



**Leominster**  
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN



*Regulation 14*  
*Draft December 2014*



# Contents

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	Page
Introduction .....	4
Background .....	5
National and Local Planning Policy .....	8
Key Issues for the Leominster Area Neighbourhood Plan .....	13
Vision, Aims and Objectives .....	17
Policies and Proposals .....	24
• Sustainable Leominster .....	25
• Prosperous Leominster .....	34
• Greener Leominster .....	38
• Healthy Leominster .....	42
• Distinctive Leominster .....	44
• Accessible Leominster .....	49
How to comment on this Plan .....	51

## **Appendix 1 – Primary and Secondary**

Shopping Frontages .....	52
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Front cover image courtesy of STWD Architects



## *Introduction*

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Leominster Town Council decided in 2012 to take advantage of the new neighbourhood planning power. This power allows town councils to set out planning policies and proposals to promote, guide and control development. This Draft Plan, published for six weeks formal consultation during November 2014, sets out how the Town Council think the town and wider area should develop up to 2031 and beyond. We hope there are many things in this document that you will agree with, and others that you think you can improve. There may be some things you disagree with, or think are missing.

Whatever your views, please let us know what they are and together we can shape the future of the Leominster Area.

Details of how to comment on this Draft Plan can be found on page [insert number].

# Background

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## Neighbourhood Plans

Neighbourhood plans are a new feature of the statutory planning system in England.

Introduced through the Localism Act in 2011, neighbourhood plans give local communities, through parish and town councils, the power to plan for the future of their area.

Leominster Town Council decided in 2012 that this was a power that we should use so we could make decisions on the future planning policy for the whole town council area, see Map 1, hence the Leominster Neighbourhood Area Plan, or LANP for short.

## Community Engagement

Following the formation of the Leominster Area Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) in the summer of 2012, plans were formulated for the involvement of the people of Leominster Parish in the process. A newsletter was prepared and delivered to every home in the parish (some 5,500). The newsletter explained the process, asked questions to which residents could respond and included an invitation to the launch meeting of LANP. This meeting was held in February 2013 at Earl Mortimer College and took the form of an introductory talk by the Chair of the Steering Group and group discussions on the themes that had been identified by the NPSG: Housing, Environment, Health and Well-being, Transport, Leisure and Sport. Other smaller public meetings were held in Ivington, and at the Hop Pole Inn on the north side of Leominster.

The comments from these meetings were refined into the themes – The Built Environment, Jobs and Business, Green Spaces, Travel and Transport, Health and Leisure - with the environment and energy as overarching concepts. These themes were built into the website developed by Orphans Press which as well as providing information and a record of meetings also had a forum for discussion of the themes. VocalEyes was incorporated into the website to provide a means of rating attitudes to suggestions. The LANP website went live in the spring of 2013.





The Chair visited Earl Mortimer College on two occasions to discuss the plan with students.

In August 2013 LANP took a window in the Tourist Information Centre in Corn Square showing a video (on a permanent loop) detailing the issues to be discussed in preparing a neighbourhood plan. Leaflets were handed out on market days throughout the month and members of the Steering Group engaged shoppers in conversation.

In September 2013 over 400 Leominster businesses were invited to a Business Forum at Grange Court to discuss the plan and generate ideas. The NPSG also met with the owners of the land earmarked for the Urban Expansion site south of Leominster on a number of occasions. We also engaged with the representatives of the GP surgeries looking to move to a larger and more convenient site and of a nursing home looking to build a retirement complex within the parish.

The website continued to function as the main means of connecting with residents while articles in the local press informed readers of the progress being made. Throughout the preparation of LANP, the Steering Group has met in open meetings usually on the first and third Wednesdays of the month.

Our Plan has now reached its first formal stage of consultation, see the diagram on this page.

# Map 1 – Designated Neighbourhood Planning Area



## *National and Local Planning Policy*

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**The Leominster Neighbourhood Plan must take account of national and strategic local planning policy<sup>1</sup>. In developing our Plan the following documents have been crucial in setting the context for the Leominster Neighbourhood Area Plan.**

### **National planning policy**

The Leominster Area Neighbourhood Plan must take account of national planning policy. This is, primarily, contained in one document - the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

This means our Neighbourhood Plan must “plan positively to promote local development” and must “support the strategic development needs” set out in Herefordshire Council’s 2007 Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and begin to take account of strategic planning in the emerging Core Strategy. Therefore, our Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared to be in “general conformity” with the strategic planning policies contained in the UDP and to take account of the planning policies in the emerging Core Strategy.

### **Planning policy for Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan**

Our neighbourhood plan must be in “general conformity” with strategic planning policy contained in the Unitary Development Plan until it is replaced by the Herefordshire Core Strategy.

There are a number of policies in the Unitary Development Plan that the Leominster Area Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in accordance with. These are summarised in the National and Local Planning Policy Assessment that accompanies this Plan.

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<sup>1</sup> The full list of national and local planning policies that have influenced the preparation of the LANP can be found in the Leominster National and Local Planning Policy Assessment that accompanies this Plan.



# Herefordshire County Council

## Core Strategy

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**Our plan has to take account of the strategic planning policies in the Herefordshire Core Strategy, (whether it is emerging or approved). In particular, the following policies are those that seek to maintain Leominster as the key centre in the north of Herefordshire. Remember these are Herefordshire Council's policies. They are not policies developed by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. The way that LANP intends to conform with these policies are contained in the "Policies and Proposals" section starting on page 24.**

### Core Strategy Policy LO1 – Development in Leominster

Leominster will accommodate a minimum of 2,300 new homes throughout the plan period (2011- 2031) of which approximately 1,500 dwellings will be provided in a single strategic urban extension (SUE) to the south-west of the town. The remaining dwellings will be provided through existing commitments, smaller scale non-strategic sites within the existing built up area; those which come forward through the Leominster Neighbourhood Development Plan or Development Plan Documents, or sites judged as having development potential which are identified in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.

The Leominster Enterprise Park will continue to serve the employment needs of Leominster, which will include a further extension of up to 10ha to the south of the enterprise park. The release of the additional land will be phased across the plan period depending upon the availability or otherwise of land within the existing enterprise park.

In Leominster new development proposals will be encouraged where they:

- continue the development of the Leominster Enterprise Park and encourage proposals for suitable small scale employment sites within the town;
- maintain and enhance the viability and vitality of the town centre. Proposals for new retail, leisure or office development of over 500m<sup>2</sup> in gross floor space and located outside of the defined town centre will need to be supported by an impact assessment in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework to determine whether there could be any adverse impacts on the vitality and viability of Leominster town centre;

- ensure that developments do not exacerbate air pollution levels within the designated air quality management area at Bargates;
- ensure that development does not undermine the achievement of water quality targets in accordance with Policy SD3 and SD4 [Note: this a reference to the Core Strategy not reproduced here]; and
- have demonstrated engagement and consultation with the community including the town/parish council.

### **Core Strategy Policy LO2 – Leominster Urban Extension**

Development proposals at Leominster urban extension will be expected to bring forward:

- around 1,500 new homes at an average density of up to 35 dwellings per hectare comprising a mix of market and affordable house sizes and types that meet the requirements of policy H3 [Note: this a reference to the Core Strategy not reproduced here] and the needs identified in the Herefordshire Local Housing Market Assessment;
- an affordable housing target of 25% will be required as an opportunity to address the range of homes currently available in the town;
- a southern direct road linking the Worcester Road roundabout to the A44 to help relieve traffic congestion within the town and improve air quality in the Bargates area;
- small scale neighbourhood retail facilities;
- potential for employment opportunities as demand arises, in the form of use class B1 and live/work units;
- provision of appropriate community and youth facilities within a community hub;
- provision of a new 420 place primary school and pre-school facilities to be delivered directly by the developer or through developer contributions;
- appropriate provision of on-site open space, sports and recreation provision (in addition to Cockcroft Hill), which shall include fully accessible semi-natural and natural green space; play provision for all age groups, indoor and outdoor sports provision (some of which may be off site), allotments and new orchard planting;
- new green infrastructure walking and cycling links to the town centre, schools, the Enterprise Park and local public right of way network;

- retention of the highly sensitive landscape areas and geological features of Cockcroft Hill (which encompasses Ryelands Croft) by retaining this site as natural open space;
- development that is sustainable in terms of its construction materials and methods, use of energy, water and other resources and contributes towards the Government's zero carbon buildings policy to include the use of renewable and low carbon energy sources;
- a comprehensive sustainable urban drainage system which includes measures such as rainwater gardens and swales to manage ground and surface water drainage and safeguard against any increased flood risk;
- an evaluation of the archaeological importance of the area in order to ensure appropriate protection of heritage assets and inform the detailed development proposals.

The land available for development to the south-west of Leominster will also enable the housing needs of the town to be met beyond the plan period.

The Core Strategy expresses this strategy in policies LO1 and LO2 and a Key Diagram, see Map 2.

Leominster also includes a significant rural hinterland. Three settlements within this area are identified within the emerging Core Strategy as villages where housing development will be restricted to "market homes which meet the needs of people with local connections". The villages are:

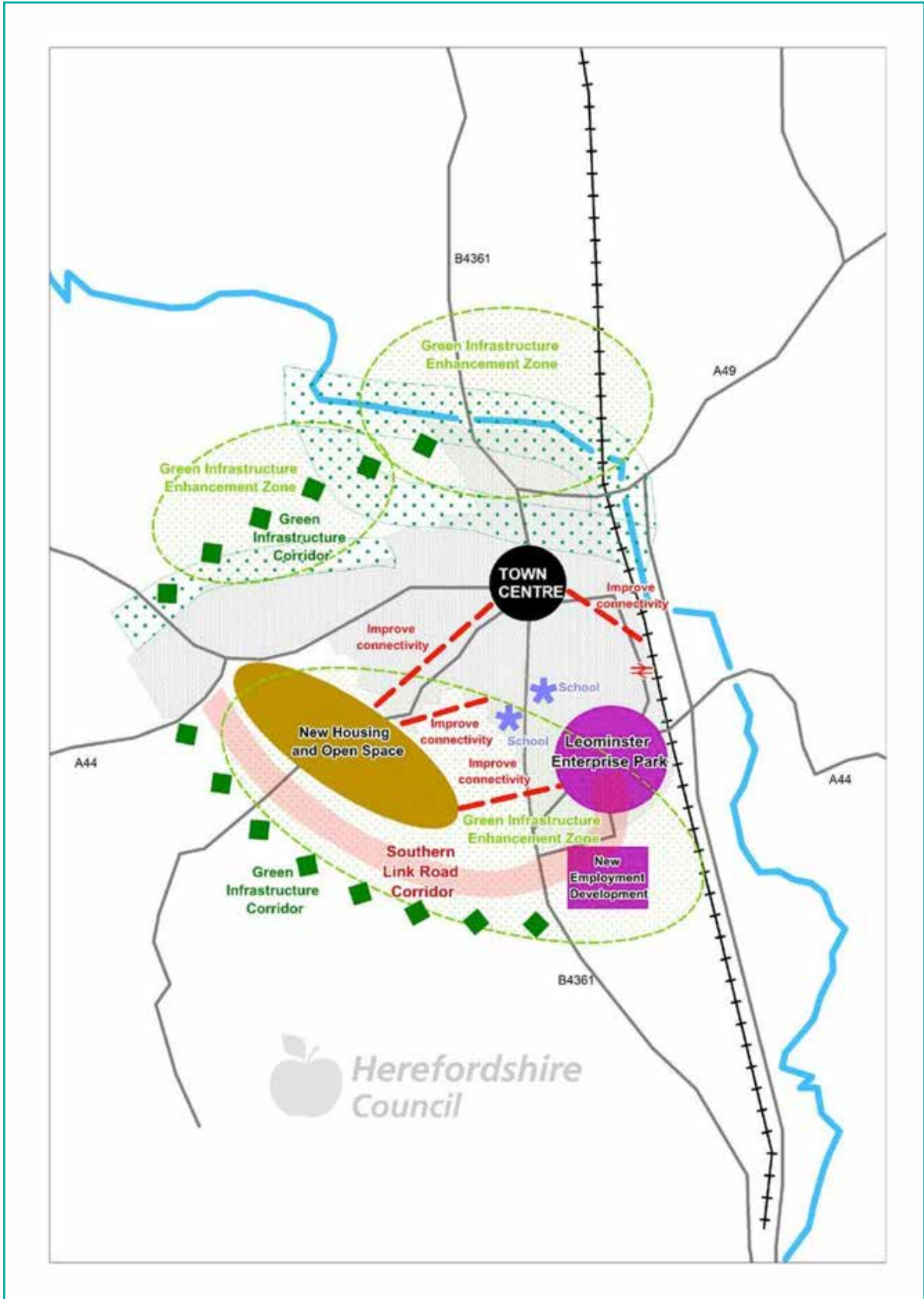
- Brierley
- Ivington
- Wharton

Outside these areas housing in the countryside surrounding Leominster will be limited to the following:

- Homes that meet an agricultural or forestry need or other farm diversification enterprise for a worker to live permanently at or near their place of work, or are necessary to allow a rural enterprise to be retained or grow (such homes also need to comply with policy RA4 of the emerging Core Strategy);
- Replacement of existing dwellings;
- Re-use of redundant or disused buildings of architectural and/or historical merit;
- Rural exception sites – small affordable housing schemes that meet proven local needs;
- Homes of exceptional quality and innovative design.

The Core Strategy also identifies a boundary for Leominster Town Centre and Primary and Secondary Shopping frontages. Our Plan defines these frontages in more detail.

# Map 2 – Leominster Core Strategy Key Diagram



# *Key Issues for the Leominster Area Neighbourhood Plan*

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This section of our plan identifies the key issues Leominster will face up to 2031.

Our Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared to tackle six key issues:

- Housing
- Health and Leisure
- Travel and Transport
- Jobs and Business
- Green spaces
- Built Environment

The Steering Group has been working and consulting on these issues since 2012.



## **Housing**

The Core Strategy identifies a significant number of new homes for Leominster: 2,300 over the period 2011 to 2031. By April 2013 only 65 homes had been completed. There were a further 453 homes with planning permission, leaving a target of land for 1,782 new homes to be found. Planning approvals up to May 2014 raise commitments to 479, of these commitments 425 are at Barons Cross. This still means land must be found for 1,756 new homes.

The Core Strategy seeks to address this issue by identifying land to the south west of Leominster for a Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE). This will accommodate around 1,500 of these 1,756 new homes. The rest of the town will accommodate the remaining 256 homes, Leominster town will be the priority, followed by the villages, and with very limited development in open countryside.

Everyone accepts the need for new housing, but this level of development will put significant pressure on the existing local community and services. While a smaller urban expansion would reduce this pressure, this is strategic planning policy set by Herefordshire Council. Our plan has to take account of this and, therefore, seeks that all new housing must be well designed, phased to ensure that land is not released unnecessarily, and it must meet and strive to go beyond the national standards for sustainable housing design. This will minimise impact on the environment and reduce running costs; and it must be the right type and tenure of housing in the right place.



## Health and Leisure

Under this heading our Neighbourhood Plan looks not only at the medical facilities in the area, for example the principles that should guide the location of a new health centre, but also looks at how a better planned, cleaner, greener and safer environment can contribute to the health and well-being of all those who live and work in Leominster.

Our plan also looks at possible new leisure facilities and recreation facilities.

Tourism is an important contributor to the town's economy with over 30,000 visitors a year. Our plan seeks to improve and grow this important sector of our local economy. One of the key existing weaknesses is the lack of higher quality hotel provision.

## Travel and Transport

One of the key issues for Leominster town is the problem of traffic flow through the town. This causes congestion and air quality issues at Bargates<sup>2</sup>. Our neighbourhood plan supports the option for addressing this issue via the construction of a new link road. A link road should be built irrespective of whether the urban expansion goes ahead or not.

It is also important that the neighbourhood plan considers other ways of getting from A to B – walking, cycling and public transport, not just in the town of Leominster itself, but also in our more rural areas.

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<sup>2</sup> Currently the air quality in Bargates is well below British and European standards and is likely to incur large fines unless remedied. The only way of improving air quality is by reducing congestion on the through route which means reducing the amount of traffic, particularly heavy vehicles, using the route.

Leominster is a Walkers are Welcome town and our plan looks at how we can prioritise journeys on foot and cycle by improving facilities for walkers and cyclists. In doing this we will support the work under our Health and Leisure theme and improve our tourism offer.

## Jobs and Business

We want Leominster to remain a vibrant and dynamic town. This means that there must be jobs for all those that need one and encouragement for businesses to establish and grow. Leominster has a very varied business base with traditional industries such as agriculture sitting alongside modern internet based businesses. Tourism makes a large contribution to the town's economy.

While Southern Avenue and the Enterprise Park are the main industrial sites, and the town centre is the main retail and entertainment hub, there are businesses scattered across the town and the surrounding rural area.

Our Plan must look at how we facilitate and promote sustainable economic growth, diversification and viability for both existing and new enterprise sectors for Leominster and the surrounding district.

We need to increase employment opportunities at all levels - specifically to improve the quality and diversity of employment.

We need to ensure a ready supply of employment land is available for future uses.

We need to improve access to employment opportunities as a priority whether that be by improving footpaths, bus routes or improving broadband.

Our plan will identify and support core industry sectors established in Leominster and will look at ways to encourage business to locate in Leominster.

Particular sectors of the economy that our plan focuses upon are tourism, construction, antiques/destination retail, warehousing, food and drink, and the economic benefits our heritage brings.





## Green spaces

There are many green spaces in the Leominster area. This includes the large rural area that surrounds the town but within the town there are parks and open spaces, rivers and streams and trees along roads.

The key issue for our Plan is how we retain the green spaces that we value, improve them, and enhance their biodiversity and add new spaces.

Our Plan sets out a range of policies and proposals to do this within a Green Infrastructure framework – a network of green spaces, rivers, and streams that, interspersed between our town and villages, will connect places and people to support our Health and Leisure, Transport, and Jobs and Business themes.

## Built Environment

Leominster was laid out outside of a flourishing monastic enclosure, separated by an Anglo-Saxon defensive line which still exists and makes a dramatic contrast between the urban market town and the open grassland of the Grange. The town's prosperity was based on wool but as this waned properties were adapted rather than replaced, so that the central streets and alleys of the town still retain much of their medieval character. The surrounding watercourses and marshland which gave rise to the town's Welsh name Llanllieni (Minster among the streams) are now harder to discover.

The historic buildings may be timber framed, rendered, or in bricks made of the local clay, and are generally two or three storeys high with roofs of tile or slate, but it is probably their terraced form and the scale derived from the original burgage plots which are most distinctive.

New buildings, whether they be houses, business premises, shops, cafes, pubs, or public buildings, should in the future contribute to Leominster's distinctiveness and not dilute it by having a "it could be anywhere" appearance.

Our plan, therefore, focuses on the design of new and redeveloped buildings. We also want to ensure that future development in Leominster is of the highest standard, is sustainable and enhances our town, villages and landscape.

We also need to have plans to regenerate Leominster's rich heritage and those buildings that may have fallen into disrepair and have a negative impact on the area's image.



# *Vision, Aims and Objectives*

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## Vision

Leominster in 2031 will be one of the country's more sustainable<sup>3</sup> towns, vibrant and bustling with a prosperous, unpolluted and healthy environment. Its population will be housed in high quality, well-designed, sustainable homes. The working population will have opportunities to work from home, or in businesses, or services which provide low-energy, low-pollution, and low-impact working environments. There will be a wide range, for all age-groups, of retail, trading and service opportunities including community facilities, leisure options and amenities available to residents, workers and visitors. The heritage of the town will be preserved, celebrated and enhanced. There will be protected green areas which are linked together to create a green network which supports biodiversity. Various travel options will co-exist including footpaths, cycleways, rail and bus routes and improved road connections with priority given to walking and cycling and improved air quality.



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<sup>3</sup> “Sustainable” and “sustainability” have various meanings. In planning circles it is taken to mean “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. Elsewhere, the understanding is that a behaviour or development is sustainable if it can continue indefinitely without depleting resources or producing pollution that damages the environment or reducing biodiversity. A sustainable development is one that is resilient to challenges such as climate change and economic crises. It is hoped that the policies detailed in this plan will apply all these definitions of the terms.



## Aims

To achieve our Vision the Leominster Area Neighbourhood Plan has the following aims:

### **1 - To create a sustainable Leominster**

The purpose of planning is to help achieve sustainable development. The Leominster Area Neighbourhood Plan will create a sustainable Leominster. This will be done by placing the principles of sustainable development at the heart of this Neighbourhood Plan, and at the heart of the Plan's implementation. This is the "golden thread" that runs throughout our Plan.

### **2 - To create a prosperous Leominster**

We will create a more prosperous community by supporting sustainable economic and housing growth. High quality housing development will provide for the expected growth in population and demand for particular types of accommodation (e.g. sheltered retirement homes) based on the housing need at that time.

### **3 - To create a greener Leominster**

We will create a greener Leominster by retaining, enhancing and adding new Green Infrastructure.

### **4 - To retain Leominster's distinctive identity**

We will create a Leominster that is distinctive and renowned for its high quality buildings, spaces and public realm.

### **5 - To create a healthy Leominster**

We will create a healthy community by addressing needs and supporting the health, social and cultural well-being of those who live, work, and do business in and visit Leominster.

### **6 - To create an accessible Leominster**

We will create an accessible community by promoting sustainable transport. We will do this by giving people more choices about how they travel or whether they need to at all.

## Objectives

This section of the Leominster Area Neighbourhood Plan sets out our objectives. These objectives, if achieved, will allow us to meet our Key Aims and achieve our Vision for Leominster.

### 1 - To create a sustainable Leominster

To create a sustainable Leominster our neighbourhood plan will seek to achieve the following:

- i. Support the strategic development needs set out in the Herefordshire Core Strategy
- ii. Plan positively to support local development and shape and direct that development.
- iii. Build a strong, competitive economy.
- iv. Ensure the vitality of Leominster Town Centre.
- v. Support a prosperous rural economy.
- vi. Promote sustainable transport.
- vii. Require good design.
- viii. Promote a healthy community.
- ix. Meet the challenge of climate change and flooding.
- x. Conserve and enhance the natural and historic environments.
- xi. Promote utilization of renewable energy sources.



## 2 - To create a prosperous Leominster

To create a prosperous Leominster we will seek to achieve the following:

- i.** Encourage employment opportunities that will be available in the town centre, the industrial area on Worcester Road/Southern Avenue and the Enterprise Park and also in selected areas in the strategic housing development sites (small businesses and live/work units) and elsewhere in the town where it is appropriate.
- ii.** Allow housing development, largely, on the two strategic sites of Baron's Cross and the Urban Expansion site with the former having priority as it is a brown-field site.
- iii.** Promote sustainable growth and diversification for existing and new businesses.
- iv.** Increase and enhance employment opportunities for all.
- v.** Ensure that a deliverable supply of small-scale employment land is available for future uses.
- vi.** Improve access to employment areas.
- vii.** Identify and support core industry sectors that are established/thriving in Leominster and also those that could be encouraged to come to Leominster.
- viii.** Promote Leominster to new business - including small scale, technology, and those utilising knowledge based skills.
- ix.** Mix the use of the defined land use zones - e.g. encourage residential use within working/retail areas (such as the town centre) likewise consider residential live/work units alongside new industrial schemes if appropriate.
- x.** In exceptional cases planning policy for historic buildings may be relaxed- so they can be used for residential, business or other purposes more easily, to increase revenue and therefore investment into the condition of existing old structures.
- xi.** Produce a high street palette of colours to create an attractive retail area that is locally distinctive and would improve the look of the town - alongside more tree planting, seating etc.
- xii.** New housing in the urban expansion area will have live/work units, small workshop/studios, community buildings, mall retail options (i.e. village shop), market hall or equivalent (both nationally and locally in demand).

### 3 - To create a greener Leominster

To create a greener Leominster we will seek to achieve the following:

- i. Identify a network of protected Green Infrastructure areas.
- ii. Enhance and improve open spaces.
- iii. Ensure that new development contributes to and integrates with the existing Green Infrastructure network.
- iv. Ensure that development does not increase the risk of climate change and flooding.
- v. Encourage a net gain in biodiversity.
- vi. Protect valued landscapes and improve those in need of enhancement.
- vii. Green the town centre.
- viii. Discourage infilling of green spaces such as gardens.
- ix. Encourage the highest quality, sustainable design standards in all buildings.
- x. Encourage the use of renewable energy.



### 4 - To retain Leominster's distinctive identity

To create a Leominster with a distinct identity we will seek to achieve the following:

- i. Protect valued landscapes and improve those in need of enhancement.
- ii. Retain and enhance our distinctive town centre and its buildings.
- iii. Avoid the label "could be anywhere".
- iv. Protect listed buildings and Conservation Areas.
- v. Improve the public areas, particularly in the town centre.
- vi. Protect important views.



## 5 - To create a healthy Leominster

To create a healthy Leominster we will seek to achieve the following:

- i.** Improve local health services and make them more accessible.
- ii.** Protect valued community assets.
- iii.** Provide safe and accessible environments.
- iv.** Provide quality places and spaces that people want to use, and give opportunities for people of all backgrounds to meet.
- v.** Improve the range of cultural activities on offer and promote a high quality, richly built and natural environment.
- vi.** Improve facilities for indoor and outdoor leisure and recreation.
- vii.** Improve opportunities for walking and cycling.
- viii.** Improve air quality in the town centre, particularly at Bargates.

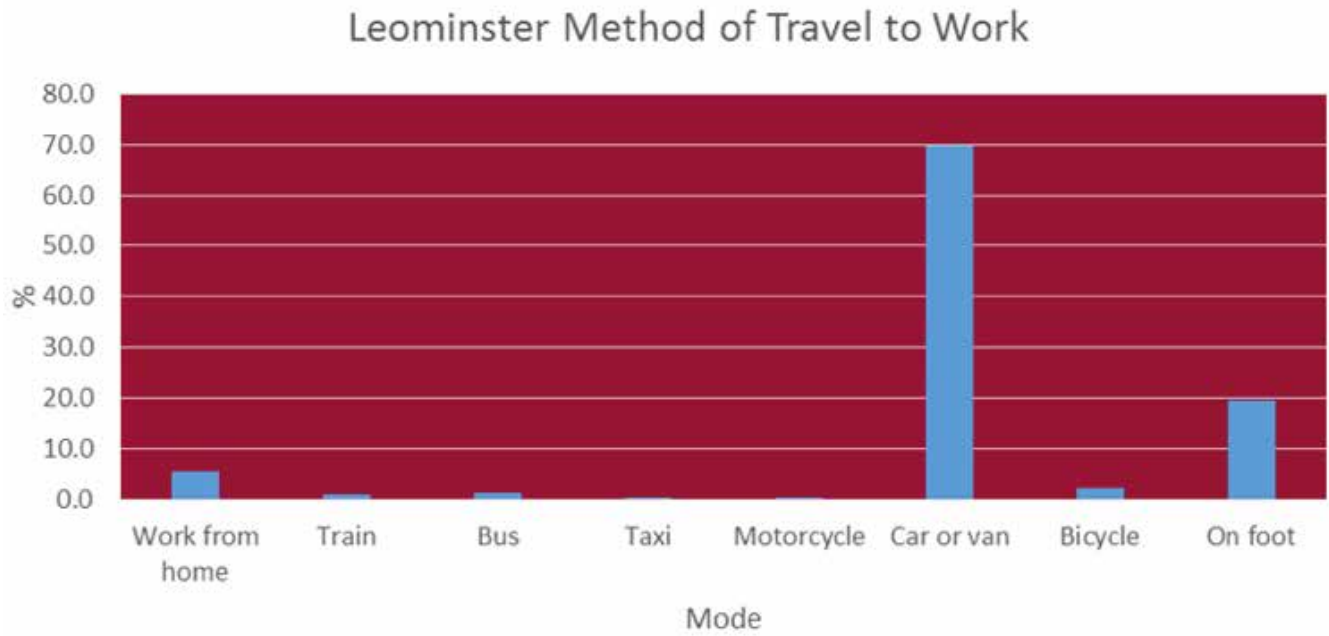
## 6 - To create an accessible Leominster

To create an accessible Leominster we will seek to achieve the following:

- i.** Prioritise walking and cycling.
- ii.** Reduce the overall need to travel.
- iii.** Increase alternatives to the private car, whilst acknowledging opportunities for such action vary from urban to rural Leominster.
- iv.** Increase the proportion of journeys by walking, cycling and public transport, see Figure 1. Almost 20% of people currently walk to work but only 2.2% cycle and only 1.9% go by public transport.
- v.** A safer more accessible Leominster Town Centre.

Figure 1<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Source: 2011 Census



## *Policies and Proposals*



## *Sustainable Leominster*

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The purpose of planning is to help achieve sustainable development. The Leominster Area Neighbourhood Plan will create a sustainable Leominster. This will be done by placing the principles of sustainable development at the heart of this Neighbourhood Plan, and at the heart of the Plan's implementation. This is the "golden thread" running through our plan. The aim is that by 2031 Leominster will be one of the more sustainable market towns, with a record of creative and innovative approaches to achieving sustainable development. The policies that will support this are given below.

### **LANP1 – SUPPORTING THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT NEEDS IN LEOMINSTER**

To promote the needs for strategic development of the Herefordshire Core Strategy, a new road linking the A44 at Baron's Cross and the A49 south east of the town should be constructed. This should happen before the developments on the Leominster Sustainable Urban Extension or other strategic sites commence. The following principles must also be followed in the design of the road:

- i.** The road should be constructed to provide cycle and pedestrian routes across it, connecting the town with the surrounding parish and, in particular, providing safe routes for access in and out of the Baron's Cross estate.
- ii.** The development should provide green corridors to connect green spaces within the town and the surrounding area.
- iii.** The link road will form the southern boundary of the urban expansion strategic site.
- iv.** The route of the link road should not result in the Baron's Cross estate being isolated from the town.



- v. Once the link road is open, heavy goods vehicle traffic should be prevented from using the old route through the town except for access.
- vi. There should be a 50 mph speed limit on the link road to limit road noise.
- vii. Low-noise surfacing should be used together with other means of noise reduction (such as banks or cuttings) where possible.
- viii. Run-off from the road should not be allowed to enter the River Arrow.

The link road is a priority and the complete route should be in place before housing development on the urban expansion site commences. Indeed, should the urban expansion site not go ahead, the benefits of the link road are such that it should be built as a priority anyway.

This is sustainable since it will reduce the waste of energy caused by congestion on the present route of the A44 through the town and reduce noise and the excessively high levels of recorded air pollution in the town, particularly at Bargates .

It improves resilience by facilitating the transport of goods in, out and through the parish, and will reduce the loss of earnings caused by delays. It will also improve access to the principal employment areas.

## **LANP2 – SUPPORTING THE STRATEGIC HOUSING DEVELOPMENT NEEDS IN LEOMINSTER TOWN**

To support the strategic housing needs identified for Leominster outside the Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE), particularly on the strategic brownfield site at Baron's Cross, new housing development will be permitted within the town when it meets the following criteria:

- i.** It is on a brownfield site and would not lead to the loss of local employment; or
- ii.** It is a small-scale greenfield site adjoining the town's main urban area; and can also demonstrate the following:
  - a.** It is of high quality sustainable design;
  - b.** The design is appropriate to its context and its appearance makes a positive contribution to the surrounding environment;
  - c.** The energy efficiency standards employed exceed national standards prevailing at the time, and include flexibility for simple and cost effective adaptations and improvements so that energy efficiency can be continually improved;
  - d.** The Developer should submit a design and access statement explicitly demonstrating how the proposal has considered the local street scene, landscape, local distinctiveness and includes a justification for the positive contribution their scheme might make and demonstrates their understanding of high design standards;
  - e.** The preferred hierarchy of pedestrian, cycle, bus, car is facilitated throughout the design with footpaths, lanes, cycle racks/storage, bus stops, generous communal/visitor parking areas, landscaping and off street parking;

- f.** There is an appropriate mix of housing types including family sized homes with family sized gardens, homes for single people, live/work dwellings, visitor accommodation, with mixed tenure and meets the affordable housing target;
- g.** The scheme should provide self-build/custom home opportunities;
- h.** The design should be locally distinctive, enhance an area, improve biodiversity, use local materials, provide security, inclusivity, and exhibit high quality that enhances Leominster;
- i.** It is not infilling a valuable green space in the town.
- j.** Two parking spaces should be provided per dwelling. Less than this will be permitted only if:
  - (i)** Alternative and reasonably accessible car parking arrangements can be demonstrated and which in themselves do not add to on-street parking;
  - (ii)** Otherwise acceptable and well-designed new-build or conversion schemes in the town centre conservation area would be incapable of meeting this parking provision.
- k.** Construction traffic on the strategic development sites will not be permitted to use the route through the town passing through Bargates.

### **LANP3 – LEOMINSTER SUSTAINABLE URBAN EXTENSION**

In addition to the provisions included in policy LANP2, development of the Leominster Sustainable Urban Extension will be permitted when:

- a.** A detailed masterplan is in place for the whole site. Individual sites should be designed in accordance with this masterplan, and, where necessary, individual sites should have their own masterplan;
- b.** Homes should be individually designed and not be “off the shelf” stock house types;
- c.** The development of the site should be phased and designed so that the look and feel of the extension is of distinct, incremental developments, rather than uniform housing estate layouts and designs, and with good connections to the town centre;
- d.** A “village” centre should be created including amenities such as community hall, shops, small businesses, and a new primary school (in addition, this may be an appropriate site for the new health centre – see Policy LANP14);
- e.** Housing density around the village centre should be high (minimum 50 dwellings per hectare) and should include sheltered/warden monitored housing for the elderly and disabled;
- f.** Housing density should decrease away from the village centre;
- g.** The energy efficiency standards employed should exceed national standards prevailing at the time, and include flexibility for simple and cost effective adaptations and improvements so that energy efficiency can be continually improved;
- h.** Priority should be given to pedestrians and cyclists;
- i.** Traffic calming should be achieved by using less intrusive methods, e.g. building placement and road design, parking, change in surfacing, bends, corners and road narrowing;

- j.** Main routes through the site should be designed to allow bus routes to serve the site and link it to Leominster and beyond;
- k.** The distinction between social and private housing should be blurred and the mix of ownership types dispersed across individual phases, rather than in single tenure developments;
- l.** All homes should have access to the “village” centre and Leominster town centre using cycleways and footpaths;
- m.** A variety of layouts should be used including squares, courtyards, lanes and terraces;
- n.** The latest information communication technologies should be incorporated into the site;
- o.** Broad green corridors (in particular including Cockcroft Hill) for the migration of wildlife between the town centre and the periphery should be incorporated in the design of the urban extension; and
- p.** There should be identified spaces for allotments and recreation areas.

## LANP4 – NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN BRIERLEY, IVINGTON AND WHARTON

New market housing to meet local needs within Brierley, Ivington and Wharton must satisfy the following criteria:

- a. It relates well to the existing settlement and is proportionate;
- b. It re-uses brownfield land;
- c. It enhances the character of the area;
- d. It does not lead to isolated homes, detached from the main village in the open countryside;
- e. It is of high quality sustainable design appropriate to its context; and
- f. It makes a positive contribution to the surrounding environment and rural landscape.



To ensure such housing is truly to meet a local need arising in the parish, appropriate evidence will have to be submitted to the local planning authority to demonstrate the housing will provide accommodation for any of the following:

- (i) Existing residents of the parish requiring separate accommodation;
- (ii) Immediate family members (parents, siblings, and adult children) who have current and longstanding links with the parish;
- (iii) Other family members (grandparents, grandchildren, aunts and uncles) where the local planning authority consider it necessary for the applicant to live in the parish to receive medical or social support from a relative;
- (iv) People with permanent, full time employment based mainly within the parish who require housing to enable them to fulfil their occupation.

Unless medical needs indicate otherwise minimum gross internal floor areas should be<sup>1</sup>:

1 bed 2 person – 60m<sup>2</sup>

2 bed 3 person – 70m<sup>2</sup>

3 bed 5 person – 100m<sup>2</sup>

4 bed 6 person - 110m<sup>2</sup>

To safeguard occupation of homes granted under this policy for identified local housing needs in perpetuity, planning obligations will be used.

Conditions will also be attached to planning permissions granted under this policy to:

- (i) Remove permitted development rights for the erection of extensions or detached buildings within the curtilage of the dwelling; and
- (ii) Restrict conversion of ancillary garages into habitable accommodation.

Applications to vary these conditions will only be approved in exceptional circumstances.

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<sup>1</sup> Figures taken from RIBA report “Case for Space”, German standards.



## LANP5 – NEW HOMES IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

New housing development in the countryside (including in settlements not covered in LANP 4) will only be permitted when it satisfies one or more of the following:

- a. It is essential for an agricultural, forestry or other rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work;
- b. It replaces an existing dwelling on the same site and is no larger than the dwelling to be replaced; or
- c. It re-uses an existing building provided that it
  - (i) is of architectural or historic interest
  - (ii) is structurally sound and capable of conversion without substantial rebuilding
  - (iii) is large enough to be converted without requiring additional extension
  - (iv) will not have a detrimental impact on the privacy of neighbours or the appearance of the countryside



## LANP6 – RENEWABLE ENERGY

Proposals for projects utilising all forms of renewable energy will be supported when they do not have a negative impact on residential amenity, biodiversity, local landscape or the character of the area.





## *Prosperous Leominster*

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We want Leominster to be a prosperous place and for all to share in that prosperity. Policies that will support this are suggested below.

### **LANP7 - NEW BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

The following new business development will be permitted:

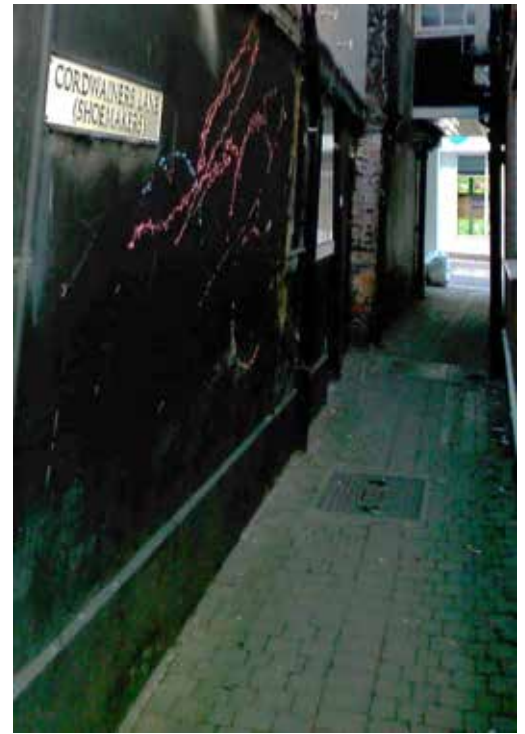
- a.** Business development at Worcester Road, Southern Avenue and the Enterprise Park;
- b.** Live/work units and small businesses will be encouraged on existing employment sites, within residential areas in Leominster, and in the outlying villages;
- c.** New ancillary space for sorting and storage of recyclable materials;
- d.** Improvements to business premises that fully utilise low-carbon materials, low energy use, use of renewable energy sources, and inclusion of green areas with planting of trees and shrubs;
- e.** Proposals which help to expand and improve Leominster's tourism offer such as hotels and other accommodation, improved cycle tracks, footpaths and bridleways, regeneration of historic buildings, and expansion/relocation of the Museum; and
- f.** Plans to diversify agricultural businesses;
- g.** Where a renewable energy statement has been prepared to show that all opportunities to generate energy were considered and actioned.

All proposals must

- (i) be of a scale and design appropriate to the area;
- (ii) have a safe access with adequate off-street parking;
- (iii) incorporate measures, where appropriate, to ensure that no light, air, noise or water pollution will result from the development;
- (iv) not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbours.

### **LANP8 – PROTECTING EXISTING EMPLOYMENT SITES**

Existing employment sites will be protected for future employment use (B1, B2 and B8 of the Use Classes Order). Redevelopment or conversion to non-employment generating uses will only be permitted when it can clearly be demonstrated, after an extensive period of active marketing, that the site is no longer viable, or suitable, in environmental terms, for continued employment use.



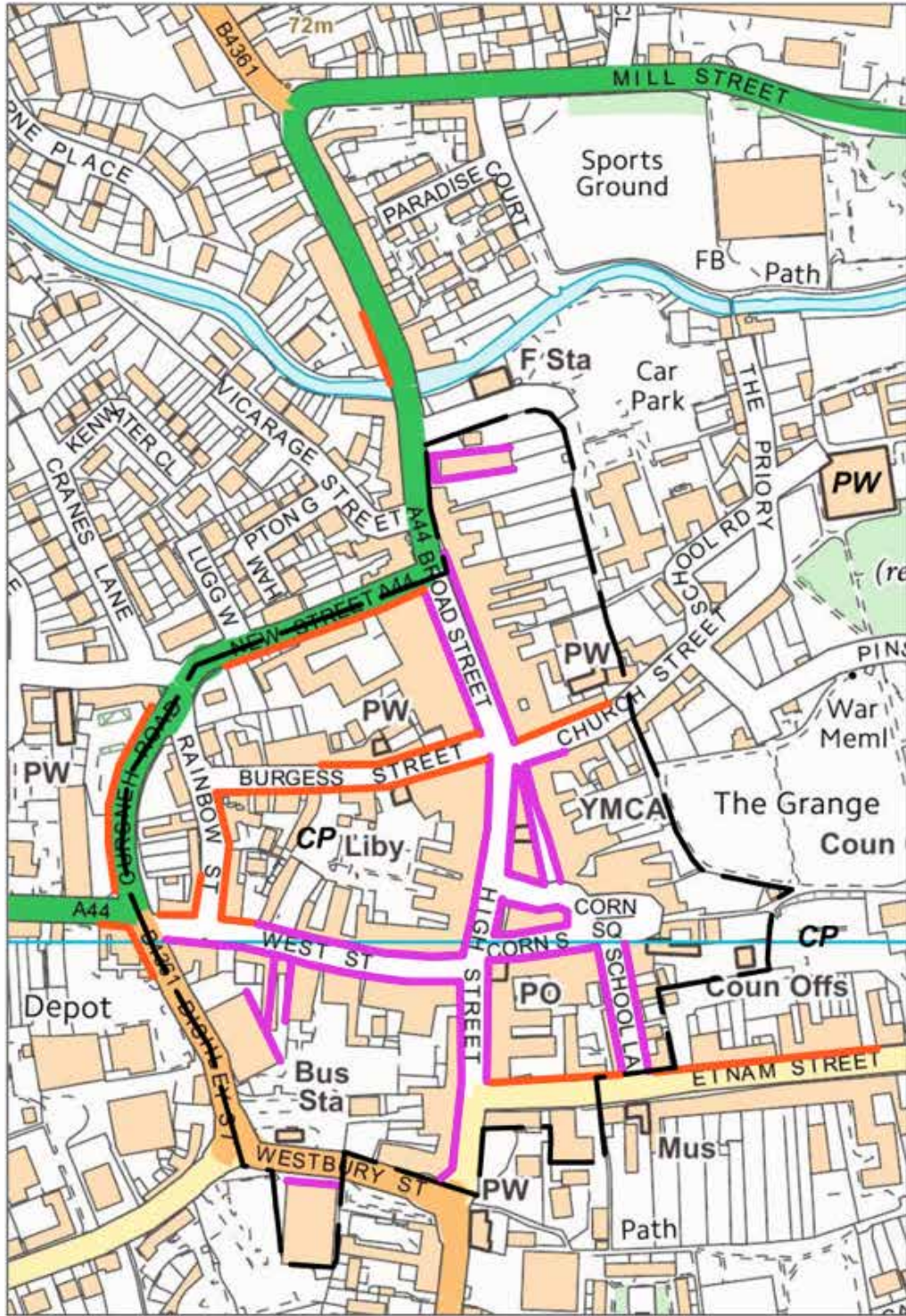


## LANP9 – DEVELOPMENT IN LEOMINSTER TOWN CENTRE

Within Leominster Town Centre, see Map 3, development for retail, leisure, office, commercial, cultural and tourism uses will be encouraged. Development proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:

- a. For retail development, it is located in one of the primary or secondary shopping frontages, see Map 3, and Appendix 1;
- b. There is sympathetic re-use and improvement of existing premises;
- c. Where new shop frontages are proposed they are in keeping with existing traditional shop frontages, or re-introduce such frontages;
- d. Existing doorways giving access to upper floors from the street should not be removed;
- e. The re-use of upper floors for residential use will be encouraged;
- f. Distinctive and detailed features of buildings should be retained and enhanced;
- g. Proposals must include secure areas for rubbish (wheelie bins) and bicycles;
- h. New developments in the town centre should retain the original boundaries of the burgage plots and retain any existing historic stone walls and earth banks;
- i. Business premises should have appropriate signage - illuminated signs and lighting should be kept to a minimum and when used make a positive contribution to the street scene;
- j. Security grilles should be well designed and seek to maintain a varied and interesting frontage, whilst at the same time providing appropriate security;
- k. Appropriate stone paving should be used on all roadways and paths. Surfaces should be permeable and tarmac should be avoided;
- l. Deliveries to the town centre should only take place within set times by small eco-vehicles, and plans for a “last mile” delivery depot on the Enterprise Park will be looked on favourably.

# Map 4: Leominster town centre and primary and secondary shop frontages

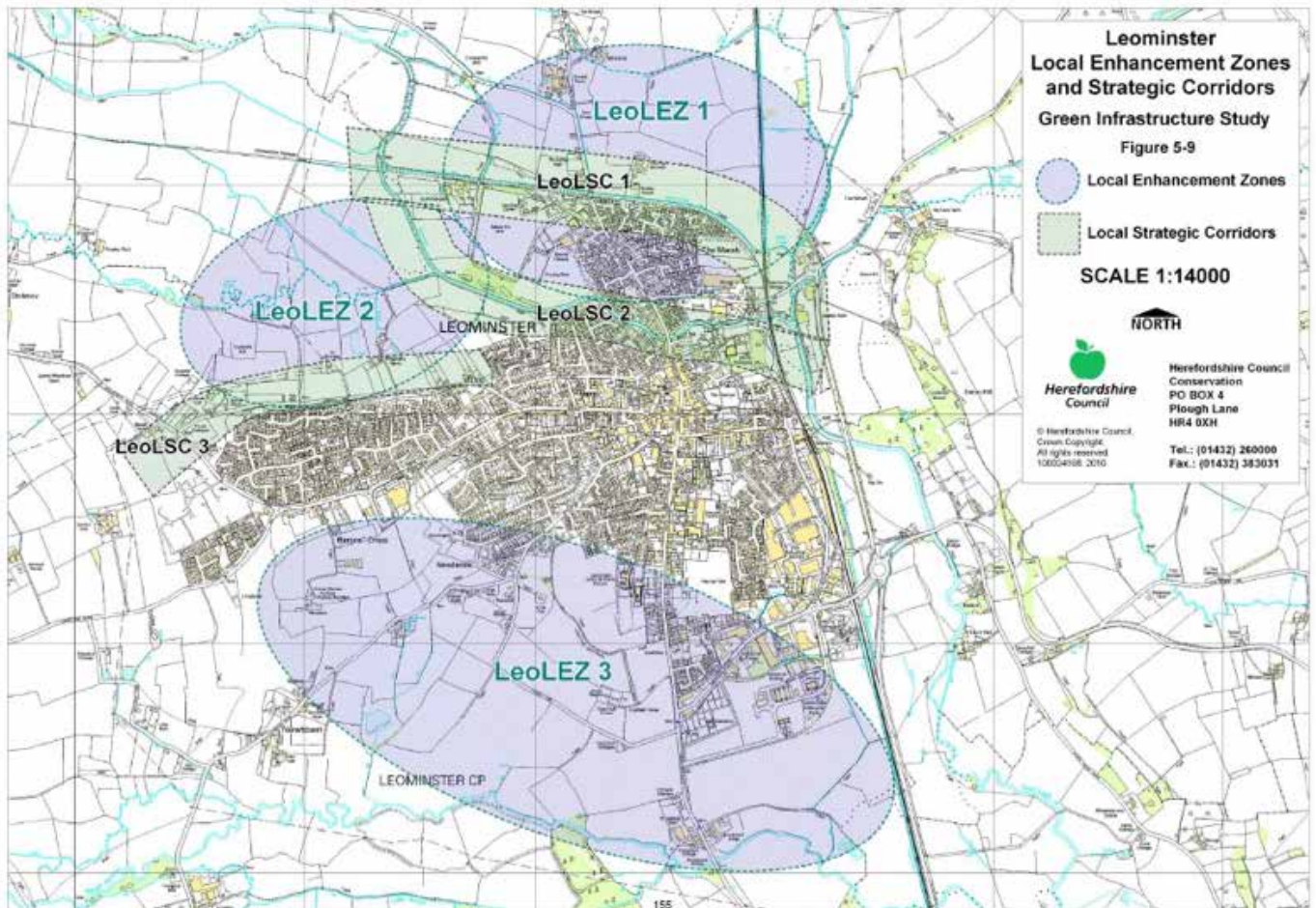


- Town Centre Area
- Primary Shopping Frontage
- Secondary Shopping Frontage
- CP - Car Park
- PW - Place of Worship

## Greener Leominster

By 2031 Leominster will be greener. Policies to achieve this are suggested below.

## Map 4 – Green Infrastructure<sup>2</sup>



<sup>2</sup> Green Infrastructure Strategy Herefordshire, 2010

## LANP10 – GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

The Green Infrastructure network identified on Map 4 will be protected and enhanced.

Proposals will be assessed for the contribution they make to the following:

- a. Improved access to the Lugg, Kenwater and Arrow;
- b. Broad Green Infrastructure Corridors within the Sustainable Urban Extension;
- c. Links to encourage walking to the Enterprise Park;
- d. Links from the town centre to the surrounding Green Infrastructure network in the rural parts of the parish;
- e. Reduce habitat fragmentation and creation of inter-connecting green and blue corridors;
- f. Maintain and enhance green corridors to open countryside and create new ones;
- g. New tree planting along roads and streets; and
- h. New allotments and community gardens.



## LANP11 – OPEN SPACES

The open spaces identified below will be protected:

- The Grange
- The Priory precinct
- Cricket pitch (off Mill Street)
- Playing fields and sports centre (off Bridge Street)
- Cemetery, Hereford Road
- Ginhall Green
- Recreation ground, Leisure Centre and school playing fields, east of South Street
- Skate Board Park ground and Sydonia Park
- Millennium Green and riverside walk
- Cockcroft Hill
- Easters Wood
- Riversides such as spaces in the former Priory lands on the south side of the river Kenwater



- Picnic Area behind Priory and Breathing Space garden
- Booth Memorial Garden
- Small park on Ryelands Road
- Orchard at top of Green Lane
- Areas of open spaces through Buckfields
- Linear walk along river behind Ridgemoor
- Orchard south west of Morrison's.

Smaller local green spaces will also be protected and infilling (e.g. of gardens and small open spaces on housing estates) will not be permitted. Redevelopment will only be permitted when the open space fails to perform any one of the following functions:

- a. It has no local significance, for its beauty,
- b. It is of no historic significance;
- c. It is of no value for recreation (including as a playing field);
- d. It is not significant for its tranquillity;
- e. nor is it significant for the richness of its wildlife.

### **LANP12 – GREENING THE TOWN (CENTRE)**

Proposals that would lead to the greening of Leominster town centre will be encouraged, including:

- a. Tree planting;
- b. Creation of new, or enhancement of, existing wildlife habitats;
- c. Proposals that protect or increase biodiversity;
- d. New and improved access to rivers and streams;
- e. Greener cycleways and footpaths will be prioritized.

Infilling of small open spaces such as gardens or on housing estates will not be permitted.



## LANP13 – DARK SKIES

To reduce light pollution and to improve the views of our night time skies, planning proposals that include external lighting and openings that would allow significant internal lighting to be seen externally will have to demonstrate the following:

- a. They have undertaken an appropriate assessment and can demonstrate the need for the lighting;
- b. The nature of the proposed lighting is appropriate for its use and location.



## Healthy Leominster

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By 2031 we want the Leominster Area community to be a healthy one: not just in terms of health and well-being, but also in terms of how people of different ages and communities can meet and how they get along; and in terms of the rich and diverse culture that is available to stimulate them, help them relax and develop as part of the community. Our policies to achieve this are set out below.



### LANP14 - PROMOTING A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

All development proposals will be assessed for the contribution they make to making Leominster a healthier community. This assessment will include the following:

- a. Suitable measures to ensure the safety of residents, workers and visitors and other users;
- b. Opportunities for different sections of the community to meet;
- c. Improvement of tourism, recreation and leisure facilities in the town;
- d. Opportunities to provide Community gardens and green spaces;
- e. Priority for the needs of pedestrians and cyclists; and
- f. Impact on amenity of adjoining occupiers.

## **LANP15 – PROVISION FOR A NEW HEALTH CENTRE**

Should a site for a new health centre be identified it should be capable of incorporating the following:

- a.** Sufficient space for existing and future health services;
- b.** Accessible to all users by a range of modes of transport;  
and
- c.** Include sufficient car parking for both staff and patients.

## **LANP16 – ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE**

Assets of community and public value, such as community centres, buildings, health centres, and halls, will be protected for community uses. Redevelopment for non-community uses will only be permitted where there is no longer a proven need for the existing use and alternative provision is available elsewhere in the town.

## *Distinctive Leominster*

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The policies and proposals in this chapter seek to retain Leominster's distinctive identity and ensure all new development makes a positive contribution to this.



### **LANP17 – LANDSCAPES**

Development proposals will be expected to protect and enhance the character of the local landscape.

In particular, proposals should:

- a.** Protect and enhance the low lying river corridors to the north, east and south of the town of the Lugg, Kenwater and Arrow;
- b.** Retain the remaining orchards;
- c.** Protect and enhance heritage buildings and areas that have traditional “black and white” timber buildings;
- d.** Retain mature trees, hedgerows and other vegetation;
- e.** Protect existing features such as field boundaries, drains and ditches; and
- f.** Seek to retain a strong distinction between the town's urban core and the surrounding rural area of the parish.



### **LANP18 – PROTECTING AND ENHANCING THE CHARACTER OF LEOMINSTER TOWN CENTRE**

Development proposals in Leominster town centre will be permitted when:

- a.** They respect the character and appearance of the town centre;
- b.** They do not have a negative impact on the heritage of the town;
- c.** They propose a suitable town centre use and improve, or bring back into use, vacant or under-used buildings;
- d.** They improve the streetscape and make a positive contribution to the character of the area; and
- e.** They include trees and suitable areas of planting, when appropriate.

## LANP19 – NEW BUILDING IN LEOMINSTER

All new buildings in Leominster will be encouraged to exceed minimum government sustainable development standards. To make Leominster a sustainable and distinctive town, development will be encouraged to include the following:

- a. Design that is appropriate to the local context and setting, taking into account
  - streetscape
  - building heights and lines
  - scale and mass
  - density
  - plot sizes, especially burgage plots
  - layout
  - means of enclosure - walls, fences and hedges
  - measures to reduce crime and increase personal safety.
  
- b. Design that creates high quality buildings that respond to local character and styles, taking into account
  - characteristic architectural design
  - building materials
  - form, colour and detailing
  - scope for innovation
  - scale and proportion
  - retain and where possible incorporate existing site features contributing to the quality of the local environment.



- c.** Design that provides variety in the size, type and design of houses, including

  - External and internal flexibility to allow adaptation to changing lifestyles
  - More single storey housing.
- d.** Design that reduces low carbon emissions and running costs and increases sustainability, taking into account

  - site orientation
  - opportunities to enhance biodiversity
  - sustainable drainage
  - retaining important open spaces.
- e.** Design that is sensitive to neighbours and the local area, taking into account

  - impact on the privacy and amenity of neighbours
  - provision of off road parking appropriate to the character and needs of the area
  - provision of a safe vehicular and pedestrian access
  - connections to schools, public transport and the town centre
  - avoiding areas with known noise and air pollution.
- f.** A large degree of external and internal flexibility to allow adaptation to changing lifestyles.
- g.** High levels of connectivity and appropriate community spaces.

## LANP20 - TOURISM

Leominster will be developed as a primary tourist destination, by encouraging the following developments:

- a. A permanent location for the Tourist Information Centre in the town centre;
- b. More Bed & Breakfast and short-stay accommodation in the town centre, villages and on farms;
- c. Proposals that enhance the Priory's potential for attracting visitors;
- d. Proposals to relocate the Museum within the town centre and to upgrade this facility as a first-rate tourist attraction;
- e. Conversion of existing buildings and new buildings to support tourist related development farm diversification; and
- f. Re-use and improvement of key historic properties that currently have a particularly negative impact on the quality of the town centre environment.



## LANP21 - IMPROVEMENTS TO THE APPROACHES TO THE TOWN

- a. Better quality pavements perhaps paid by Community Infrastructure Levy funds;
- b. Require high quality advertising and the use of powers under the Town and County Planning Act to control ad-hoc off site advertising and use of plastic banners on Worcester Road and Southern Avenue; and
- c. Protect the Wellingtonia trees that form the distinctive skyline of the town.

## LANP22 – PROTECTING IMPORTANT VIEWS

Development that would obscure or impair the following views will not be permitted:

- Views of the Priory;
- View from Eaton Hill;
- View north from Aulden;
- View from Cockcroft Hill;
- View from Newlands across the Arrow Valley;
- Northward views across the Kenwater and Lugg; and
- Views and vistas within the defined town centre, see Map 3 for the boundary of the town centre.

Development that obscures or detracts from views of important and historic buildings, key areas of landscape and large areas of open countryside will not be permitted.



## *Accessible Leominster*

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Leominster Parish is a mix of central market town and more isolated rural villages and hamlets. How accessible we can make different places, by means other than private car, e.g. by walking, cycling or public transport, is limited by this physical geography. Nevertheless, our Plan, whilst recognising these limitations, seeks to ensure that opportunities to make Leominster's town and villages more accessible are taken wherever possible. Policies to achieve this are suggested below.



### **LANP23 – REDUCING THE NEED TO TRAVEL**

All development proposals should include measures aimed at reducing the need to travel.

Development proposals should prioritise the needs of pedestrians and then cyclists over the needs of other transport users.

All proposals that are part of the Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) should prioritise and include measures to maximise walking and cycling within, to, and from, the SUE and Leominster. The SUE should also include suitable public transport measures and be accompanied by a travel plan.

## LANP24 – IMPROVING WALKING, CYCLING AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Proposals to create new and improved walking, cycling and public transport routes will be encouraged.

This includes the following:

- Movement to and from Baron's Cross;
- Movement to and from the SUE;
- Approaches to and from Leominster Station.



## LANP25 – MOVING AROUND LEOMINSTER TOWN CENTRE

A comprehensive Travel Plan should be prepared for Leominster. Proposals to improve movement around Leominster town centre will be permitted.

In particular:

- a. Measures to prioritise pedestrians in the town centre will be encouraged;
- b. Corn Square should be designated as a traffic free zone, except for disabled drivers and deliveries. (Deliveries should be limited to before 10 a.m. and after 4 p.m. unless by small, pollution free vehicles e.g. pedi-vans;
- c. Additional car parking will be supported at the rail station; and
- d. Improved footpath and cycle routes linking the railway station to the town centre and bus station will be supported.

## *How to comment on this Plan*

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The Draft Leominster Neighbourhood Area Plan is out for consultation from the 10th December 2014. This is a formal consultation on the draft plan.

Copies of the plan will be available on:

[www.leominsterplan.org](http://www.leominsterplan.org)

or available to read throughout the consultation period at:

The Town Council Office,

The Library,

The Community Centre,

Grange Court (an audio version will also be available here), and Leominster Tourist Information Centre.

Or come and talk to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group at one of our drop-in “pop-up” events or from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on 24th January 2015 at Earl Mortimer College (there will be a formal presentation and discussion of the plan at 11 a.m.).

Comments on the Plan can be made on the website or you can use one of the response forms, but this is not compulsory. Forms are available at all of the above venues.

Completed forms and comments should be returned to the Town Council by 6th February 2015 at:

LANP, c/o 17 West Street, Leominster, Herefordshire, HR6 8EP

Email: [townclerk@leominstertowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:townclerk@leominstertowncouncil.gov.uk)

# Appendix 1

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## Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages

**The primary shopping frontages shown on Map 3 are as follows:**

1-7 Buttercross Arcade

2-38 High Street

1-43 High Street

2-40 West Street

1-51 West Street

2-24 Drapers Lane

1-27 Drapers Lane

1-13 Corn Street

1-3 Victoria Street

2-16 Corn Street

1-23 Broad Street

2-34 Broad Street

4-22 School Lane

1-19 School Lane

**The secondary shopping frontages on Map 3 are:**

1-15 Church Street

4-14 South Street

1-17 South Street

15 and 17 Etnam Street

# Notes

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Prepared for Leominster Town Council by the

*Neighbourhood Plan Steering Team*

**For Further Information on this document, please contact the Town Council:**

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