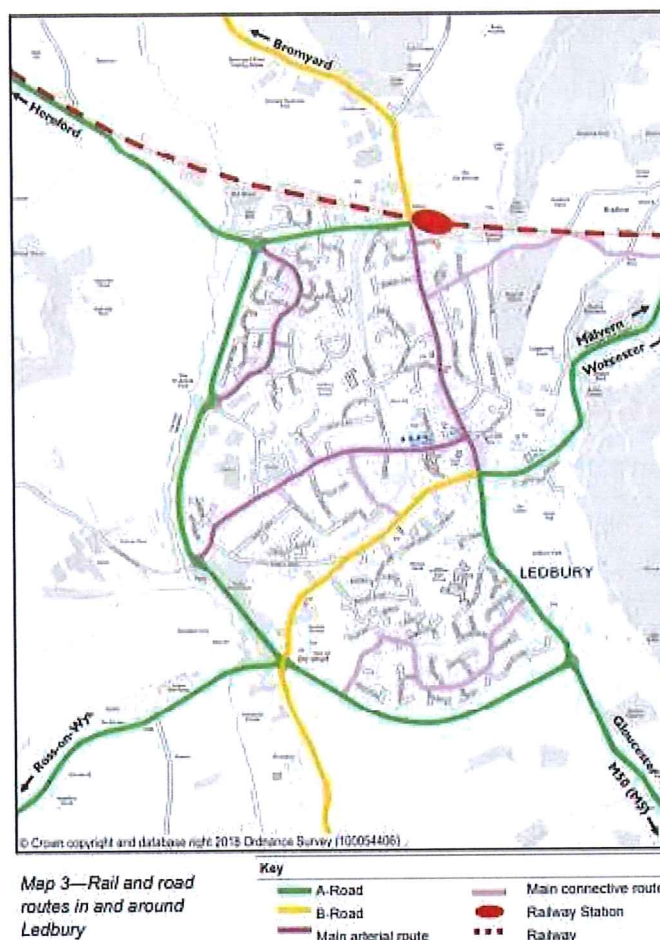
In addition, a short distance from the town centre are three busy trading estates containing various commercial outlets and light industry.

Herefordshire Core Strategy has identified a general location for new employment land to the west of the current built-up area, which will form the basis for new enterprises to develop and promote the prospect of new businesses opening or moving to the town. This will generate opportunities for future employment of the residents of the new housing estates to be built to the north and south of the town.

Travel

The town is bounded to the west and south by a bypass channelling traffic towards the M50 (5 miles away) which is the main strategic highway infrastructure provision for the region. All traffic to and from Malvern must pass through the historic town centre (including commercial, leisure and commuting). Ledbury has a railway station with regular services to Hereford, Malvern, Worcester and Birmingham. The town is fortunate to have a frequent service to London, which is an important connection for commuters wishing to travel within the region and further afield. Ledbury has bus services to and from Hereford, Gloucester

and other surrounding towns and cities. There is a daily return National Services Express coach service to London.



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(From current NDP)

Education

Ledbury Primary School (500 nursery and primary pupils) has academic achievement results above national levels. Pastorally it champions values-based education.

Once primary education has been completed, education continues at John Masefield High School and Sixth Form Centre (900 students) which has been rated "good" by Ofsted.

Both schools are successful and recognise there will be an increase in demand, with their preferred option to develop and improve their existing sites, rather than attempt to relocate.

John Masefield High School is an academy with specialist school status for performing arts, catering for 11-18 year olds of all abilities.

Through Lottery funding and former district council investment, the school has comprehensive sports facilities available to pupils during school hours and the rest of the community at other times. Private nursery education is also available in the local area.

(Insert 1 photograph from current NDP)

Services

The town has a Fire Station, Police Station, and rapid response Paramedic Service. There is a recycling centre in the town.

Religious services are held in the Parish Church of St. Michael & All Angels; the Baptist and Catholic Churches; and other denominations.

As of June 2021, two high street banks remain with branches for personal and business support, despite the rise in online banking.

Ledbury's two doctors' surgeries have recently combined to form a Health Partnership. There is a possibility that an integrated approach to health and care services may be developed to increase local services to the community.

(Insert 1 photograph from current NDP)

Community and Sport

Ledbury has a strong voluntary sector with over 120 local groups. These include general interest clubs, education classes and support groups to the less fortunate in the community. The volunteer resource needed to support such activity is likely to be extended by the continuing demands made upon it to make up for the withdrawal of services by Herefordshire Council. An admirable example of this effort is the volunteer-run Market Theatre which provides popular live shows and cinema for the community. Another success story is Ledbury in Bloom which achieved an eleventh consecutive Royal Horticultural Society gold award in the 2017 Britain in Bloom competition. Ledbury has successful rugby union, football, cricket, running, tennis, bowling and swimming clubs. In addition, the town has tennis courts, a bowling green and a Centenary Field recreation ground with a skateboard park, play equipment and various exercise facilities. It has an indoor swimming pool, reconstructed in 2016/17, and two leisure centres which run keep fit classes, including, yoga, kick boxing, and dancing.

(Insert 2 photographs from current NDP)

2. About Neighbourhood Planning

Background and Overarching Planning Policy

National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and associated Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) set out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

At the heart of the NPPF is the principle of sustainable development, which identifies three overarching objectives:

- An economic objective – to build a strong, responsive and competitive economy.
- A social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities.
- An environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.

These three overarching objectives are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives.

Localism Act 2011

The Localism Act of 2011 reformed the planning system to give residents of towns new rights to shape the development of the communities in which they live.

They include new freedoms and flexibilities for local government; new rights and powers for communities and individuals; reform to make the planning system more democratic and more effective, and reform to ensure that decisions about housing are taken locally. Ledbury Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) encompasses the use of land for all types of property development, including land use, design, density and affordability. It seeks to preserve those areas of land which are of benefit to the wider community, such as sites of historical interest, areas of natural beauty and community facilities.

The Influence of the Core Strategy

The next level of planning policy below the NPPF is Herefordshire Council's Core Strategy 2011-2031. The Core Strategy requires that "Ledbury will accommodate 800 new homes balanced with approximately 15 hectares on new employment land during the plan period". Further information particular to Ledbury is contained in Section 4.5 of the Core Strategy.

The Government's Planning Portal website is now the main online planning and building regulations resource for England and Wales. All the information and forms needed to prepare and submit a planning application are online or can be downloaded and sent to Planning Services at Herefordshire Council.

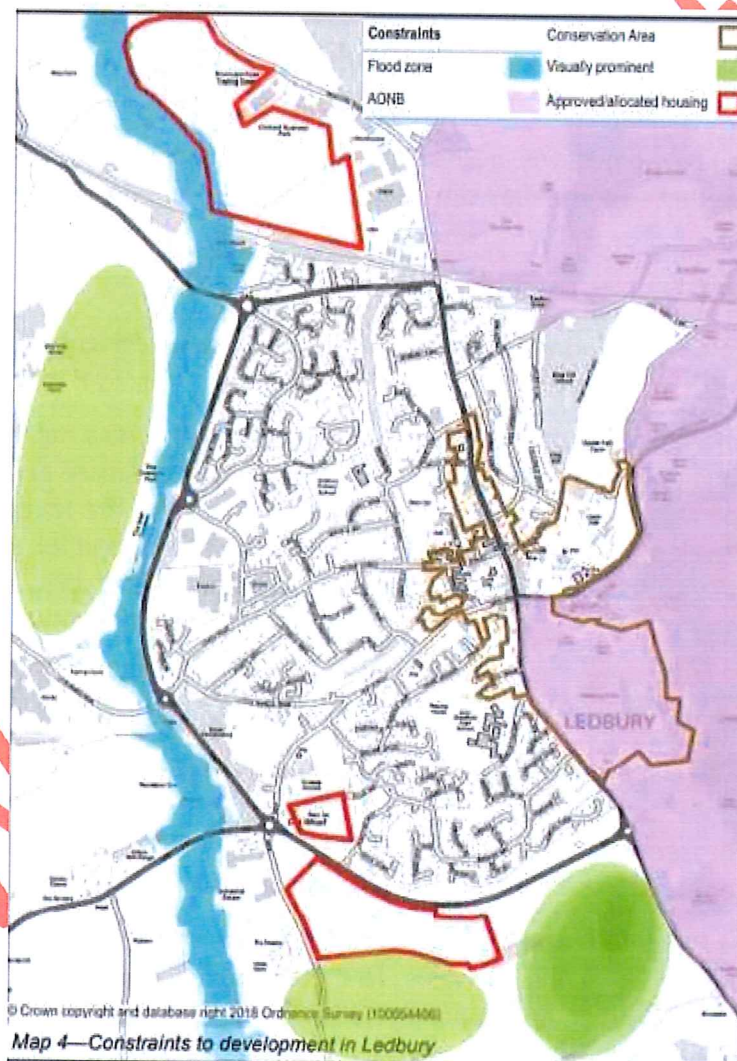
With completions and planning permissions for around 1,200 dwellings since 2011, including 625 homes to the north of the Viaduct, 415 homes south of Leadon Way², 93 homes on land

² Includes an outline permission granted for 321 dwellings although it has yet to be shown that the residual area beyond 275 dwellings is able to accommodate the remaining dwellings with adequate protection to residential amenity.

behind the Full Pitcher, and windfall developments elsewhere, the minimum target of 800 homes set out in the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy for the Neighbourhood Area has been exceeded by around 50%. This has not been matched by the required growth in employment development or community facilities.

The Core Strategy was adopted in 2015, following rigorous examination. The NDP does not seek to remove sites allocated in the Core Strategy and cannot delete sites that have received planning permission. Residents should note that the NDP review has minimal impact on either the number of homes that Ledbury is expected to accommodate, or on the sites that have already been approved.

There are two policies within the Core Strategy that relate specifically to Ledbury—LB1 and LB2:



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(From current NDP with two areas added although needs updating further)

Policy LB1- Development in Ledbury

Ledbury will accommodate a minimum of 800 new homes balanced with a minimum of 15 hectares of new employment land during the plan period. The majority of new housing development will be focussed to the north of the town as set out in Policy LB2 and the strategic location for new employment of around 12 hectares to the west of the town, south of Little Marcle Road. Further development will take place through the implementation of existing commitments, infill development, and sites allocated through a Neighbourhood Development Plan. A number of sites which have future potential for development have been identified in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA).

Within Ledbury, new development proposals will be encouraged where they:

- allow for suitable small scale employment sites including live work opportunities within or adjoining the town;*
- maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the existing town centre. Proposals for new retail, leisure or office development of over 400m² in gross floor space and located outside the town centre will need to be supported by an impact assessment to determine whether there could be any adverse impacts on the town centre;*
- improve accessibility within Ledbury by walking, cycling and public transport, particularly where they enhance connectivity with, for example, local facilities, new employment areas and the town centre;*
- contribute to addressing deficiencies in community facilities and/or allow for infrastructure improvements (including broadband) in the town, to promote sustainable development;*
- reflect and enhance the characteristic built historic elements of Ledbury, such as its stone, brick and timber-framed buildings, medieval plan form, conservation areas and setting overlooking the Leadon Valley;*
- protect and enhance its green infrastructure, including connections to the public right of way network and biodiversity, particularly the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the east and the Leadon Valley to the west;*
- protect and enhance the setting of the town from eastern and western viewpoints; and, where this is not possible, incorporate appropriate mitigation measures; and*
- have demonstrated engagement and consultation with the community including the Town Council.*

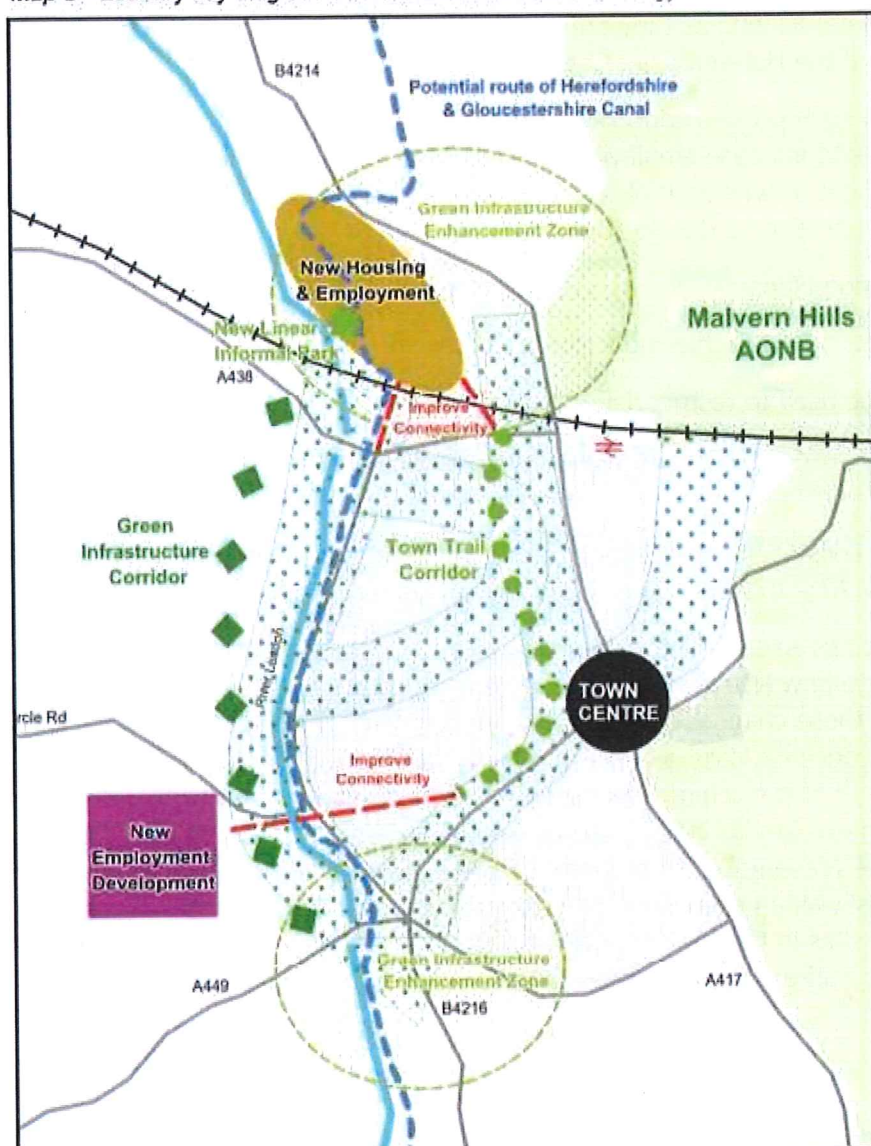
Policy LB2 - Land north of the Viaduct

Development proposals north of the viaduct in Ledbury will be expected to bring forward the following to achieve a sustainable mixed use urban extension of the town:

- mixed use development of around 625 new homes, at an average density of around 40 dwellings per hectare, comprising a mix of market and affordable house sizes and types that meet the requirements of Policy H3 and the needs identified in the latest version of the Herefordshire Local Housing Market Assessment;*
- around 3 hectares of employment land, restricted to Use Class B1;*
- a target of 40% of the total number of dwellings to be affordable housing;*

- *land and contributions to facilitate a restored canal to be delivered in partnership with the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust;*
- *a new linear informal park to link to the existing town trail, riverside walk, recreational open space and existing allotments;*
- *the provision of developer contributions towards any identified need for new/improved community facilities/infrastructure improvements. This shall include a new 210 place primary school within the development (or an expansion of the existing primary school) and new recreational open space, play, indoor and outdoor sport facilities;*
- *provision of satisfactory vehicular access arrangements, the details of which will be determined at planning application stage;*
- *appropriate mitigation to safeguard the amenity of future occupants from unacceptable levels of noise and to safeguard the continued operation of existing businesses adjoining the area;*
- *development of bespoke, high quality and inclusive design, including accommodation that will meet the needs of older persons and that contributes to the distinctiveness of this part of Ledbury and respects the setting and significance of the listed viaduct and the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;*
- *safeguards to ensure there is no adverse impact on water quality and quantity in the River Leadon;*
- *new walking, cycling and bus links from the urban extension directly to the town trail and riverside walk under the viaduct, the railway station and town centre to create linkages to nearby development and existing community facilities;*
- *sustainable standards of design and construction; and*
- *a comprehensive sustainable urban drainage system which includes measures such as rain gardens and swales to manage ground and surface water drainage and safeguard against any increased flood risk.*

Map 5—Ledbury key diagram from Herefordshire Core Strategy



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(From current NDP)

Neighbourhood Planning

Although the Government's intention is for local people to decide what goes on in their towns, the Localism Act sets out some important guidelines. One of these is that all Neighbourhood Plans must be in line with higher level planning policy, the overarching policy for England: the NPPF. This "sets out the Government's requirements for the planning system only to the extent that it is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so. It provides a framework within which local people and their accountable councils can produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities."

The NDP can introduce planning policies to which planning applications in the plan area have to adhere, as long as they are in compliance with neighbourhood planning regulations, the NPPF and the Herefordshire Core Strategy.

Examples of such policies concern the planning of new homes, leisure facilities and opportunities to increase employment. The NDP aims to focus on guiding land use rather than stopping it. However, it also aims to protect existing facilities and areas, such as sports fields, from unwelcome development.

Neighbourhood Plans:

- **Must** contribute to achieving sustainable development
- **Cannot** be used to restrict development
- **Cannot** be used to promote a quantum of development smaller than set out in the Core Strategy.

Indeed, if a Local Planning Authority says that an area needs to grow, then communities cannot use a NDP to block the building of new homes and businesses.

Government has issued a number of White Papers in recent times that suggest there would be changes to how NDPs might be used and a revised NPPF was published in July 2021. We will monitor those changes to ensure we are compliant. Although addressing some community concerns, solutions fall mainly outside the remit of the NDP. The challenge will be to ensure that the commensurate growth in population is met with increased service provision when many facilities, such as health, are already operating at or near capacity. The NDP looks favourably on property having a change of use to expand such facilities. A 'Call for Sites' was an exercise undertaken when the current NDP was prepared to ascertain and identify sites in the NDP Area that might have potential for housing, employment, community or other uses.

The NDP will become the 3rd tier of planning policy against which planning applications in Ledbury will be assessed.

Layer 1 — National Planning Policy Framework

Planning policy document for England set by Central Government



Layer 2 — Herefordshire Core Strategy

Planning policy document for Herefordshire set by Herefordshire Council



Layer 3 — Ledbury Neighbourhood Development Plan

Planning policy for Ledbury set by the Community & the Town Council

(From current NDP)

Return on Investment

It has taken thousands of hours by residents, volunteers, Ledbury Town Council (LTC) staff and Councillors, guided by paid consultants, to produce this Plan. For this investment in time and money there is a long-term return in terms of community infrastructure. Herefordshire Council has yet to adopt a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule. This is a levy on developers which the town can use for infrastructure projects. Having an adopted NDP would enable Ledbury Town Council to receive 25% of CIL monies to spend for the benefit of the community such as to facilitate disabled access to both platforms at the railway station (see NDP Objective TR3) or to support the restoration of the Hereford to Gloucester canal. Until this mechanism is available, there will need to be reliance upon policies and other funding sources. There is the possibility that Section 106 monies may be available to contribute towards projects such as provision of playing fields.

Relationship to the Town Plan

Ledbury Town Plan (2016) is an aspirational document which expresses residents' desires to maintain and improve the community, whereas the NDP addresses land use planning and will, once adopted, have legal weight in decision making on planning matters. The preparation of the NDP has taken account, wherever relevant, of the views expressed in the Town Plan and more recent consultations. The NDP sets the planning scene for Ledbury for the next ten years or so. Ledbury is a vibrant town: the NDP's main thrust is to ensure that it continues to prosper.

Useful links

Population data sources:

<https://factsandfigures.herefordshire.gov.uk/>

https://factsandfigures.herefordshire.gov.uk/media/337/KeyFindings_Ledbury_locality.pdf

Evidence base for the Core Strategy:

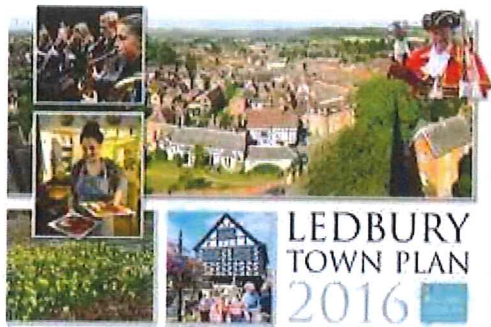
<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/download/559/corestrategy-examinationdocuments>

Evidence base from Ledbury consultations:

www.ledbury-ndp.org

Review

The Ledbury Neighbourhood Development Plan will be reviewed every 5 years or earlier should the necessity require.



(From current NDP)

3. The Vision

Background

Ledbury lies on the edge of the Malvern Hills AONB on the River Leadon in an area of great landscape beauty. It is a market town with a long history, great heritage and a thriving community.

The vision presented in the first adopted Ledbury NDP derived from evidence gathering and extensive consultation, is confirmed. This was based on the desires of the community as well as the demographic, economic, social and environmental issues facing the town. Topic papers produced for this revised NDP and further community consultation were used to update the vision to 2031 and beyond, to feed into the next Herefordshire Core Strategy, and inform future NDPs.

The Vision:

Preserve and Develop Prosperity

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.

Preserve and Develop Wellbeing

Residents are proud of Ledbury and gain a sense of wellbeing from living here. There is a strong sense of community and there are currently good services and amenities. Infrastructure will be developed in line with the rate of housing development to maintain this.

Preserve Quality and Character

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 maintain its unique character and heritage.

Widen Employment Base

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 widened, through releasing land to the south of the Little Marcle Road in particular, in order to help develop and diversify the 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 provide the option to many residents of working in the town, and reduce the numbers commuting out of the town.

Develop Educational Facilities

Ledbury will be a willing partner in the development of higher education facilities in Herefordshire and will support the development of additional facilities, including measures to support County and regional hubs should there be a need to expand the proposed university

college at Hereford specialising in engineering sciences or science and research-based training associated with Malvern Science Park.

Develop Sport and Recreation

Ledbury wishes to become an area of sporting excellence for all generations and intends to develop more indoor and outdoor sports facilities as the town grows. Ledbury will have new pitches and sports facilities south of the Little Marcle Road.

Preserve Environment

Ledbury will have a defined settlement boundary which respects the constraints of topography, and protects and conserves Malvern Hills AONB, the River Leadon and its Riverside Park, and land to the south-west that meets present and future recreation needs. Sustainable transport options such as walking and cycling, will be encouraged and public transport disabled access provisions enhanced in priority over vehicular traffic. Easy footpath network access to the surrounding countryside and beyond will be improved and maintained. The Malvern Hills AONB is the backdrop to the town and all development will be complementary to the landscape and the views. Design sensitivity and sustainability is given a high priority in all forms of development.

Green space will be protected, and biodiversity networks strengthened, 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. Natural assets will be maintained and enhanced to mitigate and adapt to climate change. There will be the opportunity to create local green corridors and enhancement zones under a green infrastructure strategy for Ledbury and its surroundings. This will include a 'green corridor' along the safeguarded route of the projected Gloucester and Hereford canal reinstatement, largely following the route of the River Leadon.

Nurture the Town Centre

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 grow its reputation for markets and festivals. Traders will be encouraged to provide a wide range of products, 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'.

4. Introduction to Objectives & Policies

Section 3 sets out the overall vision for Ledbury as a whole.

The Vision was developed in response to the issues identified from the evidence gathering and consultation exercises undertaken at the start of the previous Plan process and reaffirmed through work on its review. The Vision helped shape the Objectives which are grouped under 6 headings:

- Housing
- Employment and Economy
- Built Environment
- Natural Environment
- Community and Leisure
- Transport and Infrastructure

Policies were then developed to deliver the Objectives. Each Objective is supported by one or more Policies which are designed to help deliver each Objective.

The Objectives and Policies are set out as below:

The Objectives are in bold

The Policies are in a coloured box

The Reasoned Justification is set out in italics after the Policies.

(1 photograph from current NDP)

5. Sustainable Development

Contribution towards Sustainable Development

As described in Chapter 2, the NPPF sets out the importance of sustainable development in plan making and decision-taking. As a consequence, the principle of sustainable development remains at the heart of the NDP.

In order to achieve sustainable development, the LNDP does the following, all of which contribute to at least one of the three objectives for sustainable development:

- Defines a settlement boundary in order to ensure that new residential and other relevant development is located in sustainable locations, close to services and amenities.
- Supports appropriate housing growth in order to meet the housing needs of present and future generations.
- Seeks to protect and enhance the historic environment.
- Seeks to protect and enhance the natural environment and surrounding landscape.
- Includes provisions for the protection of biodiversity.
- Protects existing employment and retail provision and proactively seeks to enable new employment areas in order to contribute towards building a strong, responsive and competitive economy.
- Encourages food production in order to create new jobs and contribute to the local economy.
- Protects local green infrastructure and open spaces.
- Proactively promotes the provision of new community infrastructure and protection of existing provision, especially to meet the need for additional playing fields.

The SEA found the cumulative impact of the Plan over the short, medium and long term would be generally positive. 'The majority of the policies will have a neutral impact, as either they do not affect many of the SEA objectives, or the development objectives proposed are balanced with sustainable policies to minimise environmental impact.' (NB TO BE CONFIRMED)

Objective SD1:

To respond to the climate change emergency by developing Ledbury as a forward thinking, self-reliant and sustainable lifestyle community.

Policy SD1.1

Ledbury as a Self-Sustaining Community

Proposals which are aimed at developing Ledbury as a self-reliant and environmentally sustainable community, such as zero carbon based housing development, growing its own environmentally supporting food, generating its own renewable energy supplies and locally recycling its waste and water to improve water supply and quality, will be supported.

Proposals which promote a reduction in dependency on the private car and encourage environmentally sustainable travel habits will also be supported.

In anticipation of the environmental and lifestyle changes that climate change mitigation and adaptation will require in the coming decades, it will be increasingly necessary for local communities to become more self-sustaining. Early adoption and implementation of this Policy has the potential to establish Ledbury as a leading national example of a community which is self-reliant and environmentally sustainable.

Policy SD1.2

Settlement Boundary

The settlement boundary for Ledbury shown on Ledbury Town Policies Map will be the focus for development in accordance with relevant policies set out in this Plan and Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy. Outside of this boundary, land will be considered countryside and development complying with relevant rural area planning policies should recognise its intrinsic character and beauty. Such proposals, including those on the urban fringe, should contribute towards green infrastructure objectives for the landscape, biodiversity, woodland management, recreation and access set out in Appendix 2'

This policy meets the NDP's first sustainable development objective which seeks to ensure new development is located within sustainable locations. The boundary incorporates areas where new development in accordance with strategic and other needs might be located. More detailed policies define how necessary development should be located or take place within it. The policy also recognises that some forms of development can take place outside of the boundary, in the countryside that forms part of the parish. Where such development takes place, it needs to recognise that the character and beauty of the area is important, especially as parts of the parish are located within the Malvern Hills AONB and all sits within the setting of that nationally important landscape. Herefordshire Council has identified strategically important areas of green infrastructure within and surrounding the town, and these have been added to through further work undertaken for this NDP, and many of these are located upon the fringes of the town. Objectives have been set to strengthen and enhance these areas and development proposals should include measures to address these.

The settlement boundary now defined is based upon that previously identified by Herefordshire Council in the former Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (UDP) with the following additions:

- Areas where planning permission have been granted for relevant developments, in particular housing sites.*
- Land proposed for development to meet community and employment needs off Little Marcle Road.*
- Previously developed areas comprising the playing fields (rugby) and employment area either side of the Ross Road, that were shown outside of the settlement boundary on the UDP map. At that time the by-pass provided a hard edge to the settlement, but this is no longer the case given the housing developments on the south side of Leadon Way and the Core Strategy's intention for employment land to be found off Little Marcle Road.*
- The linear riverside walk and park adjacent to Ledbury Bypass to which the public has access and is a facility provided for the town's residents.*

The consequences of the above are to extend the town's boundary to the north, south and west of the town. The previous UDP boundary along the town's eastern edge has been

retained. Most of the land beyond this edge falls within Malvern Hills AONB, which is a nationally protected landscape. Several Ancient Woodlands also abut the eastern boundary. These are irreplaceable habitats. A number of unregistered parks and gardens add to the importance of the landscape along this edge.

Policy SD1.3

Sustainable Design

Development proposals should seek to achieve a zero-carbon footprint through containing a co-ordinated package of design measures which, in addition to regulatory requirements, include:

- a) In addition to relevant criteria in Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy policies SS7 and SD1, where possible utilising renewable energy infrastructure such as photovoltaic panels where these do not detract from any historic assets or their settings.
- b) Seeking on-site measures that support energy conservation such as through tree planting and other forms of green infrastructure to provide shade and shelter, where this does not cancel solar gain, and the maximum use of permeable surfaces.
- c) Minimising the use of artificial light to limit the impact of light pollution on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation as well as to reduce energy consumption.
- d) Enabling a sustainable drainage system, including serving a wider range of properties where opportunities exist, and increasing resilience in buildings, infrastructure, and businesses to the risk of flooding.
- e) Reducing the carbon intensity of the structures (embodied carbon), minimising construction traffic and reducing waste.
- f) Supporting proposals that utilise construction materials produced as locally as possible, minimising travel distances.
- g) Avoiding or fully mitigating the loss of woodlands, orchards, hedgerows, grassland, and other features that absorb carbon, and where possible taking the opportunity to extend these environmental assets.
- h) Providing opportunities for tree and woodland planting to offset the full extent of carbon used during manufacturing of building materials and construction works and to reduce run-off and the risk of flooding.
- i) Developers should set out their design approach in sufficient detail to show how the criteria included in this and other relevant policies in the NDP have been addressed.

The community supports sustainable development, and this requires a comprehensive approach encompassing a range of sustainable design elements. This policy sets out criteria that, taken with other policies in this plan, should be considered as part of a co-ordinated approach aimed at achieving zero carbon covering both construction and subsequent use. Although the various elements covered in this policy may not apply to all developments, some will be applicable to most.

The approach to sustainable design should be undertaken in an integrated way addressing measures related to individual buildings, site layout and landscaping and support for off-site measures. The latter are covered by another policy promoting links to the public footpath and cycle networks and supporting public transport through such facilities as supporting services and providing bus shelters. This policy covers detailed design issues, covering matters such as energy and water use efficiency, provision of sustainability infrastructure such as green roofs, sustainable site design measures, and the construction process. These detailed matters support the more general provisions within Core Strategy policy SD1.

Energy conservation is considered an extremely important design element yet currently this is addressed through Building Regulations and nationally set standards. There are higher standards such as Passivhaus and BREEAM and developers are encouraged to meet the highest level possible in order to make the maximum contribution to achieving a zero-carbon development. Developers should utilise guidance and advice from relevant professional bodies to set appropriate targets for embodied carbon within their development. One example of such guidance has been issued by the Green Building Council³.

The requirement for the design approach to indicate in sufficient detail how all the design criteria in this NDP have been addressed is important to show that the requirements for sustainable development as set out in National Planning Policy Guidance have been met. Herefordshire Council has a check list for compliance with climate change requirements⁴ and also for biodiversity and ecology.

³ <https://www.ukgbc.org/sites/default/files/UK-GBC%20EC%20Developing%20Client%20Brief.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/planning-services/apply-planning-permission/2?documentId=62&categoryId=200142>

6. Housing

Housing - The Background

Herefordshire Core Strategy sets a minimum target of 800 new dwellings for Ledbury Parish during the Plan period (2011-2031). The bulk of this allocation (625 dwellings) will be located to the north of the town, on what is known as the Viaduct site. Although this site was opposed by the Town Council and the community it was, however, allocated in the Core Strategy by Herefordshire Council regardless and now has planning permission. Planning permissions and recent developments will deliver all of the housing that the town requires over the Plan period.

Since the beginning of the Plan period, windfall provision has brought forward approximately 200 dwellings. This figure includes the 93 units on the Full Pitcher, former cricket ground site. Added to this figure will be the 321 dwellings between Leadon Way and the Dymock Road, approved following appeal, although it has yet to be shown that more than the current phase 1 of 275 dwellings can be accommodated. Planning permission has also been granted for a further development for 140 dwellings also on the south side of Leadon Way. When these sites are added to the 625 dwellings planned for the Viaduct Site, the total of around 1,200 dwellings considerably exceeds the Core Strategy target by around 50%.

There is therefore no need to consider further housing development within this review in that the amount of new housing is significantly greater than that proposed by the Core Strategy.

The Policies below reflect the fact that the Core Strategy target has been exceeded and promotes housing development to meet the immediate needs of the community, most particularly affordable starter units for the young and new families and appropriate units for the elderly.

The planning permissions for housing have been considered in defining the settlement boundary for the town, although a number remain commitments where development has yet to commence. The NDP can also determine the design standards preferred by the community for these sites and other housing developments. Policies reflecting the Ledbury Design Guide and other important design considerations have been integrated into the NDP.

Range of housing related statistics as per current NDP updated as necessary

Housing - Objectives & Policies

Objective HO1:

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

Community Action

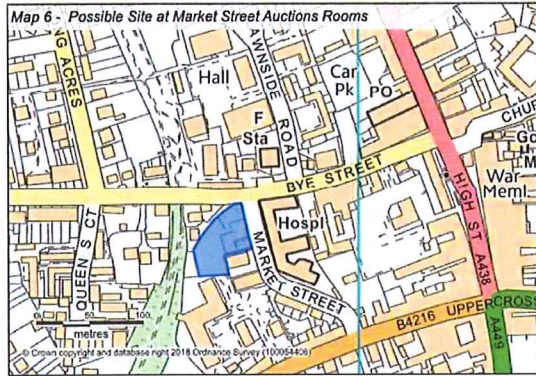
The community consultations indicate that people in Ledbury want new developments on small sites which relate well to the town, are suitable for the elderly and young people, and which also provide opportunity for self-build projects.

Ledbury's Large Housing Sites.

Maps 6, 7, 8 and 9 show the site at Market Street Auctions Rooms (planning permission for 31 apartments), the Viaduct Site (planning permission for 625 dwellings), the Full Pitcher

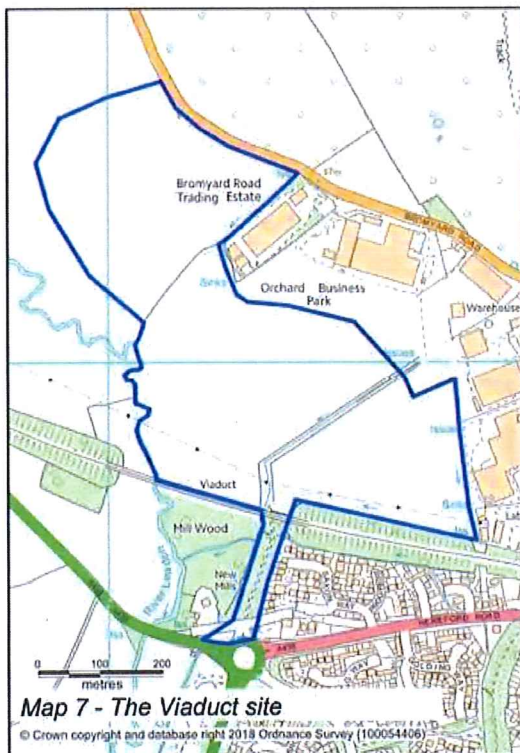
Site (planning permission for 93 dwellings), land South of Leadon Way (planning permission for phase 1 – 275 dwellings) and land south of Leadon way off the Gloucester Roundabout (planning permission for 140 dwellings).

These five sites together amount to commitments of over 1,000 homes. It is considered that these sites, in conjunction with windfall sites that have already or will come forward within the settlement boundary, more than meet the needs of the town in terms of housing provision over the plan period.



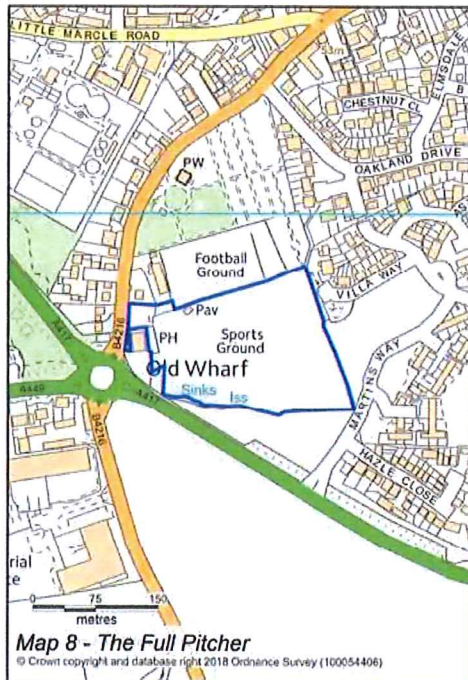
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Revise to show area covered by planning permission

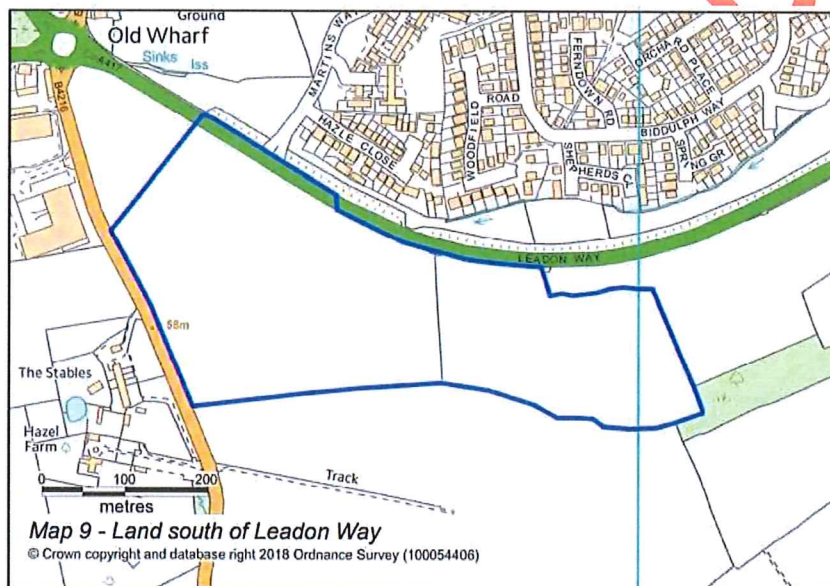


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Revise to show area covered by planning permission



Crown copyright and database rights (2020) Ordnance Survey 100024168



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(Redraft to cover both sites with planning permission and exclude any proposed large areas of strategic open space)

Objective HO2:

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

Policy HO2.1

Reinforcing Balanced Housing Communities

Proposals for windfall development in excess of 10 housing units should demonstrate the provision of a mix of building sizes, types and tenures of housing. This may include:

- Affordable housing (as per HCS Policy H1)
- Starter homes
- General housing for sale at market value
- Self-build opportunities
- Housing for adults and young people with disabilities and learning difficulties (C3b)

Traditionally Ledbury has been a low-income area derived from its past agricultural dependency, although it is now a high-cost housing area due to its convenient location and suitability for commuting to the Midlands and beyond. House prices are high in comparison to the rest of Herefordshire due to its popularity with those commuters and for those wishing to retire to an attractive market town. To help meet the housing market needs and the needs of the local area population, a mix of building sizes, types and tenures of housing stock is required. The evidence from the initial NDP consultation in 2014 shows that people in Ledbury prefer new developments to be on small sites, to help encourage integration socially, and between young and old. There is a desire to encourage the young and families to the town, who may then remain. It is acknowledged that a 'satisfactory mix' of building sizes, types and tenures of housing stock will depend on the viability of a scheme.

Policy HO2.2

Housing Density

The housing density of new development should respect its surroundings through good design which responds positively to local character. Housing densities should be appropriate to the location, type of housing required and the local environment, and within the range of 30 to 50 dwellings per hectare especially for larger sites⁵. In keeping with local character, housing densities should be at the higher end of this range towards and within the town centre and at the lower end of the range towards the edge of the settlement.

Developments outside the town centre should be lower density to maintain an 'edge of the countryside' feel which is important to the community and a key characteristic of Ledbury. The use of structured planting, trees, shrubs, etc., will be encouraged to create small areas of community within larger developments.

Policy HO2.3

Design Criteria for Residential Development

Emphasis will be placed on achieving high quality residential design and environments within the plan area, including through any alterations and extensions to existing properties and for conversions to dwellings. To achieve this, such development should:

- a) Provide a high and inclusive standard of architecture and design for the public realm.

⁵ See NPPF (2021) paragraph 73

- b) In terms of scale, massing, proportion, materials, colour and roof profiles, new dwellings should relate to the characteristic built forms of Ledbury, to fit sensitively into the townscape and surrounding landscape as appropriate. Guidance upon character and local distinctiveness provided in Appendix 1, which contains relevant extracts from Herefordshire Council's Rapid Townscape Assessment 2010 and the Malvern Hills AONB Guidance on Building Design where appropriate.
- c) Where possible and appropriate, buildings should be of their time and avoid poor imitation.
- d) Avoid repetition and regimented designs and layouts that are uncharacteristic of Ledbury through variations in density, public realm and building design. This should be part of a developed and coherent concept based on analysis of local and historical context combined with best practice.
- e) Ensure affordable housing within major housing schemes is of the same quality and design approach as open market housing upon the site so that it is not immediately identifiable as such.
- f) Ensure ridge heights are consistent with the heights of nearby buildings and only be more than 2.5 storeys where this can be shown to fit sensitively into townscape, the setting of Malvern Hills AONB and the historic environment.
- g) Encourage innovative design approaches in less sensitive areas but which should comply with criterion b above. 'Off the shelf' house types should be avoided, especially elevational treatments developed for anywhere in the country. Sustainable and energy saving elements and materials will especially be encouraged.
- h) In relation to extensions, avoid visually dominating the existing building or neighbouring properties.
- i) Ensure all buildings present active and attractive frontages to streets and public areas providing natural surveyance.
- j) Protect the residential amenity of adjacent properties and ensure new dwellings are not adversely affected by existing agricultural or commercial activities or the adverse impact of light pollution.
- k) Provide sufficient garden space to enable residents to enjoy their use with appropriate degrees of privacy and functionality in terms of providing for young children's outdoor play, private clothes drying facilities and gardening.
- l) Provide or contribute to the provision of open space for play and public amenity in accordance with Herefordshire Council's open space requirements. Where such space cannot be provided on site, contributions should be made to the provision, improvement/replacement, operation, or maintenance of open space and play areas elsewhere within the Plan area and as close as possible to the proposed development.
- m) Retain important features such as street trees and other tree cover, ponds, orchards, hedgerows, as well as adding to these natural assets of the Plan area.
- n) Include, where appropriate, an integrated and high-quality landscape scheme which should contribute towards mitigating the effects of climate change; incorporate an appropriate range of biodiversity measures; and link with the wider landscape to enhance green infrastructure.
- o) Provide safe cycle storage.
- p) Where proposals involve adaptive or mobility housing or residential homes for elderly people, provide secure covered storage for mobility scooters.
- q) Provide level access to the highway, including footpaths and any cycleways.
- r) Make provision for electric vehicle charging at an appropriate level which should normally be for each dwelling.

The criteria within this policy set out clear expectations for the design of residential developments, both at the scale of the individual property and for major sites. They also apply to extensions and alterations to existing dwellings and any conversions to dwellings where appropriate. Most criteria relate to the design of dwellings. Others seek to ensure that, in combination, the development will result in a high-quality sustainable environment for those who live in it, ensuring that it fits sensitively into its surroundings. A number address specific concerns such as promoting security through surveillance, retention and provision of gardens, provision of open space, landscape requirements, and connectivity. Larger schemes are required to provide an element of affordable housing. It is recognised that where management of such housing is required, for example by housing associations, grouped housing is preferred. However, such housing should still be fully integrated into any scheme, be of equal quality and adopt a consistent design approach.

Developers should set out their design approach in sufficient detail to show how all relevant criteria included in this policy have been addressed. This should include the advice received during consultations undertaken prior to the application being made, including from the local community, in accordance with best practice and Herefordshire Council's Statement of Community Involvement. Until a local design guide is produced developers should utilise the principles set out in Government's National Design Guide⁶. Major schemes should consider seeking external advice through the Design Review Process and include this within their submissions.

Objective H03:

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

(1 photograph from current NDP)

Policy H03.1

Housing for the Elderly

Proposals for the following types of housing will be supported, provided they comply with other policies:

- Retirement homes
- Enhanced sheltered retirement homes
- Extra care housing
- Specialist housing for people with dementia.

All new housing for the elderly to include secure storage for mobility scooters.

Based on information taken from the 2011 Census, the demographic of the town's population shows an increasingly elderly majority, older than 45 equals 55%. The Policy proposals would help free up houses suitable for occupation by families. This is important to ensure that the right type of housing is available for Ledbury's ageing population. Storage

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide>

for mobility scooters will encourage inclusivity, combat loneliness, and give access to amenities.

Due to an ageing population, it is important to encourage inclusivity within the community, combating loneliness often experienced by elderly residents. Provide easier access to centrally located health and support services, ensuring such residents feel part of the community and have easy access to all amenities. The Town Council will seek to encourage all such developments above ground floor level to be accessible via a lift.

Objective H04:

To provide sustainable and affordable homes for local singles and young families in order to promote balanced communities.

Policy H04.1

Housing for Young People

Proposals for 1-, 2- and 3-bedroom starter homes will be supported. Proposals for C3(b) units, aimed at assisting young people who require supported housing and those in care transitioning to fully independent living, will also be supported.

The high cost of property in the Ledbury parish (as described above) is one of the main reasons for local young people and families leaving the area, creating an unbalanced age demographic.

The Plan will support the building of "affordable", low cost, 1-, 2- and 3- bedroom starter units to help meet the needs of those on low incomes. Workers involved in the local agricultural industry and health and care workers, are particularly in need of this type of housing.

Providing the opportunity for the young to remain within the community will help Ledbury retain its recognised strong sense of being a caring, welcoming town, inclusive of all ages and abilities.

(1 photograph from current NDP)

Objective H05:

To encourage individual and community based self-build projects.

Policy H05.1

Self-Build

Self-build proposals for new dwellings will be supported, including proposals for development sites for the provision of self-build plots.

There is evidence that the people of Ledbury will support self-build developments as individuals or as Community Build projects (Consultation Survey Results, section 3). The formation of Community Land Trusts will be encouraged to allow individuals to come together as a group, although at this stage an appropriate parcel of land has not been identified. Proposals in line with the NPPF and the Core Strategy are to be encouraged.

7. Employment & Economy

Employment & Economy - The Background

(1 photograph from current NDP)

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

Ledbury has two principal employment areas, at Bromyard Road Trading Estate and the recently extended Lower Road Trading Estate. There are around 10 key employers. The low number of large employers has not yet given rise to the establishment of a Chamber of Commerce; this is possibly a weakness in managing trade expansion.

Supply of employment land in and around the town is good; however, some of the existing 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 an attractive location for industry, particularly situated around the ring road. Employment sites to the north of the town have the advantage of the nearby railway station.

Ledbury has slightly more industrial employment as a proportion of its overall employment provision than the average for Herefordshire and has less office employment. 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.

The Core Strategy demands the development of a minimum of 800 new homes, but this has been exceeded to a significant degree. To provide employment for the new residents will be a challenge that is even greater than that originally envisaged.

Ledbury has visitor attractions. In 2015 its historic buildings were enhanced by the completion of the renovation of the Master's House. The town is two miles from Eastnor Castle which holds several events throughout the year and provides a setting for weddings, festivals and other functions. Ledbury accommodates racegoers to the Cheltenham Festival. It is adjacent to the Malvern Hills and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Core Strategy promotes the rehabilitation of the Hereford to Gloucester canal which, when complete, will be a visitor attraction.

Range of employment related statistics from the current NDP, updated as necessary

Employment & Economy—Objectives & Policies

Objective 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**
- **Sustainable technology industries such as renewable energy and recycling.**

Policy EE1.1

New Employment Sites – Land South of Little Marcle Road

Land amounting to approximately 20 hectares south of Little Marcle Road shown on Ledbury Town Policies Map is proposed for employment uses within Use Classes B2, B8 and E(g). A comprehensive proposal for the development of this area will be encouraged that defines:

- An appropriate access point to serve the area as a whole and also adjoining land uses.
- Landscaping works that incorporates measures to achieve appropriate green infrastructure objectives for the area concerned described in Appendix 2.
- Measures to protect and enhance public rights of way and access, by adding links to existing rights of way network in the vicinity.
- The approach to external lighting to minimise the effect on the settings of Malvern Hills AONB and Walls Hill Camp.

Policy EE1.2

Small Employment Sites Within and Adjoining the Town

Sensitive proposals for employment or services falling within Use Classes E(g) or E(e) or hotels within Use Class C1 will be encouraged on land amounting to 1.6 hectares opposite the Full Pitcher and east of Dymock Road, identified on Ledbury Town Policies Map.

Small scale employment sites elsewhere for development within these same use classes and also Use Classes B2 and B8, and including live work opportunities, within or adjoining the town and the regeneration, proportionate intensification or reassignment of previously developed brownfield land to employment land uses will be supported.

In all instances such proposals will only be permitted where there is no significant adverse effects on residential amenity, vehicular and pedestrian traffic can be safely accommodated, and sensitive landscape works are proposed, including measures to achieve appropriate green infrastructure objectives for the area concerned described in Appendix 2.

If Ledbury cannot provide more employment, it risks becoming a commuter town; its new residents seeking employment farther afield. Bristol, Birmingham and Cardiff are commutable by car and it is intended not to promote car journeys. The policy seeks to offer support to new or expanding business: to grow the town as a regional centre with particular regard to start-ups. Increasing employment opportunities will help to ensure that Ledbury is a sustainable place for all ages in which to live, work, and play. Ledbury particularly wishes to encourage its talented young residents to stay, by ensuring it has diverse employment opportunities.

The defining of land for employment to the south of Little Marcle Road complies with Core Strategy policy LB1 which requires 12 hectares of employment land in this location. It is understood that this is a minimum amount, while the 20 hectares also provides for the fact that housing growth within the town exceeds that indicated in the Core Strategy by 50%. The additional provision would potentially reduce the greater level of commuting to jobs elsewhere that would result from this excessive growth. The owners of the various land parcels have been consulted and are prepared, in principle, to make the land available for the proposed uses. A co-ordinated approach is required to enable the full area to be released and the preparation of a masterplan is suggested. The criteria identified are those considered most critical to enabling development to fit into the local environment and the setting of Malvern Hills AONB. It would be expected that these matters would need to be met and appropriate conditions applied to any planning permission granted for the development. Other factors covered by policies elsewhere in this NDP and the Core Strategy may also be relevant.

Land south of the Full Pitcher and east of Dymock Road is at a key gateway site where a high-quality development is required that would be accompanied by landscape measures that would also contribute to the enhancement of this area which is identified as a Local Enhancement Zone (See Appendix 2 - LedLEZ2). The location of the site close to Ledbury By-pass, its roundabout junction and the adjacent industrial estate is such that it would not be able to achieve suitable standards of amenity to be used for housing. Furthermore, uses will need to be restricted to those that will not significantly affect the residential amenity of dwellings to the south-east. It is suggested that its development for a hotel would add to the accommodation offer provided by the Town, adding to its economic vitality. However, other employment uses may be suitable where they can show their development is sufficiently sensitive at this point, which is also highly visible within the setting of Malvern Hills AONB. Previously although there was a suggestion that an emergency services hub might be located upon Ledbury bypass on a site such as this, currently this is not a matter under consideration.

Other opportunities for employment uses may be available within or surrounding the town, as recognised in Core Strategy policy LB1, provided amenity, highway safety, active travel measures, and landscape requirements can be met. Intensification of existing uses may also offer the opportunity to increase job opportunities. Measures will hopefully be advanced through the Market Town's Investment Programme operated with the support of Marches Local Enterprise Partnership to increase economic opportunities and close ties between those working on that programme and the NDP have been fostered. In this regard the Town Council will work to encourage applications for an enterprise or business start-up hub and employment training facility, possibly linked to initiatives underway in Hereford and Malvern.

(1 photograph from current NDP)

Policy EE1.3

Protecting Existing Employment Land

The change of use of employment land and premises to non-employment uses, for which planning permission is required, will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that continued employment use is no longer economically viable, through the provision of evidence showing that the site or premises have been actively and openly marketed at the market value for the existing use/other suitable employment uses, for at least a 12-month period

In order to sustain and grow Ledbury as a prosperous local centre, the loss of employment land to non-employment will not be supported unless the existing use is no longer economically viable and the site has been marketed at a reasonable price for at least a year for that, and any other suitable employment or service trade uses.

Objective EE2:

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

Policy EE2.1

Promoting Visitor Accommodation

Proposals which increase local hotel and visitor accommodation provision in the urban area will be supported, subject to respecting local character, residential amenity and highway safety. Outside the urban area the re-use of existing buildings, that are structurally sound and capable of conversion without complete or substantial reconstruction and conversion, to self-catering tourism units will be supported. Chalet, caravanning and camping site proposals of appropriate scale to the landscape character and local setting will also be supported provided they do not affect residential amenity, meet highway safety requirements and protect the setting of Malvern Hills AONB. They should be accompanied by high quality landscape measures to ensure the development, including associated infrastructure, fits sensitively into the landscape.

Ledbury has excellent accommodation in old coaching inns such as the Feathers Hotel, Talbot Inn and The Royal Oak. There are a handful of B&B establishments and holiday lets, however for a town the size of Ledbury, with its heritage assets and attractions, there is a paucity of visitor accommodation. The nearest budget hotel for the business traveller is the Premier Inn, located at the end of the M50 near Ross on Wye. As a consequence, if the town expands as a tourist destination and business centre, it will need to provide a better visitor infrastructure. Moreover, a new hotel would provide employment opportunities. Other forms of tourist accommodation would also provide economic benefits although their scale should be restricted to that which can be accommodated within the sensitive landscape of the Parish of which a significant part comprises the Malvern Hills AONB or land within its setting.

Objective 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.

Ledbury has a thriving centre made up predominantly of independent shops, food outlets, services and pubs. A residents' survey undertaken for the Town Plan showed that over 70% do their main food shopping in Ledbury; and a visitor survey showed that over 90% value the variety of shops. The retail area is focused along the Homend and High Street with secondary provision on intersecting streets. Local butchers and greengrocers, supplemented by twice weekly markets, provide fierce competition to the three supermarkets.

The aim of policy EE3.1 below is to bring more visitors to the town and to provide extra employment opportunities.

There are a number of specialist shops in and near Ledbury that attract visitors from farther afield and which have also created thriving online business.

Thus, Ledbury has a sound base upon which to expand its retail business, both as a by-product of its tourism and by enhancing its reputation as a centre for specialist shopping. There is a need to retain a balance of type of outlet and to continue to provide support to independent enterprises.

Policy EE3.1

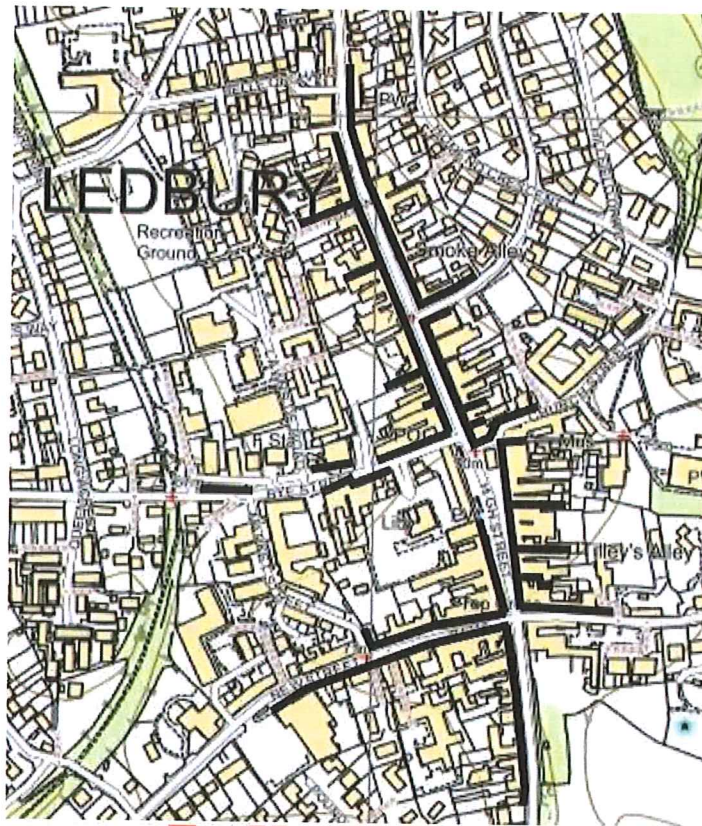
Protection of Shopping Frontages and Primary Shopping Area

Map 10 defines shopping frontages and the primary shopping area where ground floor retail and related uses should predominate. To preserve the current character and vitality of the town centre, uses falling within Use Classes E(a) to E(c) (display or retail sale of goods, sale of food and drink on the premises and financial, professional and other appropriate services in commercial, business or service localities) will be encouraged within these frontages. The change of use of ground floor premises to other use classes within these shopping frontages will not be supported unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Previously the main shopping streets within the town centre were identified as either having primary or secondary shopping frontages and restrictions placed upon what uses might be located within them. In combination they formed the primary shopping area. A review of these frontages has been undertaken with a view to developing policy which will maintain the shopping area's character and economic resilience yet encourage greater flexibility at a time when small town centres are under increasing competition from both out-of-town supermarkets and larger centres. Given the size and compact nature of Ledbury town centre, it is considered that a distinction between the two levels of shopping frontage is no longer necessary or in its best interest. It should offer greater flexibility by enabling a wider range of activities to locate within any of its defined shopping frontages, including those market town services that are normally directed to secondary or peripheral frontages. The community agreed with this change in approach when consulted. While appropriate conversions should allow new commercial, business or service uses falling within the prescribed categories within these frontages, development that would result in their loss should be resisted. There may be exceptions, such as those referred to in Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy policy E6⁷. These exceptions include provision for medical and health services, should it be decided to pursue a town centre option, and Ledbury Town Council would, in particular, support a frontage providing access to improved health facilities

⁷ The relevant Use Classes in this policy are now Classes E(d-f), F1 and F2(c-d)

for Ledbury Health Partnership. This Partnership is expected to require new premises during the plan period and options are being investigated.



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Map 10—Shopping Frontages and Primary Shopping Area— identified by black line (Draft Map).

(2 photographs from current NDP)

Policy EE3.2

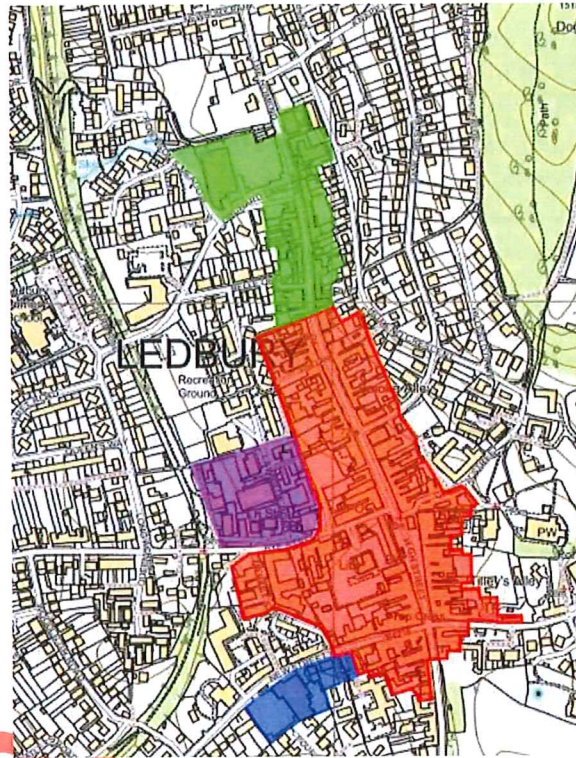
Defined Town Centre

Map 11 defines Ledbury town centre for the purposes of Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy policies E5 and LB1.

New town centre development within this area will be expected to retain or enhance existing pedestrian access, provision for cyclists and parking spaces.

The town centre differs from the primary shopping area in that it also contains other commercial, leisure, cultural and tourism uses. It has evolved over time, as some shops and other commercial premises have closed down, supermarkets located just outside the centre now provide town centre parking as well as shopping services, and public leisure facilities have developed adjacent to the centre. Meanwhile, excellent new ventures have opened in the centrally located mews areas. These changes require a repositioning of the boundary to reflect current use and to avoid sprawl and a review has been carried out as part of the NDP

review⁸. Its definition is important to maintaining the vitality and viability of the town centre. When asked about what should comprise the town centre the greatest level of support was for extending the town centre definition beyond the red area shown in Map 11. The survey results were inconclusive, however, as to where the boundary should be extended to within the areas suggested. It remains important to contain the small-scale retail interest within a reasonable distance of the three main town car parks, so that easy access for shoppers and visitors is maintained. Any changes through development should retain or improve provision for active travel as well as those needing to use vehicles to access town centre shops and other services.



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Map 11 - New map showing Town Centre – area yet to be agreed

Policy EE3.3

Lawnside and Market Street Regeneration and Opportunities Area –

Development proposals contributing to town centre vitality and viability within the Lawnside and Market Street Regeneration and Opportunities Area, identified on Ledbury Town Policies Map, will be supported in principle. Proposals contributing to a co-ordinated approach will be viewed particularly favourably where they:

- i) Expand community facilities and businesses serving the community.
- ii) Protect, enhance or restore the historic identity of the town.
- iii) Strengthen the connection with the town centre, increasing pedestrian access.
- iv) Deliver innovative design or design excellence which provides visual interest.

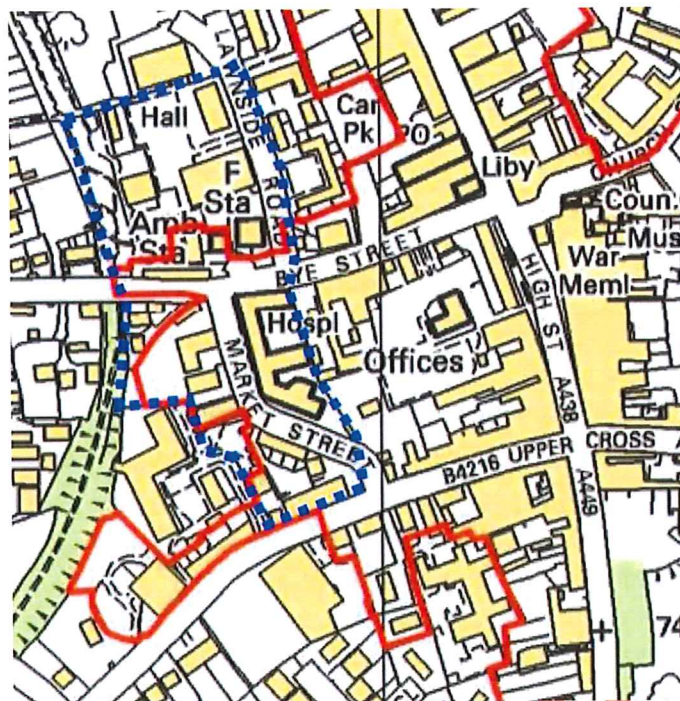
⁸ See Core Strategy paragraph 5.2.25

- v) Contribute positively to the Conservation Area.
- vii) Enhance public spaces and green infrastructure.

National and County policy supports measures to ensure the vitality and viability of town centres. Ledbury Town centre is at the heart of the local community, contains numerous important heritage assets, possesses a strong local character and sense of place, and is easily accessible to a wide number of residents from the surrounding countryside. The Lawnside and Market Street area is on the periphery of the town's primary shopping area and is an area where some change is proposed with further anticipated. It provides the opportunity for a mixture of appropriate uses, including residential. Recent proposals for residential development will provide accommodation for people needing easy access to town centre facilities on the former Market Street Auction Rooms site highlighted in the previous NDP. It is considered that the emphasis should now be upon community facilities and businesses serving the community. Of particular importance to the community are its health services which are undergoing change with the formation of Ledbury Health Partnership, combining the town's two health practices. Population growth within the town has led to a situation where the current health facilities are under extreme pressure and will need to expand. This has been recognised by Herefordshire and Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Group determining it to be a high priority. The possibility of combining with other related services to provide integrated care facilities may also be explored. A location within this area may present an option should sufficient land become available and other considerations be met. The area shown on the policies map should be considered indicative of a general area rather than a precise location in such an event.

As this area is located mostly within the defined town centre and Ledbury Conservation Area, there needs to be an emphasis on high quality design and the conservation or enhancement of its character and appearance. This need not exclude innovative design where this fits sensitively into its surroundings. Should it be possible to increase pedestrian links through to the defined shopping frontages, then this would also create benefits. A co-ordinated approach will be achieved by ensuring that the design and access statement for appropriate developments indicates how any proposal fits sensitively into the townscape at the time it is advanced. This approach should take account of any previously approved proposals and not prejudice the development of other gap sites and other areas currently detracting from local character.

When consulted, about 80% of residents indicated they would support a co-ordinated approach to the regeneration of Lawnside and Market Street to benefit the town centre, its conservation area and community services?



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Map 12 - New map showing Lawnside and Market Street Regeneration and Opportunities Area – to be agreed

8. Built Environment

Built Environment - The Background

(1 photograph from current NDP)

Ledbury residents are very proud of the character and appearance of the town. A compact town, with historic buildings dating back to the 15th century, Church Lane, The Market House and The Masters House, along with coaching inns, give daily pleasure to residents and are an attraction for tourists.

The preservation and enhancement of not only the historic town centre and the Conservation Area, but also the whole urban area is considered vitally important to maintain an attractive and vibrant town.

It is important that any new development takes account of the opportunities and constraints offered by individual sites and the surrounding area, to deliver sympathetically responsive design solutions that will stand the test of time. Although a number of development specific design policies are located in other sections of this NDP, the following policies promote the maintenance and enhancement of the Town's local distinctiveness.

Related statistics and comment from current NDP updated as necessary

Built Environment – Objectives & Policies

Objective BE1:

To ensure that Ledbury maintains its character as a rural 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 and its setting.

Policy BE1.1

Design

Development should demonstrate that it is sympathetic to the character and appearance of Ledbury and where possible, that it contributes to the conservation and enhancement of the overall distinctiveness of the Neighbourhood Area. The use of both design review and early local community consultation is strongly supported.

Both national and county planning policy guidance identify the need to encourage high quality development that responds to the characteristics of the immediate and wider area. One of the main features of Ledbury is the number of listed buildings. It is important that developments seek to maintain this historic character. Developers should comply with the design policies in this NDP and utilise the associated guidance contained within Appendices 1 and 2. Significant elements of Ledbury Design Guide have been incorporated into this NDP together with supporting information produced in association with Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy. Further, the design review process can provide an opportunity to save time and money and speed up proposals through the planning process by getting design issues resolved early on. Early consultation with the local community is also recommended and a

further explanation of the approach which Ledbury Town Council advocates is explained in Chapter 12.

(1 photograph)

Objective BE2: To promote preservation and enhancement of the Parish's heritage assets and character.

Policy BE2.1

Protecting and Enhancing Heritage Assets

The significance of heritage assets and their settings within the Parish will be preserved and enhanced through:

- a) Resisting development that would adversely affect the site and setting of Wall Hills Camp Scheduled Ancient Monument.
- b) Requiring appropriate development proposals elsewhere to be accompanied by full archaeological investigations and in the event of significant and/or extensive remains being found they should be preserved in-situ.
- c) Resisting development that adversely affects features or the setting of Listed Buildings and other similar heritage assets.
- d) Ensuring every effort is made to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Ledbury Conservation Area, including through site appraisals undertaken in association with relevant proposals.
- e) Only permitting development that would not adversely affect the significance of that part of Eastnor Castle Registered Historic Park and Garden falling within the Parish. This would include its setting within Malvern Hills AONB, including contributions to any 'borrowed view'.
- f) Ensuring every effort is made to retain and conserve buildings and heritage assets of local importance, including traditional rural buildings. (If identified, list in an appendix).
- g) Only allowing development within unregistered parks and gardens at Upper Hall; Ledbury Park; Underdown; Dingewood Park to proceed if an assessment has shown the effects of works will fit sensitively into the garden design. In addition, the contribution that such parks and gardens make to the wider landscape will be relevant to this consideration.
- h) Promoting development that would conserve the character of the Parish's historic farmsteads through allowing sensitive conversions where appropriate.

The area's heritage is reflected in the presence of a Scheduled Ancient Monument, 173 Listed Buildings, historic landscapes and other locally important monuments, buildings and assets. Although there is only one Scheduled Ancient Monument there are some 440 records for the Town's area on Herefordshire Council's Historic Environment Record. There is therefore potential for further archaeological assets to be found. Many heritage assets and, where appropriate, their settings⁹ are important and need to be preserved, not the least because of the contribution they make to the wider setting of the Malvern Hills AONB. They also contribute to the local economy. Ledbury Conservation Area covers the town centre and extends to important surrounding streets and areas. No detailed conservation area appraisal has been undertaken and until one is produced, development proposals should be informed by appropriate analysis, taking into account characteristics identified for the relevant

⁹ NPPF paragraph 194

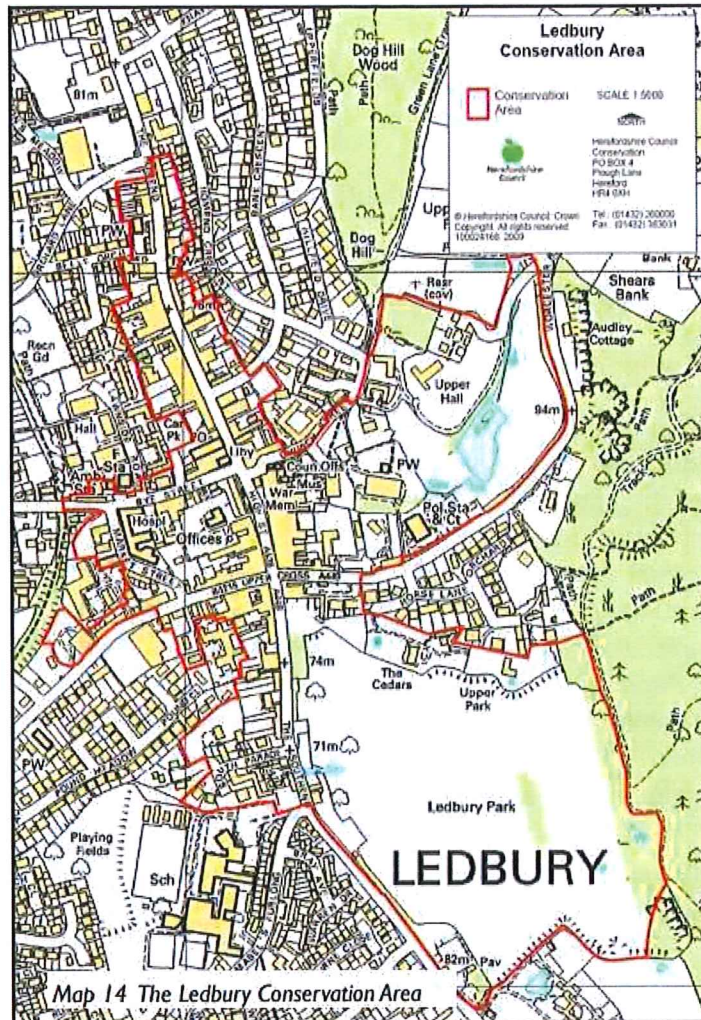
*character areas described in Appendix 1. Part of Eastnor Castle Historic Park¹⁰ falls within the Parish, having been registered by Historic England in 1986. The parkland does rely upon views between its various parts and of an important obelisk. Locally important heritage assets should also be recognised for their contribution to the townscape and landscape character. These include unregistered parks and gardens, historic farmsteads and **(List other local heritage assets in an appendix if required)**. This policy should not restrict development but influence the approach taken to it which may include stimulating the re-use of buildings so that they contribute towards regeneration.*

Historic England has sponsored a project to characterise the historic farmsteads within the County and the sites of some 28 of these can be found within the Town's area. In instances where they remain as complexes of buildings, it is understood that Historic England would like to see a positive approach to their conservation through promoting designs that will conserve, protect and sustain their historic forms, protecting their features, settings and cultural significance. They form important environmental capital within the setting of Malvern Hills AONB, contributing to its local distinctiveness and character.

Ledbury Conservation Area

Ledbury Conservation Area is fundamental to the character of the town. National policy and guidance, particularly that set out in Chapter 16 of the Framework (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) and Core Strategy Policy LD4 (Historic environment and heritage assets), or any Policy which may replace it, work together to protect this valuable resource.

¹⁰ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1000459>



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Map 13 The Ledbury Conservation Area – map number to be altered.

9. Natural Environment

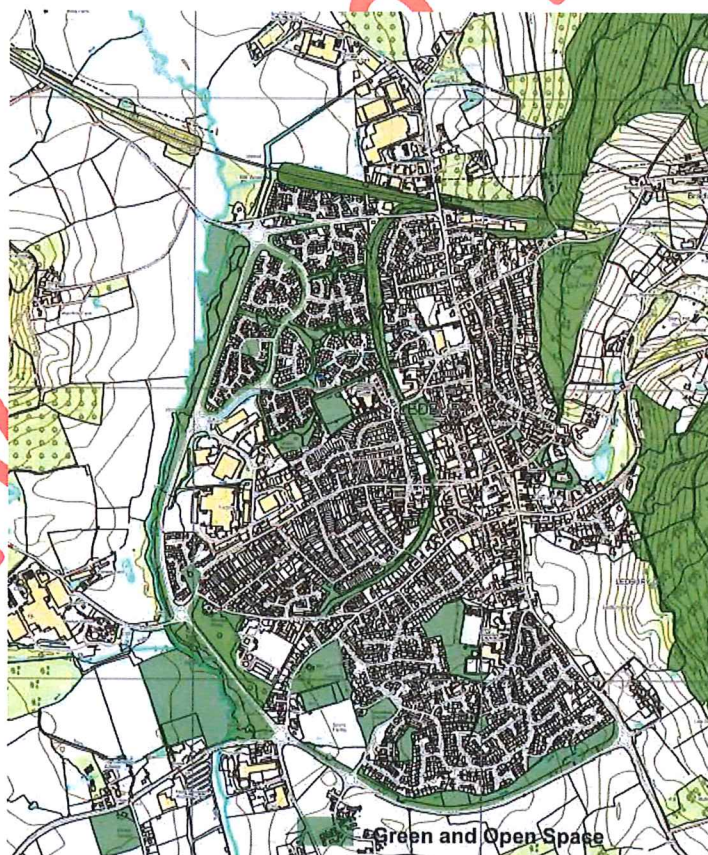
Natural Environment - The Background

(1 photograph from the current NDP)

Ledbury is a traditional country market town situated in the rural and beautiful Herefordshire landscape. Open and green spaces with a wide diversity of wildlife and fauna form an important part of the town and its surrounding countryside which includes the Malvern Hills AONB along the eastern edge of its built-up area.

Related comment and information from current NDP amended as necessary

The Parish's natural assets perform a multitude of functions, both individually and in combination. They make the town a very attractive place in which to live and to visit, with tourism being one of the principal areas of economic activity. Conserving the town's natural environment has consistently been shown to be very important to the Ledbury community, especially the health and wellbeing of residents. Access to green space, including its natural areas, needs to be retained where available and also increased where possible. Increasing biodiversity is recognised as both a national and local imperative. Map 14 identifies key areas of green space and natural features that permeate or surround the town contributing to its social, environmental and economic wellbeing. This map does not show all the Parish's natural assets but those structural elements that form the basis of green infrastructure within and surrounding Ledbury's built-up area.



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MAP 14 – Key Areas of Green and Open Space to be redrafted if necessary

With these considerations in mind and being aware of the commensurate wider need for natural environment preservation and conservation, Ledbury NDP includes appropriate policies that reflect both the local need and a responsibility to help sustain and increase biodiversity, conserve the landscape, protect local amenity, increase accessibility to nature and mitigate and adapt to climate change. This is also in keeping with national and Core Strategy policies, making sustainability an important and recurring theme throughout the Ledbury NDP.

The River Leadon contributes significantly to the landscape and natural environment of the Parish. The effects of development upon land drainage, especially protection from flooding, and the need to protect the water environment from pollution are important considerations. Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy policies *SD3 - Sustainable water management and water resources* and *SD4 - Wastewater treatment and river water quality* address these matters.

Natural Environment - Objectives & Policies

Objective NE1:

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

Policy NE1.1

Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity and Geodiversity

The conservation, recovery and enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity will be supported in order to promote, support and expand wildlife and their habitats and green infrastructure in accordance with Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy policy LD2.

To facilitate this, development should achieve at least the required level of biodiversity net gain through measures that:

- a) Contribute towards the wider ecological network, biodiversity, and green infrastructure by enhancing the ecological corridors and stepping-stones identified by Herefordshire Council in its Ecological Network Map 2013 and the biodiversity objectives in Malvern Hills Management Plan 2019 – 2024 (or any subsequent successor documents).
- b) Ensure the integrity of the Ridgeway Wood, Ledbury Cutting, and Upper Farm Quarry and Grassland SSSIs, maintaining or enhancing their conservation status.
- c) Maintain the natural qualities of green spaces and provide habitat improvements for areas of green infrastructure identified as Strategic Corridors, Enhancement Zones and Fringe Zones for Ledbury utilising objectives identified in Appendix 2.

Development proposals will be supported where they promote habitat creation and/or active management measures to maximise habitat diversity, including woodlands, orchards, streams, and wetlands. Similarly, those proposals that result in additional and new natural areas capable of becoming local wildlife sites will also be supported. Proposals should also improve access to natural green space where opportunities are available.

Given its long history in a very rural setting, Ledbury is rich in open spaces and wildlife habitats that contribute to the distinctive character and setting of the town and the surrounding countryside, which are demonstrably enjoyed by the population. The community has a clear and overwhelming desire to protect the existing wildlife habitats and

level of open space in the town. Further information on open spaces and habitats in the area can be found at www.ledburynaturalists.co.uk.

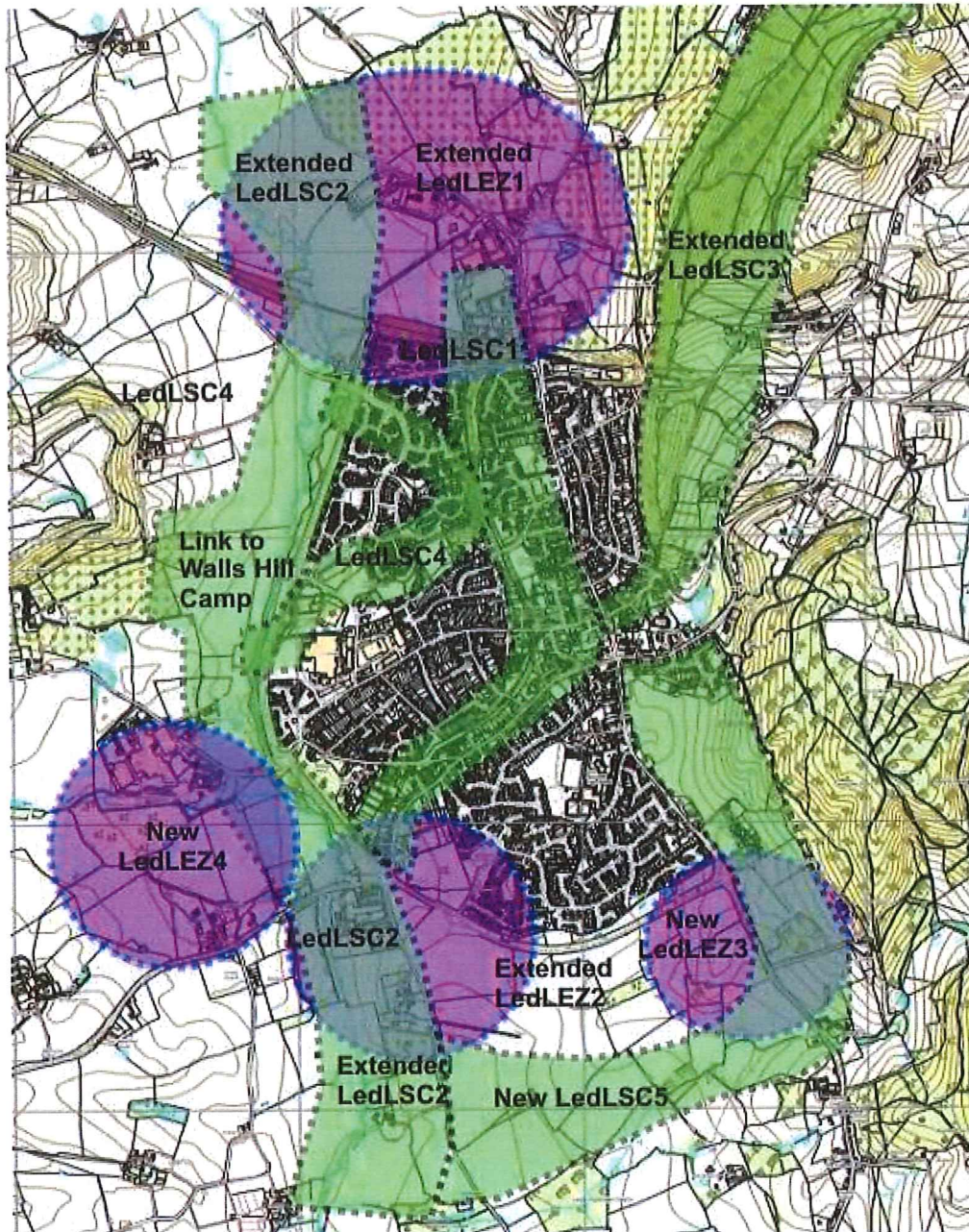
This policy complements Herefordshire Core Strategy policy LD2. It takes on board Government's intention to seek biodiversity net gains setting out the broad measures that developers should consider to improve the local natural environment. Ledbury's location nestled at the foot of the Malvern Hills is such that geological features as well as biodiversity are important.

Elements of both the ecological networks defined for the County and Malvern Hills AONB fall within Ledbury Parish. The integrity of the combined networks is important, and their coherence and resilience should be maintained. Information about the network may be updated from time to time through the preparation of Nature Recovery Strategies and these may supersede the current management approach.

There are three SSSIs within Ledbury Parish and one outside but immediately upon its border. Ridgeway Wood and Upper Farm Quarry and Grassland SSSIs are currently in favourable condition but Ledbury Cutting SSSI is unfavourable and declining. Mayhill Wood SSSI, which is immediately adjacent to the Parish's eastern boundary, is favourable but at risk. There are 10 local wildlife and 3 local geological sites identified within the parish although the condition and continued existence of many is unknown in that most were last surveyed around 40 years ago.

Herefordshire Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy defines a range of corridors and zones. The Strategy was produced before the inception of neighbourhood plans although it acknowledges that the strategy needs to be developed further, including to provide guidance on measures that might be introduced to retain and enhance important characteristics, opportunities, and associated management measures. Map X identifies Local Strategic Corridors (LSCs) and Local Enhancement Zones (LEZs) for Ledbury, and Appendix 2 defines objectives for these corridors and zones, including for additional areas identified through further analysis. The enhancement zones comprise those areas where change is expected either through proposals in this NDP or outline planning permissions that have been granted. They are 'areas where the provision of green infrastructure is required to create the most sustainable living and working places'. They provide opportunities to improve a range of measures to benefit green infrastructure, including access to natural green space. Other benefits include contributing towards mitigating the effects of climate change as well as promoting social cohesion, economic vitality, alternative means of movement and transport, and functional, healthy places.

An important enhancement element will be habitat creation, such as wetland and water features, especially where they provide or improve drainage, reduce flood risk and have the potential to support a wide variety of species, including those that might be at risk during times of drought. These and other natural areas have the potential to expand the network of local sites that support a range of species. Small individual measures can accumulate to provide significant support to wildlife such as small garden ponds, bird and bat boxes, and gardening for wildlife.



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MAP 15 – Local Strategic Corridors and Enhancement Zones for Green Infrastructure

Objective NE2:

To conserve the landscape and scenic beauty of the Parish

Policy NE2.1

Conserving the Landscape and Scenic Beauty of the Parish

Development should contribute positively to the area's landscape character and not adversely affect it. Where appropriate, this should be shown through a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and/or Heritage Impact Assessment.

Acceptable development proposals should, where appropriate:

- a) Be accompanied by a landscape scheme, informed by an analysis of the site's setting and containing measures forming an integral part of the design, retaining and enhancing as many natural features within or surrounding the site as possible, especially within Local Strategic Corridors and Enhancement Zones to meet, so far as it is possible, the objectives set out in Appendix 2.
- b) Ensure associated elements such as hard landscape measures, boundary treatment and building materials and colours are appropriate to the location.
- c) Ensure the effects of development upon the landscape setting of Ledbury, especially that within Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, are reduced and mitigated, and measures are included, where appropriate, to restore and enhance vistas and panoramic views.
- d) Promote positively the landscape character of the Parish, in particular ensuring the features contributing to their identification as Principal Settled Farmlands, Riverside Meadows, Principal Timbered Farmlands, Principle Wooded Hills, River Meadows, Settled Farmlands on River Terraces or Estate Farmlands as appropriate, are conserved, restored or enhanced through measures consistent with their particular characterisation.
- e) Protect and enhance the visual integrity of the River Leadon, its banks and associated riverside park; Frith, Conigree, Wall Hills and Dog Hill Woods above Ledbury together with their settings.
- f) Retain, wherever possible, important landscape features such as ponds, orchards, hedgerows, and water courses, and maintain and preferably extend tree cover using native species, adding to the green infrastructure network where opportunities are available. Trees considered to be of amenity value should be protected through the use of Tree Preservation Orders where under threat.
- g) Landscape works within the existing urban area should maintain, and if possible, improve the street scene and be of high quality. Where possible the opportunity to increase street trees should be taken. Tree planting should be consistent with good arboricultural practice.

Development proposals need to show how they meet the provisions of Core Strategy Policy LD1. Part of the plan area falls within the Malvern Hills AONB and national policy requires development within it to conserve and enhance its landscape and setting. Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan¹¹ together with relevant information produced by Natural England for the Malvern Hills National Character Area¹² should inform positive measures within any landscape scheme. The remainder of the plan area falls within the Herefordshire Lowland National Character Area¹³ and its guidance is relevant. In addition, more specific advice is available within Herefordshire Council's Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Guidance¹⁴. This identifies the character and features for particular landscape types which fall within various parts of the plan area. The objectives for various green

¹¹ <https://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/managing-the-aonb/management-plan/>

¹² <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/3039205>

¹³ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4827527503675392>

¹⁴

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/2069/landscape_character_assessment_for_herefordshire.pdf

infrastructure strategic corridors and enhancement zones have been set through a study that considered the most appropriate landscape features among other matters.

The riverside park along the River Leadon is an important local feature that also forms the spine for a green infrastructure corridor, and which is to be extended northwards into the proposed strategic housing and employment area to the north of the viaduct and incorporating part of a restored canal. Frith, Conigree, Wall Hills and Dog Hill Woods are important features that provide the landscape setting for Ledbury, especially through their in-combination effect.

Specific landscape features should also be protected. There are numerous important trees within the Plan area. Whether subject to any protection or not, these features should be identified in surveys in support of any development proposals and inform landscape schemes. Such schemes should ensure development fits sensitively into the landscape. Important trees of amenity value should be protected through Tree Preservation Orders. The importance of the 'borrowed view' needs to be recognised. Trees are also important within the urban part of the plan area and new development should take into account the expected size of the tree and the space available.

Policy NE2.2

Protecting Important Views and the setting of the Town

The following views in Ledbury Parish should be protected from the adverse effects of development:

- a) From Marcle Ridge looking east – Ledbury nestled on the side of the Malvern Hills.
- b) From Bradlow Knoll looking south-west to the church spire – a rural scene the church spire framed by green sloping hills and woods.
- c) From the western edge of Frith Wood looking west – panoramic views covering the viaduct, the north of the town and looking east and south-east to Marcle Ridge and May Hill.
- d) From Dog Wood southern tip 'the Cricket Pitch' looking south-west over the town
- e) From approach roads to the west (Ross Road and Lilyhall Lane) looking east to the Malvern Hills. Views from these roads are vulnerable to being affected by housing, farm and light industrial buildings in the foreground particularly as you approach the fringes of Ledbury.
- f) From within the town views to the church and Barrett Browning buildings – care should be taken that taller buildings do not obscure these views as they make a strong contribution to the sense of place.
- g) From Dog Wood north-eastern edge looking north towards the hills and south east to the town.
- h) From the Footpath LR25 as it exits Frith Wood– panoramic views of the Malvern Hills looking north-east.
- i) From footpath LR11 which runs through the fields west of the river there is a very clear, view of the viaduct
- j) From Durlow Common a long view with Ledbury at the foot of the hills in the mid-ground.

In addition, the setting of the town should be protected and enhanced, particularly in the following sensitive locations:

- i) The area immediately to the southwest of the Gloucester roundabout.

- ii) The area north of Little Marcle Road between Walls Hill Camp and the town's western edge.
- iii) The area to the east of the Dymock Road to the south of the recently constructed housing estate.

These views are identified on Map X which have been identified by the community and are important because of the following reasons:

View a) - For the view of the AONB and its relationship to the town and wider landscape. The Leadon Valley is in the fore and middle ground. It includes the variety of farmed landscapes in the neighbourhood including polytunnels, orchards, arable and pasture.

View b) - for the view of the town showing its compact rural nature, still centred around the church tower and the High Street and surrounded by countryside. It is also a view of the neighbourhood's dominant geographical features - Marcle Ridge and May Hill in the distance, local hills to the north-west and south-east the Leadon Vale in the middle ground.

View c) shows the Leadon Valley stretching from Marcle Ridge to May Hill in the south. It illustrates the neighbourhood's rural character with no other settlements visible (the northern end of Ledbury is visible in the foreground).

View d) shows the townscape in more detail, the High Street and its historic black and white buildings can be seen. The river and Leadon Valley are beyond and finally Marcle Ridge.

View e) – this is a view corridor which gives glimpses of the town in its setting in front of the Hills and the local woods. The tower of the Barrett Browning Building and the Church Spire are focal points.

View f) – the clock tower of the Barrett Browning Building is very distinctive and the church spire is the tallest building in the neighbourhood. Both are landmarks locally and for the wider area including from Marcle Ridge and the Malvern Hills.

View g) - this is a view corridor from Green Lane in Dog Wood – it overlooks the Coddington Road (which runs from the Worcester Road towards Old Colwal) and looks across to Conigree Wood to the north east there are views of the Malverns including the obelisk, the the south east there are glimpses of Ledbury Church Spire.

View h) – this view gives unimpeded views of the Malvern Hills with farmed landscape in the foreground.

View i) – this is a good view of the viaduct, with fields and trees in the fore and middle ground and unimpeded by built environment.

View j)- Another long view to the town at the foot of the Malvern Hills, this view is recognised as exceptional by the Malvern Hills AONB, it is a good view of the town in its setting including the farmed landscape.

Sitting as it does on the lower slopes of the Malvern Hills AONB, the setting of the town is also important. This is recognised in Core Strategy policy LB1 where eastern and western viewpoints are highlighted as requiring protection and enhancement. Three areas have been identified as particularly sensitive in that regard.

- *The area to the south-west of the Gloucester Road roundabout is extremely visually prominent, containing many landscape and visual features and factors that contribute towards its very low to low capacity to accommodate development. It lies adjacent to the AONB boundary and forming an important and integral part of its setting; is a highly visually prominent at one of the main gateways into the town; is*

of very good landscape quality and in good condition; and contains a historically-important eye-catching tree clump on the crest of the hill.

- *The importance of the area north of Little Marcle Road between Walls Hill Camp and the town's western edge is mainly due to the presence of the scheduled monument for which it forms an important part of its setting. It also recognised as important to the historical setting of the town, a fact highlighted by Historic England. It contains many other very high and high-value landscape and visual features and factors, including those contributing to the town's green infrastructure. The western half's level of capacity to accommodate development is judged to be very low, and the level on the eastern half, very low to low.*
- *The area to the east of the Dymock Road to the south of recent housing development contributes positively to the rural character and appearance of the setting to Ledbury and Malvern Hills AONB. Notable landscape and ecological features include species rich hedgerows, marshy grassland, woodland copse, important views from the west to the AONB from the west, including the Hereford Trail. The landscape has a medium to high sensitivity. This evidence clearly indicates that its capacity for accommodating development is low, and very low to low for suburban development in this largely rural landscape.*

The areas of importance to these settings are show on Map 4

Map 16 – To be added to show views

(1 photograph from current NDP)

Objective NE3:

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

Policy NE3.1

Allotments and Community Gardens in and around Ledbury

The conservation, enhancement and/or creation of allotments and community gardens will be supported.

The availability of locally produced food has an historic importance going back centuries. Feedback from the population of the town consistently rates community gardens and areas in which allotments can be provided as being important to them, and there is demand expressed for the provision of new community garden and allotment areas. Demand for locally produced food is also very well established and an important element of the economic wellbeing of the town and its agricultural surroundings.

Objective NE4:

To ensure that agricultural and other economic activity in the countryside does not unacceptably impact on the existing natural beauty, biodiversity and visual appeal of Ledbury and surrounding areas.

Policy NE4.1

Farming Landscape around Ledbury

Proposals for farm diversification, agricultural development and other major development in the rural parts of the Parish requiring planning permission, for example, intensive farming units, poly tunnels or solar farms, should be compatible with the rural area, in particular protecting landscape character and the form of any historic farmstead through:

- a) Ensuring the character, scale and location of the proposal is compatible with the landscape setting and any area of nature conservation importance.
- b) Resisting the loss of or significant adverse effects upon heritage assets.
- c) Where appropriate, buildings should use materials and colours that blend sensitively into the landscape.
- d) Locating new buildings or other development sensitively within the landscape and these should normally be adjacent to and of compatible design with an existing group of buildings.
- e) Reusing or adapting existing farm buildings where these are available and possible.
- f) Limiting redevelopment of existing buildings that may no longer be suitable for an existing farm diversification proposal to small expansion upon the original building floorspace such that it would be in scale with the area and landscape concerned. Such proposals should also result in benefits to the environment and deal comprehensively with the full extent of the site. Avoiding the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land to permanent development where land of a lower quality is available.
- g) Fully screening any external storage, parking, and ancillary uses.
- h) Requiring diversification proposals on farms to be complementary to the agricultural operations and operated as part of the farm holding.
- i) Ensuring the traffic generated by the proposal can be accommodated safely upon the local highway network.

The Plan is sensitive to the need for balancing local farming efficiency and employment with the importance of tourism and attracting people to Ledbury and the surrounding countryside such as the Malvern Hills AONB. These are vital economic considerations for the area. The character of the Neighbourhood Area's countryside should not be harmed by inappropriate forms of development. Core Strategy RA5 covers development that will support the rural economy, especially those aimed at diversification. Although this might include farm diversification, it does not contain any specific policies for the development of agricultural buildings or operations where planning permission is required. This policy aims to address the landscape and related effects of such development as well as proposals for diversification and other larger-scale developments. It aims to protect landscape quality and character; heritage assets, especially historic farmsteads; protect high quality agricultural land; and ensure an appropriate scale of development. It highlights the need for relevant impact assessments where the landscape and/or heritage assets may be affected, and these should inform both design and location. Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy policy RA5 covers other aspects associated with the re-use of rural buildings.

Objective NE5:

To register the historic woods above Ledbury as being community assets, for their historical significance, utility value, contribution to the amenity of the town and wellbeing of residents, as being sources of sustainable wood supplies and as sites of natural beauty and wildlife biodiversity that make Ledbury an attractive tourist destination.

Policy NE5.1

Protecting Ledbury's Woods

The conservation and/or enhancement of Frith, Conigree, Wall Hills and Dog Hill Woods above Ledbury, or their setting will be supported. Proposals which protect community access to these woods or demonstrate alternative proposals are in place to maintain community access to these important community assets will be supported. Proposals which promote active woodland management to maximise habitat diversity will be supported.

The woods of Frith, Conigree and Dog Hill on the hills above Ledbury have been an historical and important source of employment, resource and leisure activity for centuries and continue to have that important role to the community today. Conigree, as it is known locally, is an ancient woodland site of 56 hectares which is rich in plant and insect life, with evidence of prehistoric occupation such as Neolithic flint implements and in more recent times, the sites of a water mill and lime kiln.

Dog Hill Wood is a popular walking area of mixed deciduous woodland of mature oak, ash and yew, with wood anemones, bluebells and primroses in spring. Frith Wood is a 75 hectare wood, owned and managed by the Forestry Commission and probably identified with the wood 'half a league by a half' mentioned in the Domesday survey of 1086. It has traces of human activity from well before that time and its many paths allow the exploration of the flora, fauna and history of the area. All three are listed by The Woodland Trust as woods of note worth visiting.

The community regards it as vital that these woods are registered as recognised community assets to ensure that adequate notice and the right of representation are given, should any activity or change be proposed that will alter the nature of these amenity values to Ledbury and surrounding communities. The Town Council will explore opportunities to achieve this.

10. Community & Leisure

Community & Leisure - The Background

Related statistics and comment from current NDP amended as necessary.

(1 photograph from current NDP)

The vision for Ledbury makes clear that the local services and facilities are an important part of ensuring good 'quality of life' for new and existing residents. The planning system has a responsibility in planning for health and wellbeing. Protection and enhancement of existing and enabling new facilities are provided for in this NDP. Ledbury has a higher-than-average ageing population requiring support. Equally important are the needs of younger people, many of whom are struggling on low incomes, and they should not be overlooked. An aim of the Plan is to establish Ledbury as a desirable location, by offering a good standard of facilities, services, and open spaces.

Ledbury Town Plan, 2016, comprehensively addresses the views of residents on health and youth services, among others, and some of the key issues are addressed through this NDP.

One of the main challenges for the town is how to manage the expansion of health services to meet growing expectations of patients and the forecast increase in population. The two former general practices are now merged to form the Ledbury Health Partnership serving the town and its hinterland. Its current accommodation is fragmented and will not be suitable in the future, either to meet expected population growth or to accommodate the range of NHS and associated services expected for a modern health service practice. The limited parking for health staff and patients is an additional issue. There is a need for an improved NHS dental care facility, as a service is only available one day a week in the NHS Minor Injuries Unit. Therefore, dental care can only be accessed privately or by travelling to neighbouring towns. The NDP is not the forum to address healthcare issues, but it should enable the provision of new premises in an appropriate location to meet current and the future needs.

As for leisure facilities, and especially as a means of helping to reduce the demands on health care, there is substantial evidence from consultation on the NDP and Town Plans, that the community highly values the town's public and green spaces for recreational use. However, there is a shortfall in playing fields that needs to be addressed. They also want to see an enhanced footpath network in and around Ledbury.

It is worth noting that two of the town's main community assets are already protected—the Recreation Ground is protected under 'Fields in Trust' while the Community Hall is held in trust by the community.

Where appropriate the need for community services and facilities which might be addressed through this NDP are reflected in specific policies.

(1 photograph)

Community & Leisure - Objectives & Policies

Objective CL1:

To enable improvements to medical, care, emergency, educational and youth facilities commensurate with the needs of the whole community as the town grows.

Policy CL1.1

Community Services and Facilities

Proposals for new or expanded community services and facilities in Ledbury will be supported where residential amenity is protected. Such community services and facilities include, but is not limited to, health and care services, the emergency services and educational and youth services.

Developer Contributions via Section 106, Community Infrastructure Levy and/or other mechanisms will be sought to enable the provision of these community services and facilities to ensure that growth fully mitigates the impacts that it causes in Ledbury and the surrounding area.

In all instances access and facilities for people with mobility impairment should be provided.

(1 photograph from current NDP)

Improvements to community services and facilities are needed as growth takes places in and around Ledbury from housing and other development. These improvements may include the delivery of new on-site facilities, or cumulative contributions may be required towards provision off-site or through complete relocation where this will achieve greater benefits. This will ensure the existing community of Ledbury and the surrounding area suffers no detrimental impacts upon their facilities and services as a result of development growth, whilst at the same time ensuring that new residents and occupiers are able to receive the services and facilities they need. In terms of health facilities, a new Health Partnership has recently been formed and there is pressure to provide improved or new facilities to accommodate both a surgery and possibly complementary services reflecting a holistic approach to health care within the community and also population growth which has placed significant burdens upon services available within current premises. Accommodation needs for the partnership has been identified as a high priority for which a solution needs to be found. Options will need to be assessed and it is too early to be able to determine exact needs and identify a site. Delivery of a new facility depends upon central funding channelled through Herefordshire and Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Group.

Care services are also under pressure as a consequence of a high level of growth in the elderly population. In relation to emergency services, it is understood that no commitment can be given at the moment to delivering a new emergency services hub in Ledbury until the factors such as funding and operational benefits can be identified and comprehensively addressed. However, the services concerned are open to discussions although it is considered that the matter is unlikely to progress to a stage where sites might be considered before this NDP is reviewed following the review of Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy.

Facilities for youth have deteriorated since the previous NDP was prepared in that no temporary accommodation is now available. It is therefore even more important to provide a permanent building for non-sport related facilities. Teenagers and young adults seeking

advice, guidance or a safe environment currently lack support and information, and this must be addressed to provide a balanced and inclusive community.

Should proposals providing accommodation for any of the community services covered in this policy be advanced, the impact of such development upon residential amenity and other material considerations would need to be considered and determined in accordance with other relevant policies in this NDP and the Core Strategy. All such services and facilities must be accessible by those with restricted mobility.

(2 photographs from current NDP)

Objective CL2: To protect and enhance our green and open spaces and playing fields, including the Riverside Park and the Line Bank Town Trail.

Policy CL2.1

Protection of Open and Green Spaces and Playing Fields

Important open or green spaces which contribute to the distinctive spatial character, form, pattern and green infrastructure of Ledbury, or any existing playing fields shown on Map 17 **(and Ledbury Town Policies Map)** will be protected in accordance with Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy policies OS3 and LD3 (or any successor policies). This protection will apply to any other land which may become the subject of applications for development, where it is considered that the open nature of the site is of such importance to warrant protection when judged against the following criteria:

1. It provides relief within an otherwise built-up frontage or within developments.
2. It creates and maintains a well-defined edge to the settlement.
3. It provides a buffer between incompatible uses.
4. It provides important views into or out of settlements and of attractive buildings and their settings, or of attractive landscapes.
5. It provides an important amenity of value to the local community.
6. It represents a familiar or distinctive element within an attractive street scene.
7. It represents a historic element within the origins or development of the settlement or area.
8. It provides wildlife corridors or stepping-stones within built up areas.
9. It contributes in other important ways to the objectives for green infrastructure set out in Appendix 2.

NPPF guidance indicates that access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important in order to help meet diverse objectives – including recreation, amenity, environmental, nature conservation and biodiversity and climate change. This policy identifies those notable areas that should be protected and sets out criteria for other areas which are too small to be shown or have yet to be identified. The

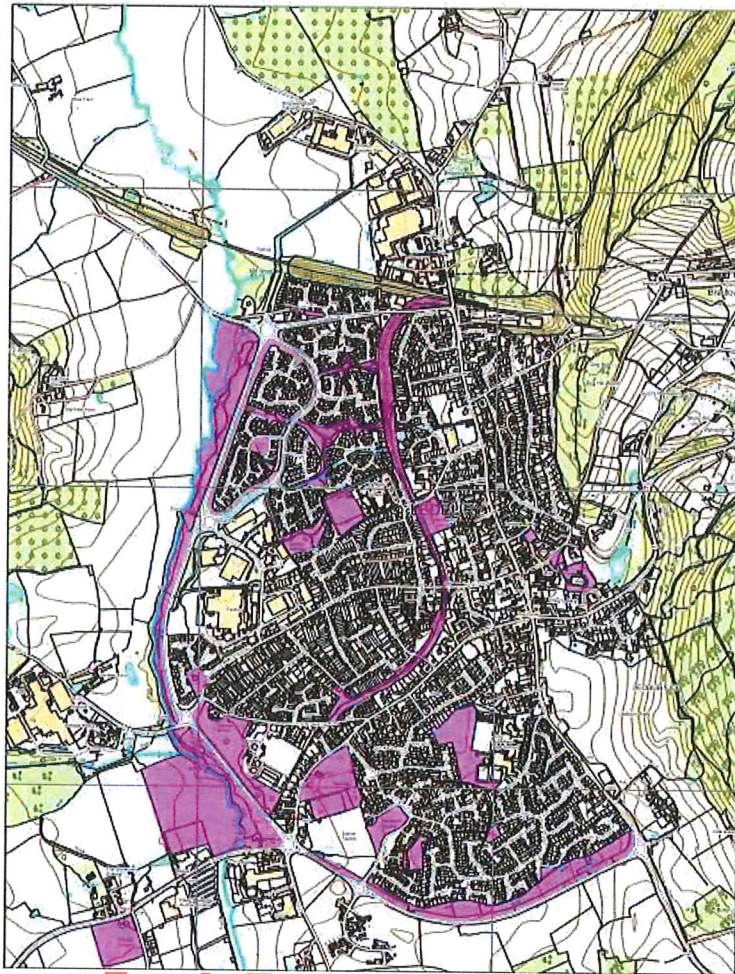
form of protection is that offered through Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy policies OS3 (Loss of open space, sports, or recreation facilities) and LD3 (Green infrastructure). The first does allow for its loss provided it is surplus to requirements or there is a replacement facility. It also acknowledges the contribution such space makes to green infrastructure, which the second policy covers. Appendix 2 to this NDP indicates what green infrastructure elements are important for certain green corridors and enhancement areas. Of particular importance are the town's Riverside Walk and Town Trail.

Although a number of other NDP policies address the benefits of open and green space to the conservation, wildlife and historic areas, this policy affords protection to land valued locally for recreational and amenity purposes where it contributes to the character of the town and the quality of life for residents of all ages. Such open spaces, whether or not there is public access to them, form an important contribution to green infrastructure.

Whilst a number of parcels of land known to be valued for various purposes in contributing to green infrastructure have been identified, there may well be additional areas whose contribution to the town and its immediate surroundings is not fully appreciated. Their value may only become apparent when development is proposed. Examples include small gaps that provide relief in otherwise built-up frontage and small areas of valued amenity land or where buildings with open spaces between them are important to local character. The criteria listed in the policy should be used in considering planning applications, to judge whether open and green spaces and playing fields are of sufficient value such that they should be retained.

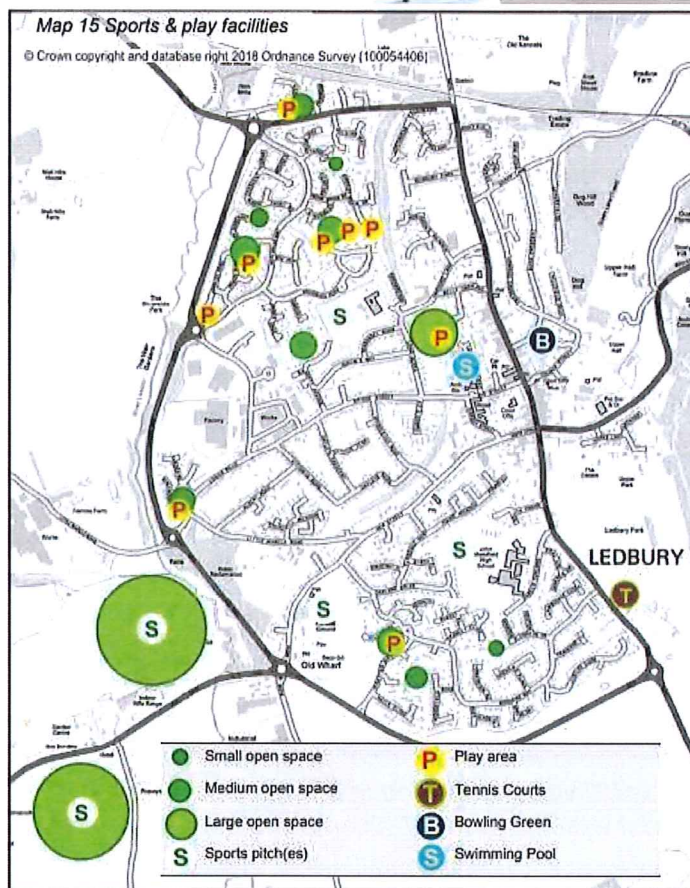
The planning and management for these elements of green infrastructure to meet other relevant parts of Core Strategy policy LD3 have been addressed through other policies in this NDP.

Working



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Map 17 showing areas to be protected (Magenta) through policy CL2.1 (To be redrafted for published version)



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Map 18 - Sports & play facilities (Map 15 in current NDP)

Policy CL2.2

Alternative Use of Land South of Little Marcle Road as Playing Fields.

The use of land adjacent to Ledbury Rugby Club and South of Little Marcle Road amounting to around 4.6 hectares shown on Ledbury Town Policies for playing fields will be supported to meet the needs of the town over the plan period.

The provision of associated facilities such as changing rooms, club house, floodlighting and vehicle parking shall be located where it will minimise the effect of views from Malvern Hills AONB. Provision should be made for biodiversity protection and enhancement as appropriate contributing towards the town's green infrastructure network. Appropriate car parking provision shall be made. In bringing forward the proposal, measures should protect footpath LR12 and bridleway LR8, should they be affected, and make the area as accessible as possible by walking and cycling. **NB any guidance about access and other criteria to be added following discussion with Herefordshire Council**

An investment plan to deliver facilities to meet playing field needs within the town, prepared in 2016, has been pursued since that time which sought to address deficiencies in football, rugby and cricket. The latter saw improved facilities through the relocation of the Cricket Club to a new facility in 2017. The outstanding requirements for Rugby would be addressed through the Rugby Club utilising land it obtained through an asset transfer and currently

leased to Ledbury Swifts Football Club, resulting in the latter losing much of its pitches. Ledbury Town FC is also under pressure to relocate, its current pitch being located adjacent to a housing development site where parking, its use of floodlights and crowd noise is not ideal in terms of protecting residential amenity. Various amounts of land and site options have been investigated through a sports partnership comprising the clubs, Herefordshire Council, Herefordshire Football Association, The Football Association, Ledbury Town Council and other relevant sporting bodies. The FA and Sports England are very clear that the best way forward is for a joint football facility housing Ledbury Swifts and Ledbury Town in order to sustain football in the future with the two clubs providing junior and senior football respectively and to enable the development of women's football. The development of a sustainable football hub for Ledbury also has wider support.

This policy seeks to address the shortfall in terms of football pitches by supporting the use of an appropriate area of land to the west of the town. Alternatives were investigated¹⁵ and the site indicated has in principle support of the two Councils and relevant sporting bodies. The initiative will also free up land at Ledbury Rugby Club so that it can meet both existing needs and deficiencies based on future growth requirements.

Delivery of the playing pitches will be through significant financial contributions from the Football Foundation and Herefordshire Council, both of which have been involved in discussions for some time and have indicated funds are available subject to meeting their respective outputs. The two clubs are aware of these requirements and set out a framework to achieve them. The landowners (including that required for access) are aware of the proposal and indicated a willingness to release the land subject to negotiation. The site is in an area where Herefordshire Core Strategy indicates a minimum of 12 hectares of employment land is required. Other proposals in this NDP are set out to more than meet this requirement (see policy EE1.1) and the two proposals are seen as complementary, utilising a joint access.

Specific requirements in planning for the development include providing associated infrastructure, landscape and biodiversity measures, protecting existing public rights of way and, if possible, encouraging access through cycling and walking. This policy is in response to Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy policy LB1 (bullet 4) and its paragraph 4.5.12.

¹⁵ Footnote providing the link to the Topic Paper

11. Transport

Transport - The Background

(1 photograph from current NDP)

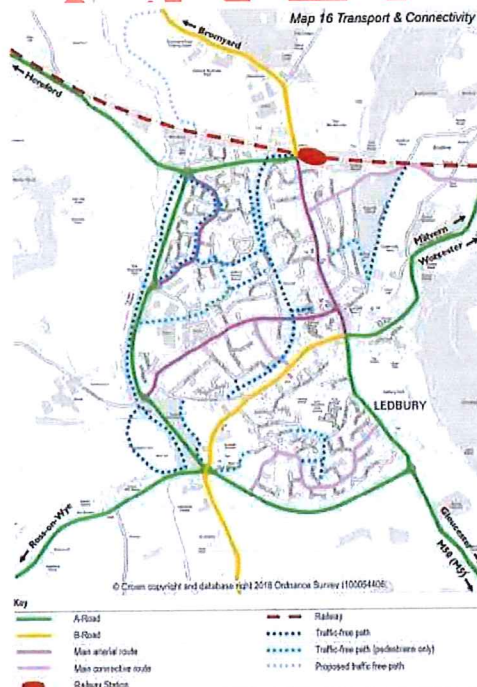
It is national and local policy to reduce the impact of, and reliance on, car travel in order to reduce pollution and encourage better health by human effort. The town can already get congested at peak times of the day. Moreover, with over 1,000 new houses planned for the town, it can be expected that the 'car population' will increase by in excess of 2,000.

Cars will, however, continue to be used by the rural population to get into the town for work, shopping and for access to financial and medical services. In addition, Ledbury is an attraction for tourists, with a large number of viewable historic buildings, so access for cars and coaches must be maintained. By promoting vehicular tourism, we possibly add to an already congested traffic problem. There are no easy solutions to this conundrum.

Ledbury is fortunate to have a mainline railway station, which has direct services to Hereford, other regional centres and London. The limited capacity for parking at the station is exceeded daily, causing overspill parking on the adjacent main roads and in surrounding residential areas. Increasing use of train services for work, business and leisure needs to be supported by appropriate, dedicated parking provision nearby.

The Herefordshire Council Local Transport Plan (2016-2031) specifically identifies the need for improved access and car parking at Ledbury railway station.

Related statistics and comment from current NDP updated as necessary



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Map 19 Transport and Connectivity (Map 16 in current NDP)

There is currently no access, other than a footbridge, to the Malvern/Worcester platform. The station is unmanned so crossing on the level is impossible. People unable to use the

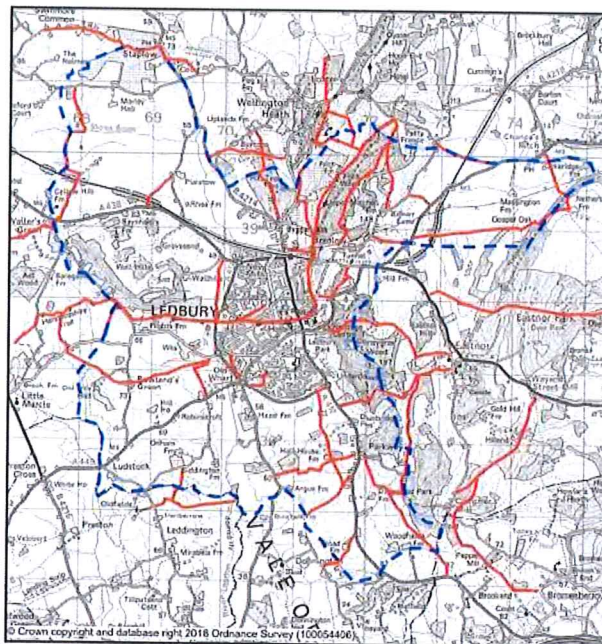
footbridge (wheelchair users, parents with pushchairs etc.) can only travel in the Malvern/Worcester direction by first going to Hereford. This is an intolerable burden on the less mobile and needs to be addressed.

Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy policy SS4 indicates that Herefordshire Council will work with local communities and others to bring forward improvements to the local transport network to reduce congestion, improve air quality and road safety, and offer greater transport choices. A number of transport related issues and actions are identified in the Ledbury Public Realm and Transport Appraisal¹⁶ and these might form the basis for the working relationship between the Town Council, Herefordshire Council and others under that Core Strategy policy. They cover measures such as traffic calming, improvements to footpaths and cycle routes, junction improvements and remodelling, upgrading public transport infrastructure, environmental enhancements involving the highway, road safety including safe routes to school, and car parking strategy including residents parking.

Transport - Objectives and Policies

Objective TR1:

To promote the use of sustainable transport methods such as cycling, walking and public transport as a primary means of getting around the Parish of Ledbury and providing connectivity to neighbouring parishes.



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Map 20 Public footpath connectivity from current NDP (Map 17 in current NDP)

PolicyTR1.1

Footpaths & Cycleways

¹⁶ Prepared by Balfour Beatty Living Places – see [\(Add link\)](#)

Improvements and/or extensions to the network of footpaths and cycling routes in the Neighbourhood Area will be supported, especially where they:

- Create appropriate crossing facilities dedicated to cycle, pedestrian and disabled access from the proposed strategic housing location north of the viaduct to give safe access to the station, schools, out of town shops and the town centre.
- Improve cycling, pedestrian and disabled access to and from the station and the town, especially where junctions create a hazard.
- Improve the Ledbury Town Trail to provide better cycling and disabled access along its whole length, including provision of street lighting and footbridges.
- Extend the Ledbury Town Trail at the Ross Road roundabout over Leadon Way to provide safer cycling, pedestrian and disabled access to the Rugby Club and new Cricket Club.
- Provide an appropriate crossing facility across Leadon Way at the Little Marcle Road roundabout for cyclists, pedestrians and the disabled, going to and from the Little Marcle business and farming areas.

Improvements to encourage cycling and walking connectivity through the provision and upgrade of crossings, footways and cycleways would help offset road congestion, limit and reduce air pollution, and provide a healthier option for short essential and recreational trips around the town. The new routes will focus on creating links between new and existing residential areas and local facilities and services; predominantly schools and community facilities; and the railway station. Applications for all new development must demonstrate how account has been taken to improve the pedestrian and cycle network.

A Toucan crossing has recently been installed over the Leadon Way ring road to serve development south of Leadon Way, providing a safe route and supporting the cycling, pedestrian and disabled access priorities. A similar link to serve existing and proposed new business areas and playing fields south of Little Marcle Road and the Riverside Park will be even more important given the proposals set out in this NDP.

Other footpath and cycle way improvements the NDP will support include:

- *Improvements in maintenance and waymark signage on important paths leading out of the town and into the surrounding countryside.*
- *Provide shared use access from the viaduct site development (Ledbury SUE) to include crossing over A438 to link to Riverside Park and extending northwards connecting to the town's allotments and the neighbouring parish of Wellington Heath.*
- *Maintaining or improving existing or adding new connecting footpaths to the neighbouring parishes of Eastnor, Colwall, Pixley and Bosbury.*
- *Provide a crossing and shared use of path, over the bypass near the Full Pitcher roundabout linking the Town Trail with Old Wharf Industrial Estate and along the north side of the A449.*

The Town Council liaises regularly with the Ledbury Footpaths Officer on footpath improvements and maintenance to keep them safe and accessible as required.

(1 photograph from current NDP)

Policy TR1.2

Highway Requirements

Where development proposals are advanced, these should ensure:

Highway Design

- a) Proposals would not cause such an increase in traffic that it would have a significant adverse effect on residential amenity.
- b) New development is designed in accordance with Herefordshire Council's Highway Design Guide for New Developments.
- c) Highway layouts within new developments minimise the impact of roads on the environment and encourage reduced speeds.
- d) Any new street furniture and signage that may be required should be minimal and consistent where this is possible.

Active Travel Measures

- e) Layouts support a pedestrian, cyclist and mobility vehicle friendly environment suitable for all users by creating convenient links to local facilities, the town centre, the public rights of way network, local and natural green space and public transport connections.
- f) Layouts should also provide for the safety of children in areas designed and located for their play.
- g) Where appropriate, travel plans are provided that include offsite measures such as supporting infrastructure to promote active travel.

Parking Arrangements

- h) Proposals will not result in indiscriminate or on-street parking but should provide adequate off-street parking for residents, employees and visitors, as appropriate.
- i) Where appropriate, proposals address the need to reduce on-street parking problems that may exist within the vicinity.
- j) Parking and the design for vehicle use must not dominate or detract from the public realm.
- k) Provision is made for cycle parking including, where appropriate, businesses providing changing facilities, lockers and safe cycle storage.

Related Sustainable Transport Infrastructure

- l) Off-road parking spaces and appropriate public hard landscaped areas are constructed using permeable materials.
- m) All new developments with parking make provision for electric vehicle charging at an appropriate level which should suit the needs of the expected level of traffic generation.
- n) Any new street lighting is encouraged to be kept to a minimum and avoid light pollution in the immediate environment and local amenity.

With the need to accommodate further development, it is essential that the highway requirements are met through a comprehensive approach covering design requirements, promoting active travel, managing parking and ensuring associated infrastructure is incorporated. Safety of all residents, and especially children, older people and those with disabilities, is paramount and the network should be capable of coping with the traffic generated. This applies not only in the locations where growth is proposed but also elsewhere in the plan area. It is also important that residential amenity and the wider environment are protected from the impact of traffic. Design measures should be used to

calm traffic, fit layouts into the landscape and avoid clutter. Areas where access should be provided to local or natural green space and the public rights of way network are highlighted in Appendix 2.

Encouraging residents to minimise the use of cars is becoming increasingly important and all measures to promote this should be utilised. Layouts should emphasise active travel components ensuring easy and the most direct connection to footways and cycleways that provide access to the town centre, areas of employment and other facilities. Larger sites will need to provide areas for children's play, and they should be in safe locations as well as having easy access. Travel plans are key to ensuring an integrated approach. Measures to encourage active travel, not just through making provision for cycle parking, but through a range of measures, including accommodating the needs of disabled people should be considered according to the proposed use. Measures to promote the health and wellbeing of residents should also be undertaken, for example by providing links to the Public Rights of Way network.

Vehicle parking should be sufficient for the needs of the particular proposal yet located in such ways as to avoid a range of adverse effects. Existing parking problems may need to be addressed where this would constrain a particular use or where development may exacerbate a problem, including taking into account potential intensification of activity.

Careful thought needs to be given to highway related infrastructure to assist with storm water drainage and future proof for the transition to electric cars. Tranquillity within the plan area is something that residents and visitors to the Malvern Hills appreciate. The design and layout of any new development should minimise the need for street lighting. This requirement should not restrict provision or improvements where there is an overriding safety requirement.

Objective TR2:

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

Policy TR2.1

Ledbury Railway Station

Improvements to the accessibility and facilities available at the railway station, connectivity between the station and other sustainable transport modes, additional cycle parking, car parking and step free access to the Malvern/ Worcester platform, will be supported. Any proposals should take account of the siting of the railway station on the boundary of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, in terms of their design.

By improving the station infrastructure, it is hoped to encourage the use of the train over cars for a range of journeys. The Core Strategy recommends consideration of an underground car park to the north requiring a geological assessment and some imaginative design. Land to the north of the current railway station was assessed to determine whether development might enable an alternative access from the north and parking. However, the landscape assessment indicates many landscape features, characteristics and qualities would either be directly or indirectly adversely affected by the proposed scheme. It was clear that they would be in conflict with many policies relating to environmental protection and enhancement and doubtful whether any social or economic scheme benefits would outweigh

the permanent environmental harm that would be caused. Other alternatives might be investigated including a lift for which there was substantial support during the consultation or the redirection of railway lines to the same platform with extended car parking south of the station.

Consideration might also be given to adding a footbridge, at platform height, across the Bromyard Road to improve the connectivity and safety to the existing footpath/Town trail network. Crossing this road is tricky at busy times and road traffic will increase after completion of the north Viaduct housing development.

It is important to maintain and enhance the railway station in Ledbury to ensure it remains a key element of a sustainable transport infrastructure.

(2 photographs from current NDP)

Working Draft

12. Implementation

Herefordshire Council as the local planning authority will determine planning applications for development within the Parish. Such determinations should normally be in accordance with the Development Plan which, for proposals within Ledbury Parish, would include this NDP.

Developers and other applicants for planning permission are encouraged to consult with the Town Council, and the community more generally, in a manner consistent with the scale of the proposal. In relation to significant applications¹⁷ the Town Council would encourage developers to consult with it prior to the submission of a planning application including, where appropriate, attending one of its meetings. These meetings are open to the public. Community consultations are encouraged. Herefordshire Council's Statement of Community Involvement¹⁸ sets out a number of methods and techniques that it will consider undertaking and Ledbury Town Council would encourage developers to consider these for use at the pre-application stage. Developers and other applicants for planning permission should consider their duties for community consultation as set out in paragraph 10.17 of Herefordshire Council's Statement of Community Involvement and may wish to discuss the most appropriate approach to be taken with the Town Council in advance. A statement on the consultation undertaken should be submitted with any planning application.

While the local planning authority will be responsible for development management, Ledbury Town Council will also use this NDP as the basis for making its representations on planning applications. The Town Council will continue to publicise all planning applications. Where necessary, Herefordshire Council will be asked to extend the time within which responses are required so that appropriate local publicity can be given before the Town Council considers important planning applications.

Herefordshire Council is required to monitor the achievement of its targets for a range of development types including whether sites are coming forward for development to meet its strategy set out in Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy. The Town Council will also monitor the effectiveness of the approach it has taken to the various issues covered in the NDP policies. This will be done through its annual report. That report will indicate:

- i) The number of dwellings granted planning permission within the Town's area, including a running total covering the Plan Period.
- ii) A list of planning applications for other matters received during the year indicating whether they are covered by policies in this NDP, the Town Council's representations made, and whether it is considered that they have been determined in accordance with the NDP.

It is anticipated that a review of the NDP will be needed, most likely when Herefordshire Core Strategy is also reviewed. In the unlikely situation that the strategy and approach in relation to its key requirements, including housing and employment land, does not deliver the level required to meet the targets for the Town, discussions will take place with Herefordshire Council upon whether an early review is necessary. Regardless of external pressures, Ledbury Town Council will undertake a review of the NDP at least every 5 years to ensure that it remains current and relevant to targets and community need.

¹⁷ See paragraph 10.16 in Herefordshire Council's Statement of Community Involvement at <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/1566/statement-of-community-involvement-january-2017>

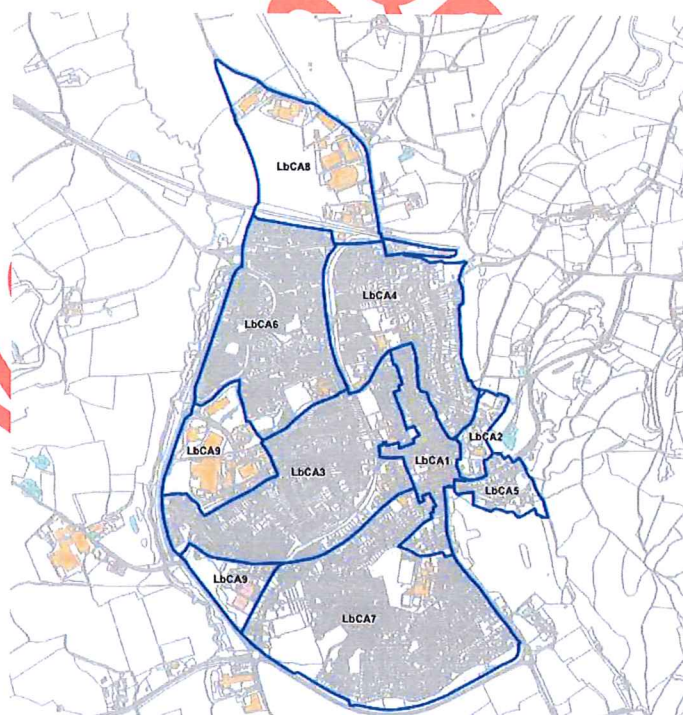
¹⁸ Ibid paragraph 8.4

APPENDIX 1: Design Influences for Ledbury Character Areas

The following characteristics and features have been identified for various areas within the built-up area of Ledbury which should be used to inform the design and/or appearance of new development within them, including alterations and extensions. The areas comprise those defined in Ledbury Rapid Townscape Assessment¹⁹ and the characteristics distilled mainly from that document, with some limited additions where these relate to matters from the previous Ledbury Design Guide where they are considered useful.

Changes to details such as doors and windows, the creation of parking forecourts and alterations to boundary features can erode local character. However, within residential streets outside of Ledbury Conservation Area a balance should be drawn between the importance of maintaining local distinctiveness and enabling residents to achieve their ambitions in terms of new dwellings or alterations and extensions to existing properties that meet their aspirations in terms of improvements. In these areas the aim should be to reflect the scale of development and to incorporate some locally distinctive features found within the particular residential streets so that the neighbourhood's identity is maintained or reinforced through an appropriate degree of coherence in terms of design.

Not all built-up areas of the town are included in the assessment with a number of new developments on the periphery of the town having taken place since it was prepared. Where appropriate, small or medium sized developments²⁰ in peripheral areas should utilise information contained in the assessments for the immediately adjacent areas. Larger developments should set out the approach proposed in a comprehensive design statement and the use of design review is recommended.



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Map 21 showing Ledbury Rapid Townscape Assessment Character Areas (Source Herefordshire Council)

¹⁹ <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/1687/ledbury-rapid-townscape-assessment>

²⁰ NPPF paragraph 69 defines small and medium sized site in relation housing. Other forms of development should be assessed within the context of the particular landscape setting.

Ledbury Historic/Commercial Core Character Area (Reference LbCA1)

- This forms part of the central commercial and historic area of Ledbury and also the core of the Conservation Area where there is a requirement to preserve or enhance its character and/or appearance.
- The character area should continue to maintain a strong sense of place informed by its history, medieval plan-form, and historic buildings.
- Townscape density is high and street frontages are generally continuous. Most buildings are of two or three storeys. Building frontages are generally regular in width, based on historic burgage plots, except where plots have been amalgamated to accommodate banks and inns.
- The burgage plot frontages should maintain a regularity of scale with a variety of architectural designs and materials based upon locally distinctive precedent (e.g., timber framed buildings; Georgian brick or rendered facades), and including roofscape features (e.g., gables; parapets; pediments).
- The commercial character of this town centre and commercial area should be enhanced by reflecting traditional shopfronts (both in terms of scale and detailed design) and signage.
- The form, scale, features and nature of buildings within the area's streets is important and change should be informed by a thorough and detailed analysis of any site and its surroundings through Historic Impact Assessments where appropriate.
- The design and appearance of shop fronts, including signage, should reflect the character of the building within which they sit and shop keepers encouraged to maintain attractive displays.
- The following street characteristics are considered relevant considerations:

High Street: The medieval wedge-shaped marketplace dominates the character of High Street with its 17th Century timber-framed Market Hall. Townscape density is high and street frontages are generally continuous. Most buildings are of two or three storeys, with a concentration of three-storey buildings on the east side set at the rear of the footway. The mix of buildings include those with timber-framing and jettied (oversailing) upper floors and buildings that have been re-fronted in brick or render and fitted with sash windows, shopfronts and parapets. The west side of High Street displays greater irregularity. Private alleyways giving access to the rear are important. The visual amalgamation of frontages should be avoided. Building frontages are generally regular in width, based on historic burgage plots, except where plots have been amalgamated to accommodate banks and inns. Some rendered frontages have inserted shopfronts concealing timber frames, indicated by jettied upper stories. On the west side the 19th Century two-storey and stone St Katherine's Hospital, 14th Century sandstone rubble St Katherine's Hall; and the 15th Century timber-framed Master's House form an important group that should be protected, including their settings. Although tree planting within and walling surrounding the adjacent car park offers some mitigation to the effect on their settings, further enhancement would benefit the townscape.

Church Lane: should maintain its cobbled pedestrian form and sense of enclosure through the combination of timbered framed and red brick mostly two-storey buildings. Detail is important through reflecting locally distinctive features such as jettied upper floors, occasional colour washed frontages, and fenestration, among other elements.

Church Street: built-form comprises mostly three storey buildings on the north-side and two storey on the south. Its narrow width again heightens the sense of enclosure which should be retained. The buildings are mostly red brick with some roughcast. The footway is cobbled. Detailing is again important as in Church Lane.

Bye Street: the eastern part of the street is quite narrow, reflecting the historic sense of enclosure close to the main street. The street becomes wider as you travel westwards. In places the historic townscape has been replaced by post 1950s commercial or civic buildings, a number of which are set back further than surviving older buildings. Although brick is the predominant material, the age, scale and architectural style varies along the street as do the range of uses, including shops and similar commercial buildings, fire station, ambulance station, and youth centre. Although consistency with the central areas historic form reduces as you travel westwards, the potential to strengthen this link should be taken where opportunities arise. There are gaps in the street frontage. A number of forecourts and parking areas present incongruous features.

The Homend: has a long slightly curving nature of the street with a continuous frontage comprising mainly three-storey buildings closer to the town centre with two storey buildings beyond. Commercial uses predominate for most of its length although the north end of the street is primarily residential. It exhibits a variety in terms of architectural form and roofscape. There are a number of timber-framed buildings, some of which are concealed behind later frontages. Timber-framing is an important element within the central core with variations including stucco, jettied upper floors, inserted 19th Century shopfronts, roughcast, exposed medieval cruck-trusses, symmetrical Georgian houses with individual design features, and terraces of plain houses, the latter generally located at the north end of the character area. There are some nineteenth Century Victorian red brick buildings the most prominent of which is the Barratt Browning Institute. Alleyways and carriageways give access to the rear of premises, and in some cases to shops and other commercial premises in refurbished buildings behind the main frontage. As one of the most visible parts of the town centre and Conservation Area, it is essential that any change should reflect its particular characteristics.

The Southend: is dominated by timber-framed buildings at the Lower Cross. On the south east side of the junction is Ledbury Park, the largest and very prominent timber framed building in Ledbury. As you travel southwards Ledbury Park gardens is then enclosed by a prominent high brick wall which reduces in scale to include railings above a lower wall further to the south. This is a strong component of the Conservation Area's character in this location. Beyond a limited number of firstly timber framed then brick painted or stucco commercial buildings close to Lower Cross on the west side of Southend, the buildings present a residential character built mainly in red brick on the rear of the footway, initially as three-storey town houses then reducing to a combination of 2 and 3 storey buildings. The southern end of the Conservation Area and this character area is punctuated on the west side by an imposing three storey property, a green gap and then a strongly contrasting small single storey 'dormer' Toll Cottage, whose exceptional and idiosyncratic appearance is added to by a gothic style arched doorway. On the east side, the end of the Ledbury Park wall and Conservation Area are similarly punctuation by the three storey Bowling Green Cottage. There should be no change to the separate characters presented for the two sides of this street.

New Street: New Street extends westwards from the Lower Cross. It is narrow at the east end, becoming wider further west. The townscape scale is less regular than

elsewhere in the character area, with the exception of Bye Street although the street frontage is continuous at the east end with gaps further to the west to allow access to the rear of properties. Buildings are of two and three storeys. There is a strong sense of enclosure at the east end where the street narrows and the first floor of a timber-framed building extends over the footway supported by wooden posts, and where the jettied upper floors of several timber-framed buildings (now faced with roughcast) oversail the footway. A mixture of timber frame, white painted brick, stucco and red brick intermingle although lighter colours predominate to reduce the feeling of enclosure. The street is primarily commercial, and enhancement would be through removing the 19th or 20th Century shopfronts.

Worcester Road: This extends eastwards from the Lower Cross. The north side is lined by a very regular stuccoed or painted brick frontage of symmetrical 18th Century two storey houses set at the rear of a narrow footway. Common features include prominent doorcases with pediments, and sash windows. Some variation is introduced in the form of several shallow bay windows, several early 20th Century shop windows, and a carriage entrance. The street is primarily residential and should remain so.

Ecclesiastical Precinct Character Area (Reference LbCA2)

- This character area also forms part of Ledbury Conservation Area where character and appearance should be preserved or enhanced.
- The Parish Church of St Michael and All Angels Church sitting within a high walled churchyard of red brick and sandstone rubble dominates this space and provides a quiet green space.
- Lanes enclosed by high walls give access to the churchyard from the south and from the north.
- A dispersed arrangement of large dwellings sit in generous plots as an associated feature surrounding the churchyard on three sides.
- A heavily landscaped park sits just outside its fourth and eastern side.
- A Walled Garden, a landscaped public garden enclosed by a high redbrick wall, sits at the eastern end of Church Street and Church Road and is also a quiet sanctuary close to the town centre.
- The townscape density is low although many of the buildings have large footprints. Most buildings are of two storeys, several with wings of one storey.
- Mature planting of trees and hedgerows play a number of roles including screening and softening the effects development.
- There is little opportunity for further development without the loss of these particular distinctive features.

Central-West Civic/Residential Character Area (Reference LbCA3)

- The area is characterised by a mixture of high density planned residential development both public sector and private, beginning in the mid-19th Century and continuing into the 21st Century.
- The area is generally fine-grained and of high density,
- The large green space comprising the public recreation ground and playground south of Orchard Lane is supported by a smaller public green space and playground at Childer Road and Lower Road, and these are important amenities.
- The Ledbury Town Trail is a green corridor extending through the character area from north to south.
- Important views include looking northeast along New Street where the spire of St Michael and All Angels Church towers above the roofscape; looking east from upper

- Bridge Street to views of the wooded slopes of Coneygree Wood; and looking west there are more distant views of wooded hills.
- Much of the development in the area is of a standard and repetitive urban estate form and character. Locally distinctive character and features found within the particular residential streets include:

Bridge Street/Lower Road: Houses are set back behind gardens upon this long curving road, and distant views of Wall Hills together with a sense of openness are maintained. The east end is characterised by two-storey brick terraces with pitched slate roofs, set on narrow plots with front gardens and brick boundary walls. Further west the street is lined by standard designed two-storey semi-detached brick houses and short terraces on the west side, and rendered on the east side, with front gardens and hipped tile roofs. On the south side of Lower Road there are several terraces of two-storey brick houses with slate pitched roofs on narrow plots with front gardens. Infilling has taken place through detached houses and bungalows set further back from the road, again utilising brick or render and tiled roofs. Local features include stone lintels, original boundary walls and piers, some timber-framing, painted frontages and porches.

New Street is lined by large detached two-storey brick houses that formerly occupied generous plots with front gardens. Most plots have been sub-divided to accommodate recently-built houses, some of which are set further back. There are areas where density varies including smaller plots with narrow forecourts and some set directly at the back of the footway. At the east end there are several terraces of two and three storey brick houses, although some have rendered frontages. Features include slate roofs, sash windows, bay windows, and hooded doorcases, staggered frontages, and some curved frontages all of which add interest to the streetscape.

Belle Orchard comprises a linear plan. Houses are of two storeys constructed of a mixture red and yellow brick with slate roofs, and some stone dressings, bay windows, and false timber-framing. On the south side of the street most houses are detached; on the north side most are semi-detached or short terraces. There is a range of plot sizes and features include small front gardens, shrubs, hedges and redbrick boundary walls. **Woodleigh Road** comprises plain two-storey brick houses, semi-detached and short terraces, with slate roofs, some with stone lintels or bay windows. They are set on narrow plots with small front gardens enclosed by brick walls. There are some later built houses and bungalows of brick or render, occupying larger plots. Most are set back further from the street behind front gardens.

Victoria Road and Albert Road are characterised by two-storey semi-detached plain brick houses and short terraces with slate roofs. They are set on narrow plots with small front gardens set directly onto the street. Later developments in this area include some larger detached houses set back further from the street in larger plots and several terraces of small two-storey brick houses on much smaller plots set perpendicular to the street.

The Queen's Way area comprises an estate of two-storey semi-detached houses and short terraces of plain brick with hipped tile roofs, with front gardens enclosed by wire and wooden fences and hedges. Occasional grass verges soften the townscape to a limited extent. A later development consists of rendered dwellings, again with hipped tiled roofs but also with door hoods, and some with advanced gables at the front elevation.

Belle Orchard Close and Lawnside Road are characterised by a number of housing types. Short terraces of two-storey brick houses and bungalows, and some two and three storey blocks of flats. Other elements include a small green space, some landscaped grounds, lock-up garages and off-street parking.

Churchill Meadow comprises detached and semi-detached brick with tiled roof bungalows, open front gardens and parking. **Childer Road** is a cul-de-sac development of brick-built semi-detached houses and short terraces on narrow plots with open front gardens, parking and a landscaped green space with playground. At **Market Street** there is a short terrace of two-storey brick houses on very small plots. Staggered frontages, dormer windows, stone dressings, door hoods and small paved open forecourts with plantings add interest to the streetscape. Several retirement or sheltered housing projects on cul-de-sacs have been undertaken on backland sites, including **Harling Court off New Street, Queens Court off Bridge Street, and Woodleigh Close off Woodleigh Street.**

Lawnside Road and Market Street area contains several civic and utilities buildings, generally brick-clad modular frame buildings of one or more storeys. Most of these buildings have adjacent surface parking areas, including a public car park off Lawnside Road.

- Development should especially try to avoid eroding the 19th Century character through significant changes which have occurred through unsympathetic development or alterations.

North-East Residential Character Area (Reference LbCA4)

- The character area includes a wide range of residential developments dating from the 17th Century although much is of mid to late 20th Century date, with its contemporary form, materials and construction methods. Of particular note are parts of The Homend, an area of large 18th Century houses and Victorian villas on generous plots with mature gardens and trees enclosed by hedges and brick walls. Part of Homend Crescent a "homes fit for heroes" 1920s local authority housing development, including crescent-shaped soft landscaping and extensive views across the Leadon valley.
- Much of the character area is of fairly high density. There is a small number of buildings with large footprints including a supermarket and three blocks of flats including sheltered housing.
- It contains evidence of historic modes of communication and transportation (canal and railway) which should be preserved as part of its character.
- Locally distinctive character and features within the parts of the character area include:

The Homend is characterised by large two-storey brick villas, detached and semi-detached, of 18th and 19th Century date, set on generous plots with front gardens and mature trees enclosed by hedges and brick or stone walls. Architectural forms include symmetrical plain-fronted Georgian houses with slate hipped or pitched roofs, prominent central doorcases with flat hoods and sash windows. Victorian houses range in style with slate or tile roofs, prominent gables, bay windows, polychrome brick dressings and false timber-framing. Several of these houses have been adapted to multiple occupancy or commercial use and front gardens have been lost to parking areas. Recent residential and commercial developments have eroded the suburban "villa and garden" character of the area.

Newbury Park, is laid out in a linear grid, mainly with detached and semi-detached two storey brick villas set on large plots with small front gardens enclosed by brick walls. Local details include dormer windows, bay windows, yellow brick dressings, balustrades and gables with false timber-framing. Variations include a short terrace and bungalows built on infill sites.

- **The Langland area** comprises two-storey detached and semi-detached houses and bungalows of brick with tile roofs with front gardens, many now parking hardstandings, and enclosed by hedges. **Robinson's Mews** comprises short terraces of two-storey brick houses, with false timber framing. Several larger buildings are located on **Orchard Lane**. They include the symmetrical two-storey redbrick former workhouse; a residential home of three to five storeys, with balconies; and a single storey supermarket with a large surface car park at the front.

The area east of The Homend is residential. **Knapp Lane** is a narrow road with detached houses and bungalows on large plots where the lack of footways give the area a semi-rural character. On the north side are post 1950s private two-storey brick houses and bungalows in cul-de-sacs. Further north, **Masefield Avenue** consists of two-storey brick semi-detached houses and short terraces with small open gardens and parking.

Homend Terrace is a narrow road without footways developed on a piecemeal basis. On the east side are two groups of rendered houses consisting of two-storey semi-detached and short terraces with gables at the front elevation and flat door hoods, each group set behind a crescent shaped grass verge with footpath. Further south on the east side are some two-storey brick or painted brick detached houses. On the west are two-storey houses and bungalows, of various architectural styles, periods and massing, set directly on the street or behind small front gardens in the backland of medieval burgage plots. At the southern end of **Homend Crescent** are brick-built bungalows. **Upperfields** delineates the eastern boundary of the character area along the edge of Dog Hill Wood with several two-storey detached brick houses. This former rural lane has recently been subjected to suburbanisation.

Much of **Bank Crescent** is lined by detached houses and bungalows of 1920s design brick and render design with bay windows. House plots are large and front gardens on the east side. Private garages on both sides of the street are set prominently at the rear of the footway. At its the southern end are a number of large two-storey detached and semi-detached brick houses. Other design elements include render, gables with false timber-framing, bay windows and stone dressings. Most are set on large plots enclosed by brick walls or hedges.

Church Street, on the southern edge of the character area, is dominated by a large two-storey sheltered housing development of flats that present a plain brick façade to the street. Further east, retirement housing on a cul-de-sac consists of several terraces of brick two-storey houses with prominent dormer windows set on small plots.

- Important green spaces include the green corridor associated with Ledbury Town Trail; the bowling green at Bank Crescent; and a green space surrounded by trees at the rear of The Knapp. Several smaller green spaces contribute to the character of residential areas including two crescent-shaped green spaces associated with 1920s local authority housing at Homend Crescent.

Worcester Road Civic/Residential Character Area (Reference LbCA5)

- The area is suburban in character comprising residential and civic developments including detached two-storey houses and bungalows with large plots on cul-de-sacs. Limited variations comprise both larger properties and two short rows of terraces. Much of the area is of moderate density and fairly fine grained.
- The developments reflect national trends in terms of design, materials and plan-form including a variety of brick with render and hung-tiles, and with front gardens, open or enclosed by hedges, shrubs or stone walls.
- On the north side of **Worcester Road**, the magistrates' court and police station is an institutional, symmetrical neo-Georgian building of two storeys in brick with hipped tile roof and prominent central entry. It is the only building with a large footprint. It has surface parking and limited soft landscaping.
- There are no publicly accessible green spaces in the character area. A small area of woodland in the south-east is part of the Ledbury Park estate.
- There is little potential for further residential development in the character area. Encroachment of the Bishop of Hereford's medieval deer park by residential development should not be permitted.

New Mills Residential Character Area (Reference LbCA6)

- The area is characterised by intensive late 20th Century private residential development on cul-de-sacs linked by a sinuous access road screened by trees. Footpaths and cycle tracks, a number of which run through green corridors, link residential neighbourhoods. Plot sizes and architectural details are variable and housing density is high.
- Locally distinctive character and features within the parts of the character area include:

New Mills Way is a long sinuous access road, with traffic-calming measures, linking six groups of residential cul-de-sacs screened by trees. Footpaths and cycle tracks, a number of which run through green corridors, also ensure permeability between residential neighbourhoods. Plot sizes range from fairly large to small and narrow; a significant percentage are very narrow. House types include large detached two-storey houses, smaller semi-detached houses, short rows, and bungalows. Most are of brick or roughcast under tile roofs, some with dormer windows. Decorative details include brick or stone dressings, false timber-framing and bargeboards. Front gardens are open and usually small with some soft landscaping, including lawns and shrubs, and paved hardstanding.

Saxon Way is characterised by detached two-storey houses, in some cases with dormer windows and false timber-framing. Front gardens are open with lawns and shrubs, and hard-standing parking. The plan form is of cul-de-sacs with generally large or adequate house plots.

Ledbury Primary School is a modern, modular-framed one- and two-storey building with brick cladding and glazing and a hipped roof, occupying a large site with ancillary buildings, car park, playground and playing field surrounded by trees.

- Throughout the area there are several small communal green spaces, play areas and green corridors. Trees, green spaces, green corridors and road-side verges are an important local amenity in screening and softening the built environment as well as providing recreational opportunities.

- Adjacent to the character area, and linked by footpaths and cycle trails, are the Ledbury Trail; the Riverside Park; Ledbury Bypass - Leaddon Way; and the Hereford-Ledbury railway line.

Deer Park Residential Character Area (Reference LbCA7)

- Residential development on cul-de-sacs linked by several sinuous access roads. Footpaths also link residential neighbourhoods.
- Plot sizes are small or very narrow.
- Architectural details are minimal with little variety in house design.
- Housing density is high and development fine-grained, particularly in the central area of smaller terraced houses on narrow plots. The secondary school building, a supermarket and a large block of flats occupy large footprints. A block of flats, off New Street, at three storeys, is also the tallest building in the character area.
- **Biddulph Way** comprises mainly of two-storey detached houses and bungalows of brick with hung tile or wooden cladding and tile roofs. They have open front gardens, lawns and hardstandings. In the central area there are smaller brick houses and flats, in short terraces of two storeys on small or very small plots with open paved forecourts, limited soft landscaped areas and some off-street parking areas.
- **Oakland Drive and Elmsdale Road** are long access roads with short cul-de-sacs. Dwellings comprise brick bungalows and two-storey semi-detached houses and short terraces with front gardens, open or enclosed by hedges or walls, many with parking.
- **Mabel's Furlong Lane** is made up of two-storey semi-detached houses of plain brick, short rows and bungalows with front gardens generally enclosed by hedges or fences. Within this area John Masefield High School consists of a group of large linked buildings with several smaller ancillary buildings. The main buildings are of modular frame construction and brick. The school occupies a large site with sports field, games courts and surface car parks.
- **New Street** is an area of a mixed townscape more variable in terms of building age, architectural design, function, massing and set-back from the street. Dwellings comprise detached brick houses on large plots, some with mature gardens, hedges and mature trees. Two short cul-de-sacs sit off this with short rows of smaller homes on narrow plots. Other uses include a modern brick and glazed church, a supermarket, and several large blocks of flats. Set-back distance from the street, building height and roofscape are variable.
- Open green spaces in the character area include a large sports ground, with adjacent football field (north side), recreational space and playground (east side) and open area, located in the western part of the character area; the school sports field; a lineal green space extending along the southern edge of the character area between the Leaddon Way by-pass and the residential area; several smaller neighbourhood green spaces in the Biddulph Way area.

North Ledbury Trading/Industrial Estates (Reference LbCA8)

- The area is characterised by modular frame buildings with low profiles and large footprints, and adjacent surface parking and storage areas. The western part is open agricultural land.
- The industrial and commercial facilities are of similar character to those of any other late 20th Century trading estate.
- Cladding materials include steel and brick; roofs are generally shallow-pitched or flat.
- Most large buildings are adjacent to surface parking and storage areas.
- Surviving railway infrastructure, including the brick arched viaduct that crosses the Leaddon Valley, embankment and bridge, Station House and the decorative brick

retaining wall at the station approach road, are a reminder of the history of Ledbury, and create a sense of place and an area of local interest. In addition, there is a small wooden prefabricated station and waiting room, a footbridge and a signal box.

- In the northwest, several groups of oak trees and other species are the subject of a Tree Preservation Order.

West Ledbury Trading/Industrial Estates (Reference LbCA9)

- The area occupies two sites either side of character area LbCA3. They are characterised by modular frame industrial buildings with a low profile and large footprint and adjacent surface parking and storage areas.
- Site activities and functions include a range of general and light industries, other commercial operations and, in the southern part, a sewage treatment works with extensive water treatment ponds and a household waste site is adjacent.
- Cladding materials include steel and brick, roofs are generally shallow-pitched or flat.
- Soft landscaping includes embankments and plantings. Both parts contain areas previously protected as green space in the Hereford Unitary Development Plan and they are liable to flooding, and part of one was also previously a landfill site.

Appendix 2: Green Infrastructure Objectives.

(Refer to Map 15)

Local Strategic Corridor 1 (LedLSC1) Objectives

- Retain the level of green infrastructure and enhance it where opportunities present themselves, including in association with open spaces that lie within or just outside the corridor.
- Maintain and enhance the Town Trail as a continuous green space and improve the Recreation Ground which it passes through.
- Manage the Town Trail and other green spaces in the town centre to support wildlife and biodiversity.
- Improve the surface of the trail for shared use by removing vegetation, re-surfacing and widening of the path for shared use.
- Encourage appropriate tree, shrub and other garden planting for wildlife.
- Seek replacement of and green space lost to at least equal wildlife and residential amenity value.
- Reinststate the protection offered to areas of woodland and other green space that was shown as such in the former Herefordshire UDP.

Local Strategic Corridor 2 (LedLSC2) Objectives

- Retain the ecological qualities of the water environment, linear bankside wet woodland and the transition to grassland, as appropriate.
- Create and enhance wet grassland and linear wet woodland habitats along the corridor.
- Include measures to improve water quality, support climate change mitigation and reduce flood risk by retaining good quality soils and utilising spare land for tree planting (including wet woodland), where this would reflect the character of the landscape.
- Utilise opportunities in areas ancillary to sporting and employment uses south of little Marcle Road to support landscape character and wildlife, and also for carbon offsetting.
- Maintain the recreational value of the riverside walk extending it further to the north and south along the protected line for the Hereford and Gloucester Canal. This includes the potential for a cycle route along what might be considered the canal's towpath to link with other parts of the network in those directions.
- Between Walls Hill Camp with its surrounding ancient woodland and the riverbank, maintain and enhance the fields, hedgerow trees, hedgerows and open grassland.
- Protect the heritage qualities of the western slopes of the River Leadon, its contribution to the historical setting of Ledbury, and views from Malvern Hills AONB.
- Include measures to limit or reduce both existing and further light pollution to the west of this corridor.

Local Strategic Corridor 3 (LedLSC3) Objectives

- Maintain and enhance the extent and condition of the woodland, especially the irreplaceable ancient woodland.
- At the northern end in particular, enhance the areas of rich habitat and heritage comprising woodland and parkland and the connection to the traditional orchards and grasslands that lie further to the west.
- Improve the conservation status of SSSIs within the corridor.

- Community access to the area and all footpaths within it should be protected and, where possible, increased.

Local Strategic Corridor 4 (LedLSC4) Objectives

- Maintain and strengthen areas providing wildlife stepping-stones, pocket parks and larger spaces, as well as the relatively substantial planting that softens the urban environment and helps to absorb carbon and other pollutants, mitigating the effects of climate change.
- Maintain accessible within this corridor through combining significant green spaces, footpaths, verges and tree lined avenues.

Local Strategic Corridor 5 (LedLSC5) Objectives

- To improve the ecological network by strengthening the elements within the corridor that characterise its transition role from lower hillside slopes through to parkland, then to estate-lands and finally river valley.
- In its eastern compartment, to maintain the diversity of elements comprising a mosaic of habitats, including a number of historic land enclosures, ancient and veteran trees, woodlands and dense hedgerows, and a parkland character.
- To the south, to utilise opportunities to enhance the network of hedgerows, hedgerow trees and grasslands, although maintaining the 'estate' character comprising large fields, coppice, well maintained hedgerows and small pockets of woodland planting.
- At the western end of the corridor around the connection with the River Leadon, wet grassland and woodland habitat creation and enhancement are needed.
- Increase accessibility, including links to the riverside walk along the River Leadon and to Parkway, especially those that provide views towards the Malvern Hills.
- Accessible community open space is encouraged, both in terms of natural green space and amenity areas available for such uses as allotments and community gardens.
- Both the eastern and the western ends of this corridor are sensitive landscapes, especially in terms of effect on the views from, and setting of the Malvern Hills AONB and a green buffer should be maintained and enhanced between them.
- Where the south section of LSC5 borders new housing, new green infrastructure is required, reflecting the network of hedgerows, grassland and small areas of woodland typical of this area.

Local Enhancement Zone 1 (LedLEZ1) Objectives

- Support the restoration of the canal to develop a continuous linear aquatic habitat, accompanied by pedestrian and non-motorised vehicular access, especially cycling along a reinstated tow path.
- Protect and expand wet grassland areas and associated features particularly streams, ditches and ponds, extending northwards to Storebrook Bridge.
- Maintain, restore and replant traditional orchards, predominantly to the east of the zone.
- Create new paths and access to accommodate pedestrians and cycles, including under the viaduct, to improve the existing network of public rights of way between the town and open countryside, particularly from the town trail and riverside park towards the town's northern allotments and Wellington Heath.
- Soften the transition from built form to open countryside through the introduction of new linear woodland, orchards and hedgerows around any new development.

- Maintain a green gap between Ledbury's built-up area and the settlement of Wellington Heath that complements that included in Wellington Heath NDP and improving connectivity between habitats.
- Ensure new green infrastructure is introduced, particularly trees and hedgerows, in association with new housing and employment development.
- Include measures to limit or reduce both existing and further light pollution in this zone.

Local Enhancement Zone 2 (LedLEZ2) Objectives

- Enhancement through extending the riverside habitat created as part of the riverside park, to the south of the A449, particularly the creation of linear wet woodland.
- Reinstatement of the historic pattern of field boundaries through the planting of hedgerows, particularly to the south of the ring-road.
- Introduction of linear woodland planting along the southern side of Leaden Way to mitigate the visual impact of the road and more recent residential development.
- Maintain and enhance the remaining small, informal recreational open spaces within the ring-road, compensating for those lost through development pressure, and seeking improvements to pedestrian linkages to the centre of the settlement.
- Maintain existing green infrastructure south of Hazel Farm, including its orchard and other habitats, and the floodplain habitats west of Hazel Farm.
- Introduce new green infrastructure alongside any development in the 'triangle' of land opposite the Full Pitcher roundabout including trees and utilising land where available for community open space.

Local Enhancement Zone 3 (LedLEZ3) Objectives

- Strengthen the buffer on the north side of Leaden Way, an important area of amenity open space.
- Maintain the open aspect on the higher ground on the south-west side of the Gloucester roundabout, through taking opportunities to integrate the area with the parkland aspect to the east through the introduction of characteristic landscape features.
- Protect ancient and veteran trees, in particular the stand on high ground south-west of the Gloucester roundabout.
- Create a new footpath and cycle-way between the town and Parkway along a green corridor.
- Strengthen the landscape character of the area between Ledbury Town and Parkway, maintaining it as a green gap similar to that to the north of the town.

Local Enhancement Zone 4 (LedLEZ4) Objectives

- Maintain the existing footpath network and create new Public Rights of Way and links to the existing network, especially to the Herefordshire Trail and the natural habitats and heritage assets that sit along or close to it and to the linear park along the River Leaden.
- In addition, where possible incorporate a cycleway with footpaths to create a peripheral circuit around the western edge of the town.
- Create a linear natural corridor around the western edge of the proposed development area extending to the south to connect with LedLSC2 and River Leaden and to the ancient woodland surrounding Walls Hill Camp to the north.
- Strengthen the riparian habitat along the River Leaden.

- Create areas of multifunctional greenspace within the zone that would act as an educational and recreational resource meeting the standards set for 'Accessible Natural Green Space' by Natural England.
- New development should contribute to net gains in biodiversity, contributing as appropriate to the preceding objectives. Existing development should also be encouraged to create biodiversity benefits that would make such contributions.
- Ensure new development mitigates the effect on the landscape, especially views from the Malvern Hills AONB.
- Protect the heritage qualities of the western slopes of the River Leadon on the north side of Little Marcle Road, its contribution to the historical setting of Ledbury, and views from Malvern Hills AONB.
- Include measures to limit or reduce both existing and further light pollution in this zone.

Working Draft

