

**Ledbury Neighbourhood Development Plan
2011-2031**

1st Review

**Topic Paper 4: Green
Infrastructure.**

February 2021

Draft No 1

DRAFT

Ledbury Neighbourhood Development Plan – Green Infrastructure

Purpose of this Report –

To review and update the approach to green infrastructure set out for Ledbury in the Core Strategy and recommend how this might be incorporated into Ledbury NDP.

The report:

- *Reviews work undertaken by Herefordshire Council for its Core Strategy and Ledbury Town Council for its current Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) – **Section 1.***
- *Considers those green infrastructure assets present within and surrounding the town – **Section 2.***
- *Puts forward proposals to ensure the local strategy for green infrastructure within and around the town is sufficiently comprehensive, and to protect and enhance those green spaces and features that contribute to the green infrastructure network - **Sections 3 to 5.***

1. Introduction

1.1 Green Infrastructure can be defined as *a network of multi-functional green space and other green features, both urban and rural, which can deliver quality of life and environmental benefits for communities.* Examples of green spaces and features within and surrounding the town include, among others, parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, orchards, rivers and streams, street trees and allotments. Natural England considers it should comprise high-quality green spaces. It should underpin sustainability, being designed and managed to respect and enhance the character and distinctiveness of an area, including habitats and landscape types. It should include 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. 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 on the urban fringe and wider countryside. Not all areas, however, need to be accessible to fulfil the function of supporting biodiversity.

1.2 The adopted NDP contains some policies that address a number of these elements or features. These include:

Policy NE1.1 - Protecting Biodiversity.

The conservation, restoration and enhancement of biodiversity, including that found in open spaces, trees and hedgerows, in order to promote and support wildlife and other forms of biodiversity will be supported. Additionally, proposals for the creation of small wetland or other nature reserves and which maintain and enhance streams and open watercourses will be supported.

Policy NE2.1 - Food Production in Ledbury

The conservation, enhancement and/or creation of allotments and community gardens will be supported. Protection of the best and most versatile agricultural land for its economic and other benefits will be supported.

Policy NE4.1 - Protecting Ledbury's Woods

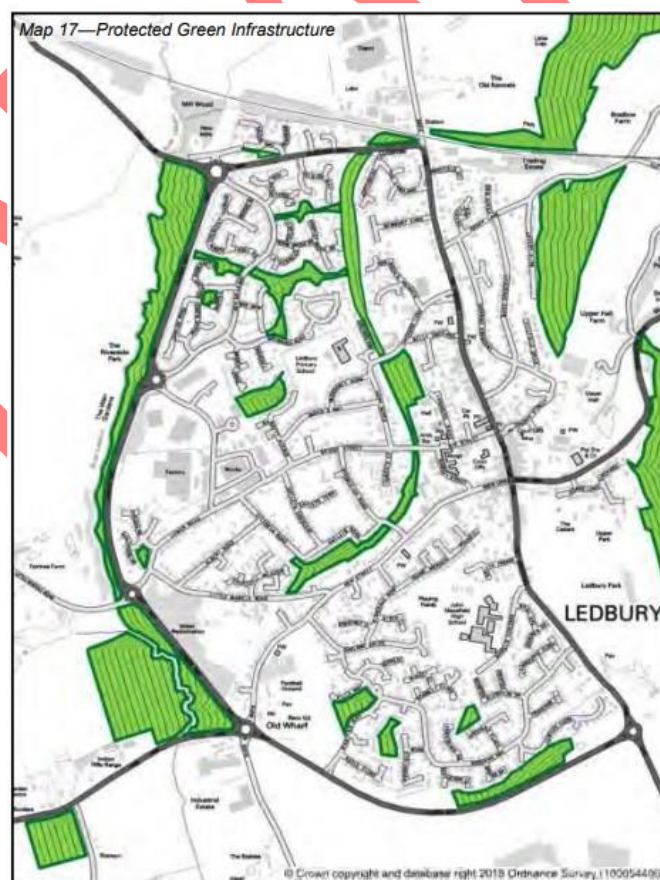
The conservation and/or enhancement of Frith, Conigree, Wall Hills and Dog Hill Woods above Ledbury, or their setting will be supported. Proposals which protect community access to these woods or demonstrate alternative proposals are in place to maintain community access to these important community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

- 1.3 The Submission Draft NDP did contain a policy to protect green infrastructure together with a map showing the areas concerned:

Protecting Green Infrastructure

The areas marked on Map 17 (see below), shall be promoted, protected and enhanced by improved access and connectivity. Redevelopment will only be permitted when the area has no significant value for recreation, beauty, tranquillity, wildlife or historic importance.

- 1.4 This was deleted by the NDP Examiner because there was no substantive evidence in respect of how the policy will be implemented, including how it will be paid for, how it will be managed, or who by. It was not considered deliverable, having regard to Paragraph 154 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The policy also refers to "redevelopment" when the majority of the areas shown on Map 17 were undeveloped and consequently, it is not clear how this might apply. The Policy was considered imprecise.



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Figure 1: Areas comprising the Green Infrastructure Network presented in the Regulation 16 draft NDP that was subsequently removed.

- 1.5 Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy (the Core Strategy) policy LB1 encourages new proposals that protect and enhance its (Ledbury's) 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. The Core Strategy also contains more general policies that are relevant including one to protect, manage and plan for the preservation of existing and delivery of new green infrastructure (Policy LD3).
- 1.6 These policies are backed up by a number of strategies, studies or assessments found in Herefordshire Council's Core Strategy Evidence Base¹. The Environmental Scoping Report prepared for this NDP review draws conclusions from these that are relevant to the NDP area. These are:
- Building Biodiversity into the Local Development Framework - Ledbury NDP can (be used to) overcome any existing constraints and capitalise on opportunities to enhance habitats and their networks.
 - Urban Fringe Sensitivity Analysis - The study provides evidence that could inform policies for the Ledbury NDP. Land to the east of Ledbury falls into the Malvern Hills AONB. The historic core of the town is situated in an elevated position with sloping wooded hills on its eastern edge. Ledbury is visually constrained, north is restricted by the viaduct and embankment, the east restricted by landform, the south by hills and west by woodland. Conservation features in the core of Ledbury Town with notable listed buildings, this extends westwards to encompass Ledbury Park and Upper Hall historic parks.
 - Herefordshire Green Infrastructure Strategy - The study provides evidence that could be taken into account when preparing policies for the Ledbury NDP. It establishes policies and principles for the protection and enhancement of those features and functions that contributes to the environment of Herefordshire across a range of scales.
 - Water Cycle Study - The River Leadon is currently classed as 'Poor' ecological status. Unless there are mitigation measures, the significant increase in housing pressure will exacerbate the situation. Water quality is an issue in both the upper and lower River Leadon sub catchments currently having poor ecological status. Mitigation measures should be considered whilst drafting emerging policy. Examples of mitigation strategies are: Promotion of SUDs, reduction of water demand and sewerage disposal, and improved adaptive land management to reduce levels of orthophosphate from horticultural and farmed land.
 - Condition of SSSIs within Ledbury: Ridgeway Wood (Favourable); Ledbury Cutting (Unfavourable Declining); Farm Quarry and grassland (Favourable).
 - In relation to local wildlife sites the NDP should capitalise on opportunities to protect or enhance the areas of value to nature conservation.
- 1.6 Since Ledbury NDP was adopted, a number of issues have arisen that require the NDP to promote positive changes in relation to green infrastructure, and particularly to contribute towards health and wellbeing, biodiversity net gain and climate change mitigation.

¹ https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/directory/29/local_plan_-_documents

2. Green Infrastructure

2.1 Figure 5.2 in Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy (Core Strategy) identifies examples of green infrastructure at a range of levels (Table 1 below).

Table 1: Hierarchy of Green Infrastructure Assets (Source: Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy)

Geographic Tier	Example of green infrastructure asset
County/Regional Strategic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty• Sites of national and international nature conservation importance (e.g., SAC, SSSI)• Verges of trunk roads, motorways and railways
District	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rivers and large streams and their floodplains• Local wildlife sites. Scheduled Ancient Monuments• Designed landscapes
Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public and private parks and gardens• Recreational grounds, cemeteries, playing fields and public green spaces.• Public rights of way and cycle paths

2.2 Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy Policy LD3 states:

Development proposals should protect, manage and plan for the preservation of existing and delivery of new green infrastructure, and should achieve the following objectives:

- 1. identification and retention of existing green infrastructure corridors and linkages; including the protection of valued landscapes, trees, hedgerows, woodlands, water courses and adjoining flood plain.*
- 2. provision of on-site green infrastructure; in particular proposals will be supported where this enhances the network; and*
- 3. integration with, and connection to, the surrounding green infrastructure network.*

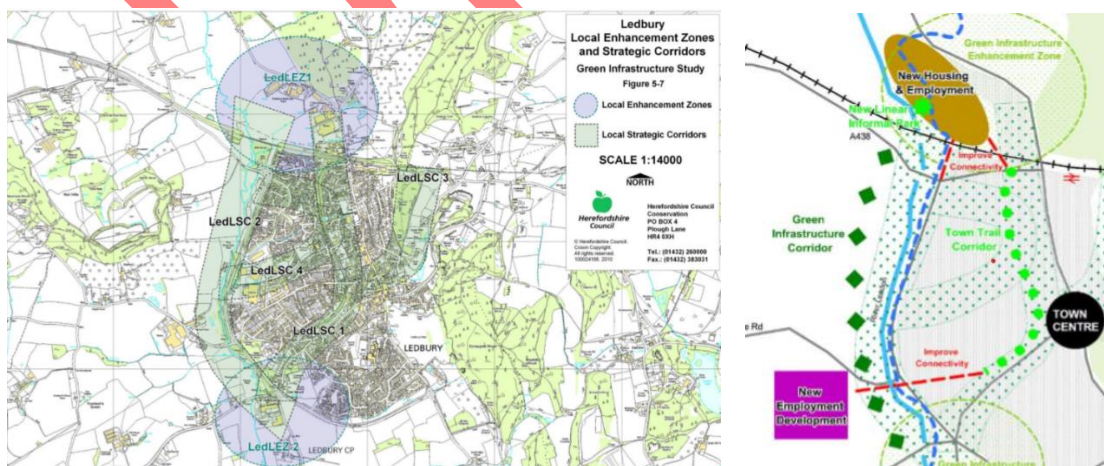
Developing the Green Infrastructure Strategy for Ledbury

2.3 Elements from all three tiers shown in Table 1 can be found within or surrounding the built-up area of Ledbury emphasising its importance to the importance of green infrastructure of the County and beyond.

- Malvern Hills AONB, along the eastern edge of the town, is an important Regional Strategic green infrastructure asset. This is supported by a number of SSSIs, including one which comprises the cutting for the railway line that is in unfavourable condition and declining.
- At the District level, several large local wildlife sites, many comprising ancient woodlands, sit on the slopes of the Malvern Hills, forming the backdrop to the town on its eastern side. To the west of the town runs the River Leadon and its narrow flood plain, which also provides a riverside walk along part of its length. Further to the west and north of Little Marcle Road sits Wall Hills Camp Scheduled Ancient Monument surrounded by ancient woodlands that are designated local wildlife sites.

- The Core Strategy protects the route of the Hereford to Gloucester Canal as a County-wide proposal. Locally this runs through the riverside walk to the west of the town and extends further to both its north and south.
- Local assets include:
 - The Unregistered Parks and Gardens at Ledbury Park, Underdown and Upper Hall extend southwards along the eastern edge of the town.
 - To the west and south, verges along the edge of Ledbury Bypass enhanced by recreation areas either side of the Ross Road, extend almost uninterruptedly between the Hereford and Gloucester roundabouts.
 - Ledbury Town Trail which runs north-south roughly through the middle of the built-up area.
 - Small pockets of amenity and play space sit within some of the town's residential areas, although there are few of any note within the older parts.
 - A significant concentration of green infrastructure comprising the network combining the school playing field, Ledbury Cemetery, Ledbury Town FC's pitch, and the area surrounding Ledbury Wastewater Treatment Works which is a combination of grassed areas and tree planting. This area has seen a reduction in its extent through housing development upon the playing fields that previously sat behind the Full Pitcher Public House.
 - Urban trees, including those in rear gardens and along a number of avenues, the most significant of which are along New Mills Way. Gardens themselves also add to 'greening' the town, providing space for nature.
 - New Mills Way provides a green corridor with a separated cycle-path and footpath as does Ledbury Town Trail. There are a limited number of other footway links not associated with roads through the built-up area, some of which are associated with amenity green space.

Many of these assets, although not all, were shown on Map 17 included in the Submission draft NDP. These reflect green infrastructure corridors identified in a number of Herefordshire Council documents. Given the provisions within Core Strategy Policy LD3, the NDP should consider whether it is possible to add to those identified within the Herefordshire Green Infrastructure Strategy².



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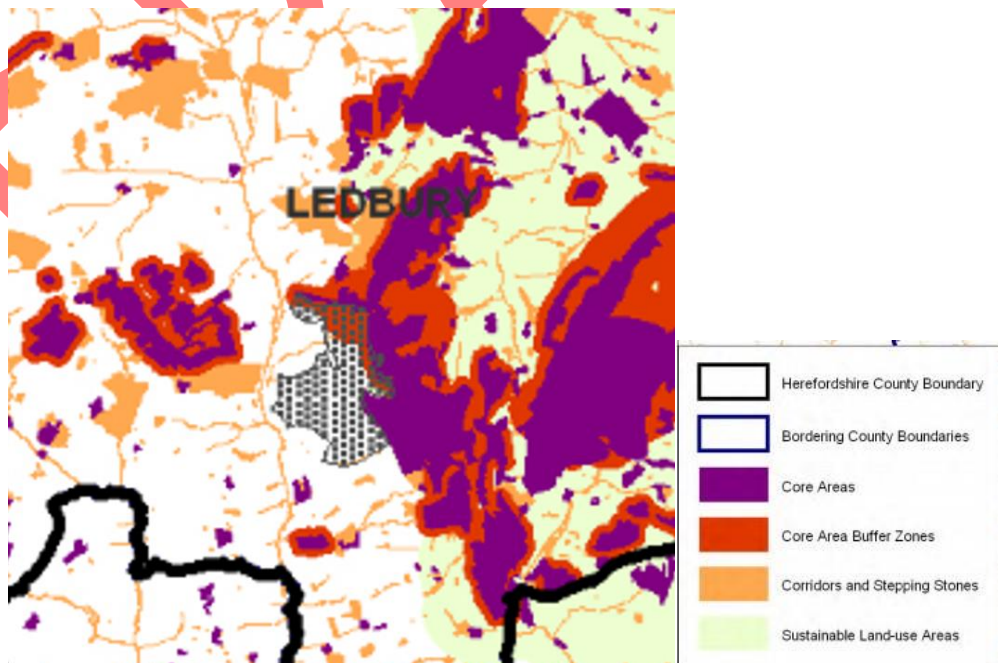
Figures 2 and 3: Extract from Herefordshire Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy³ relating to Ledbury; and the Core Strategy Key Diagram⁴ (Figure 4.8) for Ledbury.

² <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/2063/herefordshire-green-infrastructure-strategy>

³ Ibid

⁴ https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/download/123/adopted_core_strategy - section 4

- 2.4 New green infrastructure should contribute towards enabling greater and wider access to open space to the benefit of health and wellbeing and supporting nature. The Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy provides a helpful basis for an overall approach identifying Local Strategic Corridors and Local Enhancement Zones and this has fed into the Core Strategy Key Diagram for Ledbury (Core Strategy Figure 4.8). These fit into an overall strategy for the County although in relation to Local Strategic Corridors, the Strategy indicates those identified are not exhaustive⁵, again suggesting that further such areas might be defined. The objectives for the network more generally referred to in Core Strategy Policy LD3 are set out in greater detail within the Green Infrastructure Strategy. The importance of the green infrastructure corridor along the Leadon Valley, just outside the western edge of the town, appears to be increased by its protection and enhancement being specified in Policy LB1. However, this does not mean that its other corridors and also the enhancement zones are of lesser importance, or that additional corridors and areas that might be enhanced should not be defined if there is good evidence for their identification.
- 2.5 The Local Strategic Corridors follow most green linkages through or around the town. The Local Enhancement Zones reflect areas where change was anticipated although other areas have subsequently been developed to the south of the town outside of those highlighted in the Green Infrastructure Strategy. Herefordshire Council's Ecological Network Map⁶ (see extract below) indicates more extensive 'core areas' and 'buffers' along the town's eastern edge than are represented by the current Local Strategic Corridors and there is also an important east-west corridor, supported by a number of 'stepping-stones', beyond the town to the south. The Ecological Network Map also highlights important areas on the western slopes of the Leadon Valley surrounding Walls Hill Scheduled Ancient Monument beyond the Local Strategic Corridor.



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Figure 4: Extract from Herefordshire Council's Ecological Network Map for the area surrounding Ledbury.

⁵ https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/2063/herefordshire-green-infrastructure-strategy_para_4.3.27

⁶ https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/download/77/ecological_network_map

3. Local Strategic Corridors

3.1 Within these areas the following sustainability elements are considered assets that should be preserved and, where possible enhanced, through development:

- biodiversity
- conservation and enhancement of local distinctiveness
- flood management
- leisure and recreation
- alternative transportation opportunities
- climate change mitigation (added since the strategy was prepared)

When considering development proposals, all opportunities should be taken where possible to increase green infrastructure whether it be through small scale proposals such as planting individual trees or larger structural landscape measures. These corridors are explored in greater detail to determine whether local proposals or measures might be included in the NDP to promote this objective.

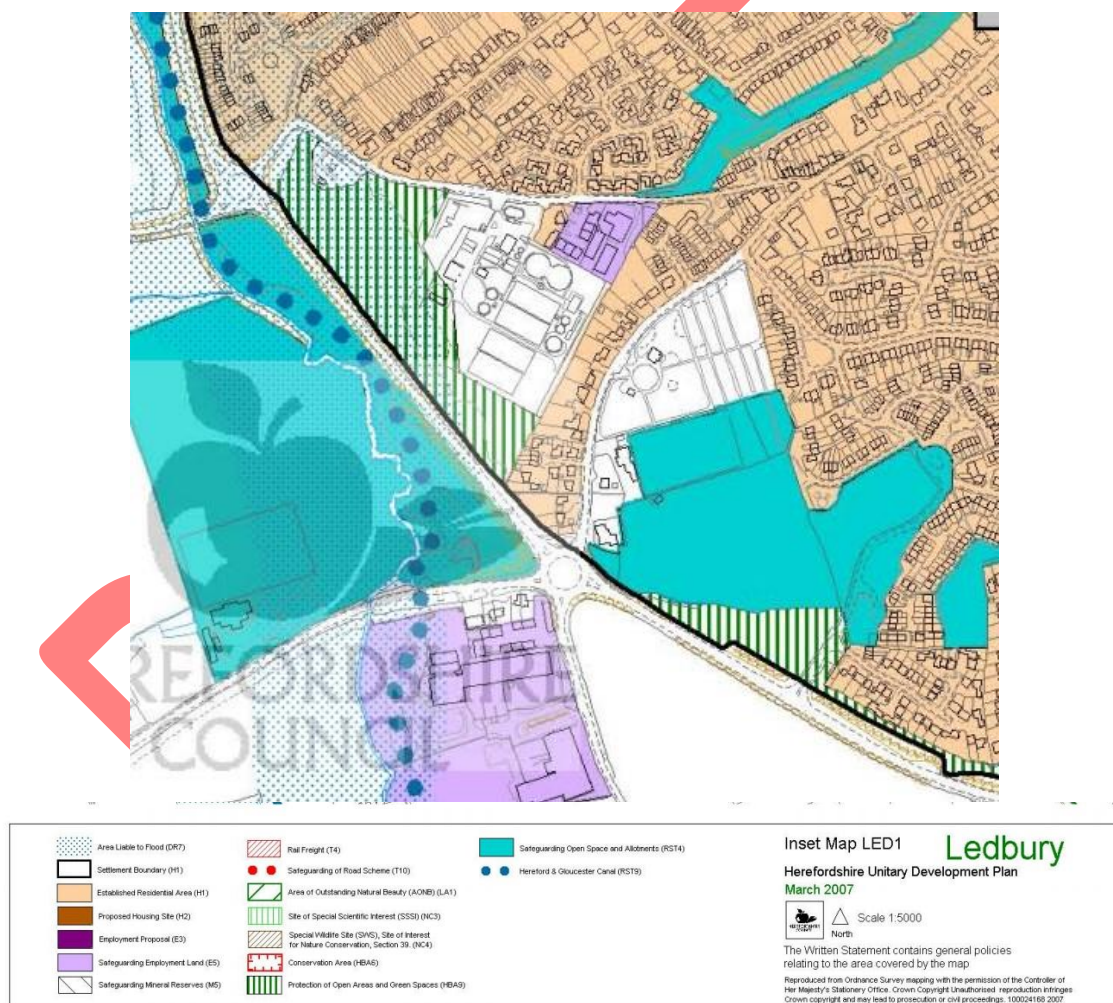
3.2 A number of the Local Strategic Corridors fall within defined Fringe Zones identified in the Green Infrastructure Strategy. The provision of green infrastructure within these should create a comfortable, dynamic and functional transition between the settlement and open countryside, both in conjunction with new development and through specific projects. The provision of green infrastructure in these fringe zones is based on and will respond to the existing visual sensitivity of the areas, biodiversity resources and historic and cultural significance. The aim is to achieve the integrity of green infrastructure to complement the linear, radial corridors and network of sites that occupy ground in and beyond the town.

Local Strategic Corridor 1 (LedLSC1)

3.3 This corridor passes roughly north-south through the town's urban area, utilising Ledbury Town Trail which generally follows the line of the former Ledbury-Gloucester railway. Currently it is a continuous linear green space, footpath and cycle way that links Hereford Road in the north, near the railway station, with Little Marcle Road in the south near to the town cemetery. It provides easy access to substantial housing areas, the primary school and town centre. It has the potential for both health and wellbeing benefits and provides a corridor for wildlife through the town. It starts and finishes adjacent to corridor LedLSC2 at points where there are enhancement zones. The current approach is to 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. Residents can add to its value by appropriate tree, shrub and other garden planting for wildlife.

3.4 Some development is expected that may affect green spaces and features within this corridor. Planning permission has been granted that will result in the loss of the cricket ground to housing and this will also increase pressure upon the adjacent football ground. This will reduce the amount of green space at the southern end of the corridor although there are other relatively large expanses in the vicinity, namely the town's cemetery, areas of grass and woodland surrounding the town's wastewater treatment works and a relatively large grassed play area. The loss of the grassed cricket ground has been compensated for by a new pitch on the edge of the enhancement zone (LedLEZ2) to which the corridor is connected. The grassed area and woodland that surrounds the town's wastewater treatment works were not

identified upon the draft NDP's green infrastructure map. The first may be required in association with the treatment works. However, the woodland was a protected open area and green space in the former Herefordshire UDP and unless there is a reason for its omission this should continue to form part of the green infrastructure network if possible. The cemetery is a green space contributing to the corridor that was not identified as such on the draft NDP map. Its purpose as a community facility will not change, although an environmentally based yet sensitive management regime would ensure it contributes towards the objectives for the corridor. Change is expected at the northern end of the corridor as part of the development of the viaduct site for housing and employment. This falls within another enhancement zone (LedLEZ1) for which objectives have been set. Little change is expected within the central part of this corridor although it does include part of the area 'Lawnside' which may see some redevelopment should the Town Council's preferred location for medical facilities materialise.



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Figure 5: Extract from Herefordshire UDP showing protected area adjacent to the Wastewater Treatment Works

Proposal 1 – The area comprising woodland adjacent to Ledbury Wastewater Treatment Works identified as protected open space/green space in the former Herefordshire UDP be again shown as having appropriate protection within the NDP.

Local Strategic Corridor 2 (LedLSC2)

- 3.5 The riverside linear park along which the length of this corridor runs marks the town's western edge and follows the course of the River Leadon and Leadon Way. The corridor has a continuous footpath and provides a recreational facility for residents, especially those in the west of the town. Its ecological qualities are based upon water, linear bankside wet woodland and the transition to grassland, especially on the west side. Objectives should be based upon retaining these qualities, improving water quality and supporting climate change mitigation by retaining good quality soils and utilising spare land for tree planting (including wet woodland), but where this would not be out of character with the landscape. To the north of Little Marcle Road, limited hedgerows currently link the corridor to the ancient woodland surrounding Wall Hills Camp as does a Public Right of Way that connects to the woodland's southern edge. This should remain an open landscape, but the connection is important to wildlife and the character and setting of the town. To the south of Little Marcle Road there are two significant areas of recreational, a strategic proposal for employment land and a search area for further playing fields. Opportunities might be taken where possible to utilise areas not required for these uses to support landscape character and wildlife, and also for carbon offsetting. The protected line for the Hereford and Gloucester Canal runs along this corridor. Opportunities to extend the riverside walk further to the north and south exist and might include the potential for a cycle route along what might be considered the canal's towpath to link with proposals understood to be advanced or supported by the adjacent parishes in those directions. This would bring additional health and wellbeing benefits.
- 3.6 This corridor falls with the Fringe Zone immediately along the western side of the town and is associated with the valley and narrow corridor of the River Leadon where the target habitats for creation and enhancement along this corridor are wet grasslands and wet woodlands. Further to the west, which would incorporate Walls Hill Camp, the land falls within a separate fringe zone which is considered to have an 'estate' character with large fields and hedgerow trees, hedgerows and grassland. Maintaining and enhancing the network of hedgerows and grasslands, should be the focus for action in this area.

Proposal 2 – LedLSC2 should be extended further to both the north and to the south along the River Leadon to incorporate the safeguarded line of the Hereford to Gloucester Canal. The protection offered to the route of the Hereford to Gloucester Canal through the Parish should include the potential for a cycle route and footpath as part of its towpath. This would enhance its value to residents, communities to the north and south of the town, and visitors, promoting active travel. Improved public access, to include cycling, should be enabled along this corridor, if possible, in advance of any works to restore or provide the canal tow path.

Proposal 3 - In addition, the corridor should be widened or have a link to the ecological core area surrounding Wall Hills Camp between the A438 Hereford Road and Little Marcle Road. This will enhance connectivity within this landscape, the importance of which is highlighted by Core Strategy policy LB1 and heightened by Historic England in relation to comments made in relation to planning application P184447.

Local Strategic Corridor 3 (LedLSC3)

- 3.7 This corridor is based upon the green lane (part of the Geopark Way) running along the eastern boundary of Dog Hill Wood which is an important linear green infrastructure asset for the town that connects it to the boundary of Malvern Hills AONB. This corridor provides a link to open countryside from the centre of the town (Church Street) with parkland to the east and adjoining ancient semi-natural woodland to the west. The combination provides an attractive walk with access to a variety of wildlife. Current NDP policy NE4.1 supports the conservation and/or enhancement of Dog Hill Wood and its setting, protection of community access to it, and active woodland management to maximise habitat diversity. The corridor might usefully be extended further to the north to include Frith Wood which is also covered by NDP policy NE4.1. Although new development is not expected within this corridor as a consequence of the NDP, should any proposals come forward there should be an emphasis on protecting the current assets.
- 3.8 This corridor falls within a fringe zone comprising rising ground to the east of the settlement, which is dominated by woodland, most of which is considered ancient. Maintaining and enhancing the amount and condition of the woodland resource to the east of the settlement is a priority for this area. Areas of parkland merge with the woodland to form a landscape rich in habitat and heritage. At its northern end traditional orchards and grasslands have become the most significant components of the landscape. Their enhancement, expansion and connection should be the principal target of green infrastructure provision.

Proposal 4 – This local strategic corridor should be extended to the north to include Frith Wood which is a continuation of the linear ancient woodland linking the town to the Malvern Hills through good community access.

Local Strategic Corridor 4 (LedLSC4)

- 3.9 This comprises an arc firstly, starting at its southern end, connecting the industrial area inside the western edge of the town through a corridor to the Town Walk via a network of footpaths and relatively large green spaces. The corridor then links the Town Walk to New Mills Way by generally smaller green spaces running alongside tree lined avenues. The spaces are important as stepping-stones, pocket parks and larger spaces, while the relatively substantial planting softens the urban environment and helps to absorb carbon and other pollutants. Little change is expected within this corridor. The approach along New Mills Way presents an exemplar for new development.

Local Strategic Corridor 5 (LedLSC5)

- 3.10 This is a proposed newly defined corridor comprising two compartments. The first compartment runs along the south-eastern edge of the town's built-up area and comprises a parkland setting connecting the town centre at its northern end to the southern extent of the town's built-up area. It then turns westwards within a sensitive, relatively open landscape with pockets of woodland, including the core area of Upper Highbridge Coppice. This compartment sits just beyond the southern edge of the town's built-up area and includes a Public Right of Way linking the Ledbury Road with the B4216 to Dymock. The corridor then extends on to the River Leadon. Beyond the northern edge of this compartment is an area of change where biodiversity net gains and carbon offsetting would have been beneficial although the opportunities for this may now be limited. Both the eastern and western ends of the southern compartment are sensitive landscapes, especially in terms of effect on the

views from and setting of Malvern Hills AONB. The project to utilise an existing '1 acre' walled garden within the curtilage of Underdown, a Listed Building within an Unregistered Park and Garden, as community allotments is an example of promoting the multi-use of green space.

- 3.11 The importance of this corridor is reflected in its transition role that spans three fringe zones. That lying to the east comprises a mosaic of habitats; including a number of historic land enclosures, ancient and veteran trees, woodlands and dense hedgerows, and has a parkland character. Maintaining this homogeneous, but distinct character through continuation of the diversity of elements will be central to green infrastructure provision directly or indirectly resulting from development. The compartment to the south of the town is similar to that on the western slopes having an 'estate' character with large fields and hedgerow trees, hedgerows and grassland. The opportunity to maintain and enhance the network of hedgerows and grasslands, has been lost through major residential development. The approach should now be utilised beyond the town's newly defined southern edge through the defining of this corridor. The western end of the corridor then completes the transition from hill to valley by connecting with the River Leadon where habitat wet grassland and woodlands creation and enhancement are needed.

Proposal 5: A new Local Strategic Corridor should be defined to include Ledbury Park and Underdown Park; the area south of the housing developments off Leadon Way and incorporating Upper Highbridge Coppice and the brooks flowing to the north of Hall House Farm; and extending to meet the River Leadon corridor beyond the Dymock Road. The eastern part of this corridor comprises the two unregistered parks and gardens and the objective here should be to maintain settlement and landscape character on the edge of Malvern Hills AONB. The southern part of the corridor is just beyond an area of change (planning permissions codes P192482/O and P182628) where biodiversity enhancement should be promoted. The NDP should identify parts of this compartment as visually prominent. The emphasis should be upon maintaining the open sensitive landscape with woodland pockets, promoting grasslands, increasing accessibility especially linking to any extension to the riverside walk along the River Leadon and to Parkway, improving the ecological network and biodiversity, and maintaining the integrity of views from the Malvern Hills AONB.

4. Local Enhancement Zones

- 4.1 These identify areas where development is most likely and should create benefits to the local community and environment.

Local Enhancement Zone 1 (LedLEZ1)

- 4.2 Some of this area north of the railway viaduct is under active discussion following its inclusion within the Core Strategy (Policy LB2) for housing and employment. Some residential but mainly commercial development has already taken place resulting in an extension of the settlement and creating an abrupt interface between developed land and open countryside. The area is low-lying to the west where associated with the River Leadon, and rises to the north-east, towards Wellington Heath. Two of the identified local strategic corridors (LedLSC1 and 2) terminate in this zone which incorporates the route of the former Hereford to Gloucester canal. Covering part of the transitional area between the uplands of the Malvern Hills to the river valley, are fringe zones where the rich landscape varies from woodland to traditional orchards then grasslands, the enhancement potential should range across these elements

through the zone being extended to the east to connect with LedLSC3. This area has also been identified as important in landscape terms with the adopted Wellington Heath NDP⁷ containing a policy to maintain a green gap between its main settlement and Ledbury. Some opportunities for enhancing green infrastructure in this zone have been included within policy LB2. Additional measures may also be promoted, and it is to be hoped that all the following can be achieved through measures included in the NDP:

- Support the restoration of the canal to develop a continuous linear aquatic habitat, accompanied by pedestrian and non-motorised vehicular access, especially cycling.
- Protect and expand wet grassland areas and associated features particularly streams, ditches and ponds.
- Restore and replant traditional orchards, predominantly to the east of the zone.
- Create new paths and access 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.
- The zone contains a green gap between Ledbury's built-up area and the settlement of Wellington Heath. The NDP for the latter has a policy to protect this green gap and this should be replicated within Ledbury NDP's area to maintain its integrity.

Proposal 6: The expanded list of objectives for this enhancement zone be adopted, including especially the defining of a complementary green gap between Ledbury and Wellington Heath to reflect that included in Wellington Heath NDP.

Proposal 7: The enhancement zone be extended to connect with strategic corridor LedLSC3 to encompass the traditional orchards habitat referred to in the objectives.

Local Enhancement Zone 2 (LedLEZ2)

4.3 This area to the south-west of the town comprises intensive agriculture and some commercial development which has weakened the pattern and character of the landscape, fragmenting habitats and reduced its ecological integrity. This enhancement zone lies at the termination of the two principal local strategic corridors (LedLSC1 and 2). Despite the loss of the cricket pitch, the town cemetery to the east of the ring road, and the river and sports grounds to the west all provide opportunities for enhanced green infrastructure. However, development pressures have and continue to affect some informal public open space and the football pitch inside the bypass resulting in the reduction of this potential. This Zone should be extended southwards to encompass the junction of LedLSC2 with the proposed LedLSC5. The junction falls within a visually sensitive area acknowledged in planning decisions. Enhancement opportunities that exist include:

- 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.

⁷ <https://wellingtonheathpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/WHNDPfinal-v14.04.pdf>

- Introduction of linear woodland planting along the southern side of the ring-road 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 on the western side of the bypass, and seeking improvements to pedestrian linkages to the centre of the settlement.

Proposal 8: Enhancement Zone LedLEZ2 be extended southwards to include the junction of LedLSC2 with the proposed LedLSC5 and the above opportunities be agreed as objectives for any development that might take place in this area.

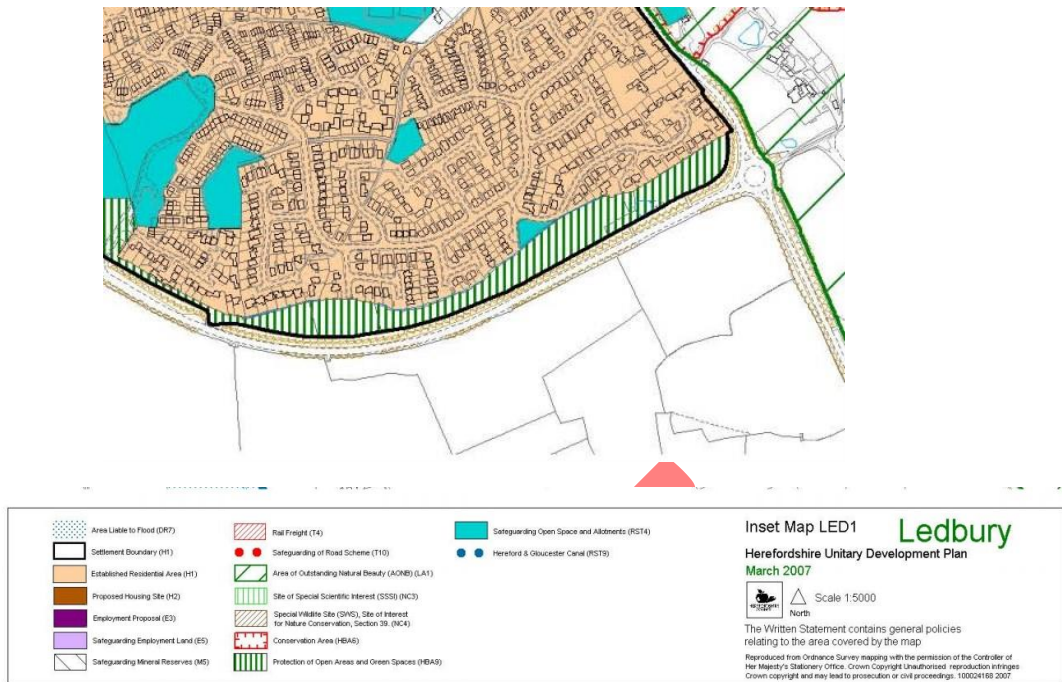
Local Enhancement Zone 3 (LedLEZ3)

4.4 This zone is a key point in the transition from historic parkland character with ancient and veteran trees, woodlands and dense hedgerows to an 'estate' character with large fields and hedgerow trees. At this point the elements are highly visible and prominent as a consequent of the topography. Development that was unforeseen at the time the Green Infrastructure Strategy was prepared has extended outside of the town's former built-up area boundary marked by Leadon Way. The current NDP identifies the high ground to the south-west of the Gloucester roundabout as sensitive in landscape terms. To the north-west of the roundabout, a high bank with green space behind sits on the north side of Leadon Way screening views of housing. This was previously protected in the former Herefordshire UDP but not in the current NDP. Parkway, a small hamlet, sits to the south of the zone and would benefit through the creation of a footpath and cycle link to the town although the gap separating the two is important. The scenic qualities on the approach to the town from the south would be significantly harmed by any extended ribbon of development along the undulating landform. The objectives for this area should include:

- Strengthening the buffer on the north side of Leadon Way, an important area of amenity open space.
- Maintaining 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.
- Creating a new path and cycle-way between the town and Parkway along a green corridor.
- Strengthening the landscape character of the area between Ledbury Town and Parkway and maintaining it as a green gap similar to that to the north of the town.

Proposal 9: An additional local enhancement zone be added to the current green infrastructure strategy for the town located in the area surrounding the Gloucester roundabout with green infrastructure objectives set out above being agreed for this zone.

Proposal 10: The areas of open space on the north side of Leadon Way previously protected in Herefordshire UDP should be included with similar protection in the reviewed NDP.



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Figure 6: Extract from Herefordshire UDP showing protected area along the north side of Leadon Way.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The detailed measures to protect and enhance green infrastructure that should be pursued within the Local Strategic Corridors and Local Enhancement Zones should be included within the reviewed NDP. These might be utilised, in an appropriate form, to complement other design guidance, either as an appendix within the NDP or as a free-standing document published for consultation at the same time to ensure it attains an appropriate degree of weight.
- 5.2 In terms of how the elements of green infrastructure might be presented within the NDP, this encompasses a range of different land uses within an overall framework to be protected and/or enhanced. In most instances, their contribution to the network of green infrastructure adds to their community value. Broadly these land uses fall under the following headings:
1. Land for recreation and leisure – including playing fields, play areas, informal leisure areas such as trails and walks. Proposals are envisaged to increase the amount of playing fields; protect play areas and other areas of open space, including access to allotments; and enhance the network of footpaths and cycleways.
 2. Amenity land and areas - including amenity open space, parks and gardens, buffers and screens, important landscapes and landscape characteristics, cultural landscapes. Relevant areas should be protected, and enhancements sought where development proposals are advanced.
 3. Habitats – for which the hierarchy ranges from those of international and national importance, to locally important sites, ancient woodlands and specific habitats identified in Herefordshire Biodiversity Action Plan. Designated habitats are already

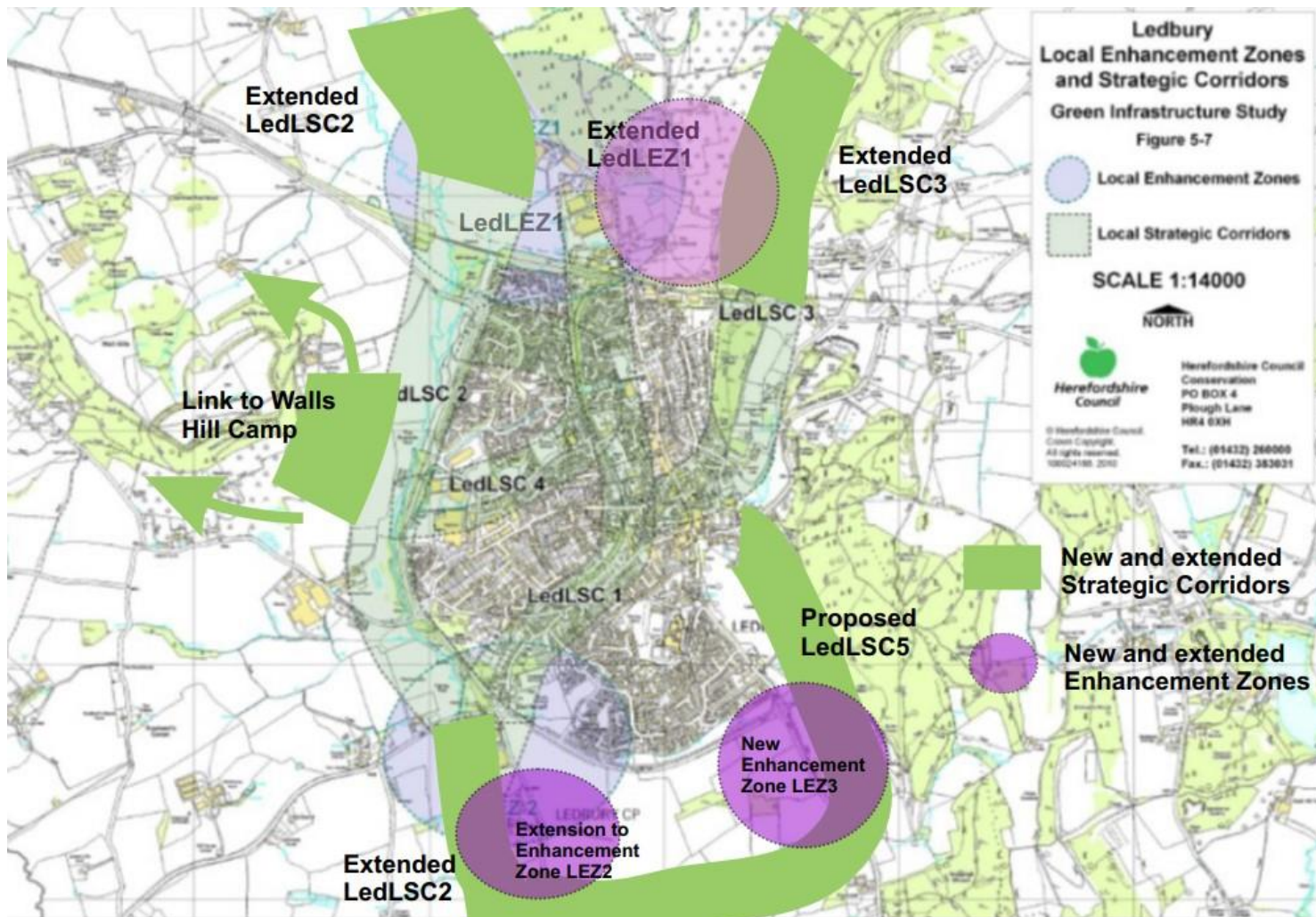
protected on the basis of a hierarchy although opportunities to enhance these and seek gains to contribute towards the network as a whole should be sought.

4. Local Green Space can also be designated where sites are demonstrably special to a local community and hold a particular local significance. Examples include land special because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity, or richness of its wildlife where not covered sufficiently by other designations above. Such areas do not necessarily require public access and they should not comprise extensive tracts of land. No such additional areas have so far been identified where the use of this designation will be needed although the matter will be kept under review.

- 5.3 Where any of these areas already exist, specific policies should indicate how these should be preserved or enhanced and, where appropriate, their locations identified. How new developments should contribute towards green infrastructure should be defined. These should include measures to address climate change. The objectives for the various corridors and enhancement zones should be adopted and used when formulating policies in the NDP. This may be in relation to specific proposals or more generally to areas of land through policies. A number of relevant policy areas are considered in other topic papers, particularly Topic Paper 1 (Design Guidance) and Topic Paper 3 (Recreation, Leisure and Open Space). The objectives for the corridors and zones set out above might usefully be included in an appendix within the NDP.

Proposal 11: Areas identified in this report as contributing to green infrastructure should be protected so far as it was possible through designations such as those covering habitats, open space, recreation land and local green space.

Proposal 12: The NDP should contain policies (as necessary) referring to the need for development proposals to include measures aimed at supporting green infrastructure based on objectives set out in sections 3 and 4 above.



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Figure 7: Additional Green Infrastructure Corridors and Enhancement Zones