

Ledbury Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 –2031

Ledbury Town Council

Regulation 14 Consultation Draft Plan
January 2022



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MAP 1 – Ledbury Neighbourhood Development Plan Area



1. About Ledbury

Population

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

Historical Interest

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



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

¹ Source – Understanding Herefordshire, 2017 - <https://understanding.herefordshire.gov.uk/quick-facts/>



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1.3 Key buildings include the Market House and Ledbury Park (both listed Grade I buildings by Historic England), the Barrett Browning Institute (Grade II listed) the recently restored **Master's House (Grade II* listed), St Katherine's Hall and Almshouses, the Old Grammar School Heritage Centre (Grade II* listed), St Michael and All Angels Parish Church (Grade I listed)** plus the Feathers and the Talbot Hotels (both Grade II* listed). The latter two are former coaching inns that accommodated the **travellers of that time, maintaining the town's** reputation for friendly hospitality.

1.4 Much of the retail accommodation in the centre of town is of this era and recognised as historically important or special by listings of Grade II or Grade II*. The town centre is a Conservation Area. The Civic Society runs a small museum and presents lectures by visiting speakers, as well as its work on conservation and the environment.



Natural Environment

1.5 The parish includes a large area of productive and attractive agricultural land, orchards and woodland. The eastern part of the parish, including Frith and Connigree Woods, (known locally as Connigree) is within the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) **and this nationally important landscape abuts the town's built-up area** along its eastern edge. Many of the woodlands along this eastern edge are ancient woodlands as are those surrounding Walls Hill Camp, all of which are considered irreplaceable habitats. Three Sites of Special Scientific Interest and numerous local wildlife and geological sites are located within the Parish.

Visitors

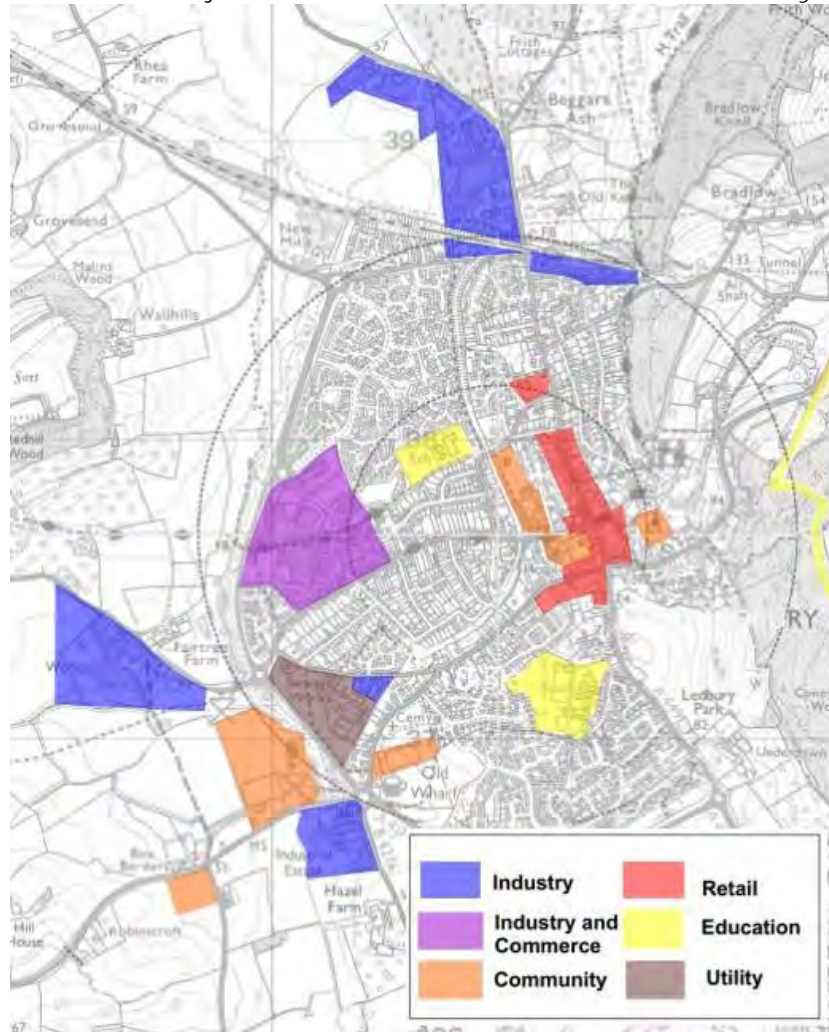
1.6 The town centre provides interest for tourists and historians. It is also the venue for the annual Poetry Festival, an event of international status attracting well known participants from the arts. It is a few miles from Eastnor Castle, including its Registered Park and Garden, which holds events and festivals throughout the year and has excellent facilities for **family celebrations. Although Ledbury is an hour's drive from Cheltenham racecourse, the town's hotels are much in demand during race meetings** from visitors, owners and trainers. The Herefordshire Trail passes east-west through the Parish and town and the Geopark Way skirts its eastern edge. Ledbury has longstanding links with our armed forces and welcomes visits by the crew of HMS Ledbury, who were awarded the Freedom of the Town in 2011.

Shopping and Entertaining

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



MAP 2 – Major Non-Residential Land Uses in Ledbury



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Housing

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

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



Business

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

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

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

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

Travel

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

Education

1.15 Ledbury Primary School (500 nursery and primary pupils) has academic achievement results above national levels. Pastorally it champions values-based education. Once primary education has been completed, education continues at John Masefield High School and Sixth Form Centre (**900 students**) which has been rated "good" by Ofsted. Both schools are successful and recognise there will be an increase in demand, with their preferred option to develop and improve their existing sites, rather than attempt to relocate. John Masefield High School is an academy with specialist school status for performing arts, catering for 11-18-year-olds of all abilities.

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



Services

1.17 The town has a Fire Station, Police Station, and rapid response Paramedic Service. There is a recycling centre in the town. Religious services are held in the Parish Church of St. Michael and All Angels as well as Baptist, Methodist and Catholic Churches, and other denominations. As of June 2021, two high street banks remain with branches for personal and business support, despite the rise in online banking.

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



Community and Sport

1.19 Ledbury has a strong voluntary sector with over 120 local groups. These include general interest clubs, education classes and support groups to the less fortunate in the community. The volunteer resource needed to support such activity is likely to be extended by the continuing demands made upon it to make up for the withdrawal of services by Herefordshire Council. An admirable example of this effort is the volunteer-run Market Theatre which provides popular live shows and cinema for the community. Another success story is Ledbury in Bloom which achieved its fourteenth Royal Horticultural Society gold award in the 2021 Britain in Bloom competition. Ledbury has successful rugby union, football, cricket, running, tennis, bowling and swimming clubs. In addition, the town has tennis courts, a bowling green and a Centenary Field recreation ground with a skateboard park, play equipment and various exercise facilities. It has an indoor swimming pool, reconstructed in 2016/17, and two leisure centres which run keep fit classes, including, yoga, kick boxing, and dancing.



2. About Neighbourhood Planning

Background and Overarching Planning Policy

National Policy

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

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

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

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

Localism Act 2011

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

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

The Influence of the Core Strategy

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

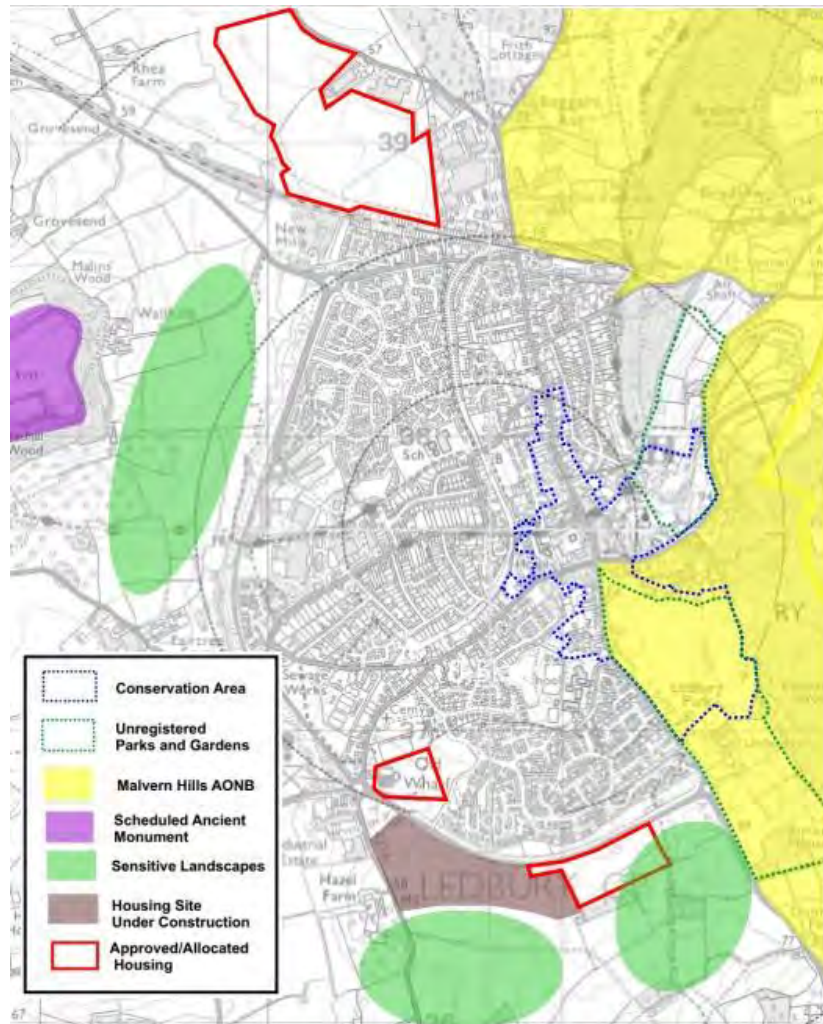
2.7 With completions and planning permissions for around 1,200 dwellings since 2011, including 625 homes to the north of the Viaduct, 415 homes south of Leadon Way, 93 homes on land behind the Full Pitcher, and windfall developments elsewhere, the minimum target of 800 homes set out in the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy for the Neighbourhood Area has been exceeded by around 50%. This has not been matched by the required growth in employment development or community facilities.

2.8 The Core Strategy was adopted in 2015, following rigorous examination. The NDP does not seek to remove sites allocated in the Core Strategy and cannot delete sites that have received planning permission. Residents should note that the NDP review has minimal

impact on either the number of homes that Ledbury is expected to accommodate, or on the sites that have already been approved.

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

Map 3 – Constraints to Development in Ledbury



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Policy LB1- Development in Ledbury

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

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

- *allow for suitable small scale employment sites including live work opportunities within or adjoining the town;*

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

Policy LB2 - Land north of the Viaduct

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

- *mixed use development of around 625 new homes, at an average density of around 40 dwellings per hectare, comprising a mix of market and affordable house sizes and types that meet the requirements of Policy H3 and the needs identified in the latest version of the Herefordshire Local Housing Market Assessment;*
- *around 3 hectares of employment land, restricted to Use Class B1;*
- *a target of 40% of the total number of dwellings to be affordable housing;*
- *land and contributions to facilitate a restored canal to be delivered in partnership with the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust;*
- *a new linear informal park to link to the existing town trail, riverside walk, recreational open space and existing allotments;*
- *the provision of developer contributions towards any identified need for new/improved community facilities/infrastructure improvements. This shall include a new 210 place primary school within the development (or an expansion of the existing primary school) and new recreational open space, play, indoor and outdoor sport facilities;*
- *provision of satisfactory vehicular access arrangements, the details of which will be determined at planning application stage;*

- appropriate mitigation to safeguard the amenity of future occupants from unacceptable levels of noise and to safeguard the continued operation of existing businesses adjoining the area;
- development of bespoke, high quality and inclusive design, including accommodation that will meet the needs of older persons and that contributes to the distinctiveness of this part of Ledbury and respects the setting and significance of the listed viaduct and the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- safeguards to ensure there is no adverse impact on water quality and quantity in the River Leaden;
- new walking, cycling and bus links from the urban extension directly to the town trail and riverside walk under the viaduct, the railway station and town centre to create linkages to nearby development and existing community facilities;
- sustainable standards of design and construction; and
- a comprehensive sustainable urban drainage system which includes measures such as rain gardens and swales to manage ground and surface water drainage and safeguard against any increased flood risk.

Map 4 – Ledbury key diagram from Herefordshire Core Strategy

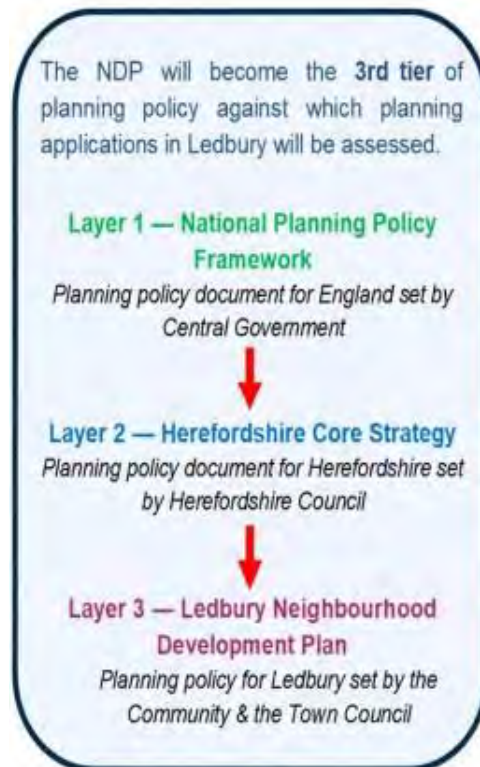


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Neighbourhood Planning

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

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



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

2.13 Neighbourhood Plans:

- Must contribute to achieving sustainable development
- Cannot be used to restrict development

- Cannot be used to promote a quantum of development smaller than set out in the Core Strategy.

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

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

Developer funding available for improvements to local infrastructure

2.16 It has taken thousands of hours by residents, volunteers, Ledbury Town Council (LTC) staff and Councillors, guided by paid consultants, to produce this Plan. For this investment in time and money there is potentially a long-term return in terms of community infrastructure. **Two contribution methods seeking developer contributions to local infrastructure are available to local planning authorities. Herefordshire Council as Local Planning Authority seeks contributions under S106 of the Town and Country Planning Act towards elements of infrastructure set out in its Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document². Ledbury Town Council has limited influence over elements to which contributions might be made. Herefordshire Council has yet to introduce a scheme under provisions for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) where up to 25% of contributions received can be determined by local councils with an NDP. Having a well a constructed NDP with clear policies supported by public consultation gives the Town Council significantly greater influence on where the money could be spent than if no NDP existed. There is, for example, the likelihood that Section 106 monies would be made available to contribute towards the provision of new football playing fields as detailed in this revised NDP.**

Relationship to the Town Plan

2.17 **Ledbury Town Plan (2016) is an aspirational document which expresses residents' desires to maintain and improve the community, whereas the NDP addresses land use planning and will, once adopted, have legal weight in decision making on planning matters.**

2.18 The preparation of the NDP has taken account, wherever relevant, of the views expressed in the Town Plan and more recent consultations. The NDP sets the **planning scene for Ledbury for the next ten years or so. Ledbury is a vibrant town: the NDP's main thrust is to ensure that it continues to prosper.**

² <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/2616/planning-obligations-supplementary-planning-document>



Useful links

2.19 Evidence base for the Core Strategy:

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/directory/29/local-plan-evidence-base-documents/category/63>

2.20 Evidence base for Ledbury NDP (under Neighbourhood Plan - NDP Documents):

<https://www.ledburytowncouncil.gov.uk/en-gb/ndp-documents>

Review

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

3. The Vision

Background

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

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

The Vision:

1. Preserve and Develop Prosperity

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

2. Preserve and Develop Wellbeing

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

3. Preserve Quality and Character

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

4. Widen Employment Base

. Currently there is an imbalance between housing and employment building with some 40% of the working population commuting out of the town. The employment base will be widened, through releasing land to the south of the Little Marcle Road in particular, in order to help develop and diversify the economy, and to continue the technology corridor from the midlands via Malvern, in order to attract high-tech and R&D businesses to Ledbury. The effect of this will be to provide the option to many residents of working in the town, and reduce the numbers commuting out of the town.

5. Develop Educational Facilities

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

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

6. Develop Sport and Recreation

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

7. Preserve Environment

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

Green space will be protected, and biodiversity networks strengthened, **while the town's** relationship with the open countryside will be strengthened through the prioritised use of urban trees, landscaping and decorative planting throughout all developments. Natural assets will be maintained and enhanced to mitigate and adapt to climate change. There will be the opportunity to create local green corridors and enhancement zones under a green infrastructure strategy for Ledbury and its surroundings. This will include **a 'green corridor'** along the safeguarded route of the projected Gloucester and Hereford canal reinstatement, largely following the route of the River Leadon.

8. Nurture the Town Centre

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

4. Introduction to Objectives & Policies

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

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

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

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

4.4 The Objectives and Policies are set out as below:

The Objectives are in bold

The Policies are in a coloured box

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



5. Sustainable Development

Contribution towards Sustainable Development

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

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

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

5.3 The Strategic Environmental Assessment³ (SEA) of this Regulation 14 draft Plan found that the cumulative impact over the time scale (2021 to 2031) is generally positive. Although the development policies indicate that in the short term there may be a neutral or uncertain impact due to the development works that would be undergoing, but within the middle and long term the effects often turn positive due to the criteria in additional NDP policies that provide mitigation methods against the development. Therefore, the majority of the policies will be balanced with sustainable policies to minimise environmental impact.

Objective SD1:

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

Policy SD1.1

Ledbury as a Self-Sustaining Community

Proposals which are aimed at developing Ledbury as a self-reliant and environmentally sustainable community, such as zero carbon based housing development, growing its own

³ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal>

environmentally supporting food, generating its own renewable energy supplies and locally recycling its waste and water to improve water supply and quality, will be supported.

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

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

Policy SD1.2

Settlement Boundary

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

5.5 This policy meets the NDP's first sustainable development objective which seeks to ensure new development is located within sustainable locations. The boundary incorporates areas where new development in accordance with strategic and other needs might be located. In particular, recent housing developments and sites granted planning permission considerably exceed the strategic requirement. Given the extent of housing commitments and the outstanding plan period up to 2031, it is possible that not all housing sites may commence development within the period specified within those permissions. These sites should continue to be retained predominately as housing allocations. There are three such sites and these are indicated on the Ledbury Town Policies Map:

- *Land south of Leadon Way - site for 140 dwellings*
- *Land to the rear of The Full Pitcher - site for 93 dwellings*
- *Land north of the Viaduct - site for 625 dwellings and 3 hectares of employment land*

The area shown on the Ledbury Town Policies Map for employment to the north of the Viaduct has yet to be confirmed and may be subject to change. The requirement should remain to provide 625 dwellings and 3 hectares of employment land in accordance with Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy policy LB1.

5.6 More detailed policies define how necessary development should be located or take place within it. The policy also recognises that some forms of development can take place outside of the boundary, in the countryside that forms part of the parish. Where such development takes place, it needs to recognise that the character and beauty of the area is important, especially as parts of the parish are located within the Malvern Hills AONB and all

sits within the setting of that nationally important landscape. Herefordshire Council has identified strategically important areas of green infrastructure within and surrounding the town, and these have been added to through further work undertaken for this NDP, and many of these are located upon the fringes of the town. Objectives have been set to strengthen and enhance these areas and development proposals should include measures to address these.

5.7 In determining the settlement boundary, the town's relationship to local landscape and townscape character and forms were considered and also existing physical features, boundaries such as roads, watercourses, historic field boundaries, more recent developments and the previously defined settlement boundary. The boundary proposed has been defined taking the following into account⁴:

- *The topographical constraints which are significant to the east and north, comprising the Malvern Hills AONB, and to a lesser extent to south and west. In relation to the south and west there are, however, sensitive landscapes comprising the extremely visually prominent land to the south-west of the Gloucester roundabout; land to the south of the housing estate being developed to the south-east of the Full Pitcher roundabout and east of Dymock Road which has been identified as medium to high sensitivity including impact on views from the Malvern Hills AONB; and land to the west of Ledbury By-pass and north of Little Marcle Road which is sensitive both in landscape terms to the setting of the town especially when viewed from the Malvern Hills and for its heritage value as the setting for Walls Hill Camp Scheduled Ancient Monument. The weight given to key natural, cultural and visual features, factors and qualities is significant given the built-up area of the town forms part of the setting of the Malvern Hills AONB to which it lies immediately adjacent and from which it is overlooked.*
- ***The previous boundary along the town's eastern edge has been retained** because, in addition to being the boundary with Malvern Hills AONB, there are several Ancient Woodlands **on this side of the town's built-up area** and these are irreplaceable habitats and landscape features. A number of unregistered parks and gardens add to the importance of the landscape along this edge.*
- *The hydrological constraints provided by the River Leadon and its flood plain, although noting the linear riverside walk and park adjacent to Ledbury Bypass to **which the public has access and is a facility provided for the town's residents.***
- *The need to protect existing Green Infrastructure (GI) assets and functions⁵, and to establish new ones.*
- *The previous boundary identified by Herefordshire Council in the former Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (UDP).*
- *Areas where planning permission have been granted for relevant developments, in particular housing sites.*
- *Land proposed for development to meet community and employment needs off Little Marcle Road.*

⁴ See Evidence Base - Landscape and Visual Assessment Baseline Assessment (LVBA) - in relation to the first four bullet point: <https://www.ledburytowncouncil.gov.uk/en-gb/ndp-documents>.

⁵ 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.

- *Previously developed areas comprising the playing fields (rugby) and employment area either side of the Ross Road, that were shown outside of the settlement boundary on the UDP map. At that time the by-pass provided a hard edge to the settlement, but this is no longer the case given the housing developments on the **south side of Leadon Way and the Core Strategy's intension for employment land to be found off Little Marcle Road.***

*5.8 The consequences of the above are **to extend the town's boundary to the north, south and west of the town in a sustainable way.** The local community was consulted upon options for a settlement boundary and there was a clear preference with some 85% of respondents to the consultation upon issues and options⁶ supporting the approach proposed in this NDP*

Policy SD1.3

Sustainable Design

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

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

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

⁶ See Ledbury NDP Issues and Options Report, May to July 2021 in Evidence base: <https://www.ledburytowncouncil.gov.uk/en-gb/ndp-documents>

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

5.11 Energy conservation is considered an extremely important design element yet currently this is addressed through Building Regulations and nationally set standards. There are higher standards such as Passivhaus and BREEAM and developers are encouraged to meet the highest level possible in order to make the maximum contribution to achieving a zero-carbon development. Developers should utilise guidance and advice from relevant professional bodies to set appropriate targets for embodied carbon within their development. One example of such guidance has been issued by the Green Building Council⁷. Developers should also **consider guidance provided in Herefordshire Council's Environmental Building Standards Supplementary Planning Document** which is currently being prepared.

5.12 The requirement for the design approach to indicate in sufficient detail how all the design criteria in this NDP have been addressed is important to show that the requirements for sustainable development as set out in National Planning Policy Guidance have been met. Herefordshire Council has a check list for compliance with climate change requirements⁸ and also for biodiversity and ecology.

⁷ <https://www.ukgbc.org/sites/default/files/UK-GBC%20EC%20Developing%20Client%20Brief.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/planning-services/apply-planning-permission/2?documentId=62&categoryId=200142>

6. Housing

Housing - The Background

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

6.2 Since the beginning of the Plan period, windfall provision has brought forward approximately 200 dwellings. This figure includes the 93 units on the Full Pitcher, former cricket ground site. Added to this figure will be the 321 dwellings between Leadon Way and the Dymock Road, approved following appeal, although it has yet to be shown that more than the current phase 1 of 275 dwellings can be accommodated. Planning permission has also been granted for a further development for 140 dwellings also on the south side of Leadon Way. When these sites are added to the 625 dwellings planned for the Viaduct Site, the total of around 1,285 dwellings considerably exceeds the Core Strategy target by around 50%.

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

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

6.5 The planning permissions for housing have been considered in defining the settlement boundary for the town, although a number remain commitments where development has yet to commence. The NDP can determine the design standards preferred by the community for these sites and other housing developments. Policies reflecting the Ledbury Design Guide⁹ and other important design considerations have been integrated into the NDP.

Housing - Objectives & Policies

Objective HO1:

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

Community Action

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

Ledbury's Large Housing Sites.

6.6 The Ledbury Town Policies Map indicates the location of committed housing sites and these comprise land formerly Market Street Auctions Rooms (resolved to grant planning

⁹ See Ledbury Design Guide in Evidence Base: <https://www.ledburytowncouncil.gov.uk/en-gb/ndp-documents>

permission for 31 apartments with S106 agreement to be entered into), land north of the Viaduct (planning permission for 625 dwellings and 3 hectares of employment land), land at the Full Pitcher (planning permission for 93 dwellings), land South of Leadon Way (planning permission for Phase 1 – 275 dwellings; Phase 2 of 49 dwellings awaiting S106 agreement) and land south of Leadon way off the Gloucester Roundabout (planning permission for 140 dwellings). At the time of drafting this NDP, only one of these developments had commenced construction with a considerable number of dwellings on other sites yet to be started. The committed yet undeveloped sites are retained as housing allocations, identified on the Ledbury Town Policies Map, given the possibility that their planning permissions may expire before development commences (see Policy SD1.2).

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



Objective HO2:

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

Policy HO2.1

Reinforcing Balanced Housing Communities

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

- Affordable housing (as per HCS Policy H1)
- Starter homes
- General housing for sale at market value
- Self-build opportunities

- Housing for adults and young people with disabilities and learning difficulties (Use Class C3b)

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

Policy HO2.2

Housing Density

The housing density of new development should respect its surroundings through good design which responds positively to local character. Housing densities should be appropriate to the location, type of housing required and the local environment, and within the range of 30 to 50 dwellings per hectare especially for larger sites¹⁰. In keeping with local character, housing densities should be at the higher end of this range towards and within the town centre and at the lower end of the range towards the edge of the settlement.

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

Policy HO2.3

Design Criteria for Residential Development

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

Building Design and Site Layout

- Provide a high and inclusive standard of architecture and design for the public realm.
- In terms of scale, massing, proportion, materials, colour and roof profiles, new dwellings should relate to the characteristic built forms of Ledbury, to fit sensitively into the townscape and surrounding landscape as appropriate. Guidance upon character and local distinctiveness is provided in Appendix 1, which contains relevant **extracts from Herefordshire Council's Rapid Townscape Assessment 2010** and the Malvern Hills AONB Guidance on Building Design where appropriate.
- Where possible and appropriate, buildings should be of their time and avoid poor imitation.

¹⁰ See NPPF (2021) paragraph 73

- d) Avoid repetition and regimented designs and layouts that are uncharacteristic of Ledbury through variations in density, public realm and building design. This should be part of a developed and coherent concept based on analysis of local and historical context combined with best practice.
- e) Ensure affordable housing within major housing schemes is of the same quality and design approach as open market housing upon the site so that it is not immediately identifiable as such.
- f) Ensure ridge heights are consistent with the heights of nearby buildings and only more than 2.5 storeys where this can be shown to fit sensitively into townscape, the setting of Malvern Hills AONB and the historic environment.
- g) Encourage innovative design approaches in less sensitive areas but which should comply with criterion b) **above. 'Off the shelf' house types should be avoided,** especially elevational treatments developed for anywhere in the country. Sustainable and energy saving elements and materials will especially be encouraged.
- h) In relation to extensions, avoid visually dominating the existing building or neighbouring properties.
- i) Ensure all buildings present active and attractive frontages to streets and public areas providing natural surveillance.

Protecting Amenity

- j) Protect the residential amenity of adjacent properties and ensure new dwellings are not adversely affected by existing agricultural or commercial activities or the adverse impact of light pollution.
- k) Provide sufficient garden space to enable residents to enjoy their use with appropriate degrees of privacy and functionality in terms of providing for young **children's outdoor play**, private clothes drying facilities and gardening.
- l) Provide or contribute to the provision of open space for play and public amenity in **accordance with Herefordshire Council's open space requirements. Where such space** cannot be provided on site, contributions should be made to the provision, improvement/replacement, operation, or maintenance of open space and play areas elsewhere within the Plan area and as close as possible to the proposed development.

Landscape Design and Features

- m) Retain important features such as street trees and other tree cover, ponds, orchards, hedgerows, as well as adding to the natural assets of the Plan area.
- n) Include, where appropriate, an integrated and high-quality landscape scheme which should contribute towards mitigating the effects of climate change; incorporate an appropriate range of biodiversity measures; and link with the wider landscape to enhance green infrastructure.

Sustainable Design Components

- o) Provide safe cycle storage.
- p) Where proposals involve adaptive or mobility housing or residential homes for elderly people, provide secure covered storage for mobility scooters.
- q) Provide level access to the highway, including footpaths and any cycleways.
- r) Make provision for electric vehicle charging at an appropriate level which should normally be for each dwelling.

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

*6.11 Developers should set out their design approach in sufficient detail to show how all relevant criteria included in this policy have been addressed. This should include the advice received during consultations undertaken prior to the application being made, including from **the local community, in accordance with best practice and Herefordshire Council's Statement of Community Involvement**. Until a local design guide is produced developers should utilise the principles **set out in Government's National Design Guide**¹¹. Major schemes should consider seeking external advice through the Design Review Process and include this within their submissions.*

Objective HO3:

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

Policy HO3.1

Housing for the Elderly

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

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

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

*6.12 **Based on information taken from the 2011 Census, the demographic of the town's population shows an increasingly elderly majority; older than 45 equals 55%. The Policy proposals would help free up houses suitable for occupation by families. This is important to ensure that the right type of housing is available for Ledbury's ageing population. Storage for mobility scooters will encourage inclusivity, combat loneliness, and give access to amenities.***

¹¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide>

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



Objective HO4:

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

Policy HO4.1

Housing for Young People

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

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

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

6.16 Providing the opportunity for the young to remain within the community will help Ledbury retain its recognised strong sense of being a caring, welcoming town, inclusive of all ages and abilities. This includes those with learning disabilities and mental health problems who aspire to and are capable of living with a degree of independence in supported housing. Such supported housing falls within Use Class C3(b).

Objective HO5:

To encourage individual and community based self-build projects.

Policy HO5.1

Self-Build

Self-build proposals for new dwellings within the settlement boundary or meeting the exceptions in Core Strategy policy RA3 will be supported, including proposals for development sites for the provision of self-build plots.

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

7. Employment & Economy

Employment & Economy - The Background



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

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

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

7.4 Ledbury has excellent access to the M50 and the M5 making it an attractive location for industry, particularly situated around the ring road. Employment sites to the north of the town have the advantage of the nearby railway station.

7.5 Ledbury has slightly more industrial employment as a proportion of its overall employment provision than the average for Herefordshire and has less office employment. The town has significantly above average sales activity, but otherwise the surveyed employment activity in Ledbury is broadly in line with the rest of the county.

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

7.7 Ledbury has a wealth of visitor attractions. In 2015 its historic buildings were enhanced **by the completion of the renovation of the Master’s House**. The town is two miles from Eastnor Castle which holds several events throughout the year and provides a setting for

weddings, festivals and other functions. Ledbury accommodates racegoers to the Cheltenham Festival. It is adjacent to the Malvern Hills and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Core Strategy promotes the rehabilitation of the Hereford to Gloucester canal, a section of which is planned to be completed as part of the Viaduct development and which will, when complete, be a major visitor attraction.

Employment & Economy—Objectives & Policies

Objective EE1:

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

- Independent and national retail
- Tourism - domestic and business: day, overnight and short visit
- Research and Science
- Manufacturing and Distribution
- Engineering
- Food & Drink
- Agricultural services
- Professional services
- Art, Design & the Creative Industries
- Healthcare
- Sustainable technology industries such as renewable energy and recycling.

Policy EE1.1

New Employment Site – Land South of Little Marcle Road

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

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

Policy EE1.2

Small Employment Sites Within and Adjoining the Town

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

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

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

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

7.9 The defining of land for employment to the south of Little Marcle Road complies with Core Strategy policy LB1 which requires 12 hectares of employment land in this location. This is the minimum amount and was set in the Core Strategy to correspond to the housing growth target of 800 houses. However, planning permissions for housing have exceeded the housing growth indicated in the Core Strategy by 50% - a larger population will need additional employment land and so up to 20 hectares of employment land is proposed. The additional provision would potentially reduce the greater level of commuting to jobs elsewhere that would result from this excessive growth. The owners of the various land parcels have been consulted and are prepared, in principle, to make the land available for the proposed uses. A co-ordinated approach is required to enable the full area to be released and the preparation of a masterplan is suggested. The criteria identified are those considered most critical to enabling development to fit into the local environment and the setting of Malvern Hills AONB. It would be expected that these matters would need to be met and appropriate conditions applied to any planning permission granted for the development. Other factors covered by policies elsewhere in this NDP and the Core Strategy may also be relevant.

7.10 Land south of the Full Pitcher and east of Dymock Road is at a key gateway site where a high-quality development is required that would be accompanied by landscape measures that would also contribute to the enhancement of this area which is identified as a Local Enhancement Zone (See Appendix 2 - LedLEZ2). The location of the site close to Ledbury By-pass, its roundabout junction and the adjacent industrial estate is such that it would not be able to achieve suitable standards of amenity to be used for housing. Furthermore, uses

will need to be restricted to those that will not significantly affect the residential amenity of dwellings to the south-east. It is suggested that its development for a hotel would add to the accommodation offer provided by the Town, adding to its economic vitality. However, other employment uses may be suitable where they can show their development is sufficiently sensitive at this point, which is also highly visible within the setting of Malvern Hills AONB. Previously although there was a suggestion that an emergency services hub might be located upon Ledbury bypass on a site such as this, and although currently not under consideration, consultations with the emergency services indicate this could be a site suitable for their location in the future.

*7.11 Other opportunities for employment uses may be available within or surrounding the town, as recognised in Core Strategy policy LB1, provided amenity, highway safety, active travel measures, and landscape requirements can be met. Core Strategy Policy LB2 specifically requires some 3 hectares of employment land as part of proposals to the north of the Viaduct. **The site's developer has suggested the location shown in the general area** represented on the Ledbury Town Policies Map although this was in a masterplan forming part of an outline planning application. This location has yet to be confirmed and its actual location would be expected to be confirmed before the adoption of this NDP.*

7.12 Intensification of existing uses may also offer the opportunity to increase job opportunities. Measures will hopefully be advanced through the Market Town Investment Plan programme operated with the support of the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership to increase economic opportunities. Close ties between those working on that programme and the NDP have been fostered. In this regard the Town Council will work to encourage applications for an enterprise or business start-up hub and employment training facility, possibly linked to initiatives underway in Hereford and Malvern.



Policy EE1.3

Protecting Existing Employment Land

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

market value for the existing use/other suitable employment uses, for at least a 12-month period

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

Objective EE2:

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

Policy EE2.1

Promoting Visitor Accommodation

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

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

Objective EE3:

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

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

7.16 The unique mix of many independent retailers operating from smaller listed buildings in the Ledbury Conservation Area puts it in a strong position to buck the trend for the reduction in small town centre shopping, adding to its tourist and visitor attraction. The aim of policy EE3.1 is to preserve and enhance this important contribution to the town's economy by bringing more visitors to the town and provide extra employment opportunities.

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

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

Policy EE3.1

Protection of Shopping Frontages and Primary Shopping Area

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

*7.19 Previously the main shopping streets within the town centre were identified as either having primary or secondary shopping frontages and restrictions placed upon what uses might be located within them. In combination they formed the primary shopping area. A review of these frontages has been undertaken with a view to developing policy which will maintain **the shopping area's character** and economic resilience yet encourage greater flexibility at a time when small town centres are under increasing competition from both out-of-town supermarkets and larger centres. Given the size and compact nature of Ledbury town centre, it is considered that a distinction between the two levels of shopping frontage is no longer necessary or in its best interest. This supports the simplification and changes in retail type definitions that were updated on 1 September 2020, making the distinction no longer relevant. It should offer greater flexibility by enabling a wider range of activities to locate within any of its defined shopping frontages, including those market town services that are normally directed to secondary or peripheral frontages. The community agreed with this change in approach when consulted. While appropriate conversions should allow new commercial, business or service uses falling within the prescribed categories within these frontages, development that would result in their loss should be resisted. There may be exceptions, such as those referred to in Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy policy E6¹². These exceptions include provision for medical and health services, should it be decided to pursue a town centre option, and Ledbury Town Council would, in particular, support a frontage providing access to improved health facilities for Ledbury Health Partnership. This Partnership is expected to require new premises during the plan period and options are being investigated.*

¹² The relevant Use Classes in this policy are now Classes E(d-f), F1 and F2(c-d)



Policy EE3.2

Defined Town Centre

The Ledbury Town Centre Policies Map defines Ledbury town centre for the purposes of Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy policies E5 and LB1 (bullet two). Proposals for new retail, leisure or office development of over 400m² in gross floor space and located outside this defined town centre will need to be supported by an impact assessment to determine whether there could be any adverse impacts on the town centre.

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

7.20 The town centre differs from the primary shopping area in that it also contains other commercial, leisure, cultural and tourism uses. It has evolved over time, as some shops and other commercial premises have closed down, supermarkets located just outside the centre now provide town centre parking as well as shopping services, and public leisure facilities have developed adjacent to the centre. Meanwhile, excellent new ventures have opened in the centrally located mews areas. These changes require a repositioning of the boundary to reflect current use and to avoid sprawl and a revision has been carried out as part of the NDP review¹³. Its definition is important to maintaining the vitality and viability of the town centre which is a requirement of Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy policies E5 and LB1 (bullet two). When asked about what should comprise the town centre the greatest level of support was for extending the town centre definition beyond that previously defined. Community consultation was inconclusive, however, as to where the boundary should be extended within the areas suggested. Consultations identified some concerns that a wider definition would include a significant number of residential properties and spread the town centre too widely, potentially with footfall across a greater area where there are significant blank frontages thereby reducing its attractiveness. The extensions have, therefore been

¹³ See Core Strategy paragraph 5.2.25

limited predominantly to existing frontages. It remains important to contain the small-scale retail interest within a reasonable distance of the four main town car parks, so that easy access for shoppers and visitors is maintained. The defined town centre is shown on the Ledbury Town Centre Policies Map. Any changes through development should retain or improve provision for active travel as well as those needing to use vehicles to access town centre shops and other services.

Policy EE3.3

Lawnside and Market Street Regeneration and Opportunities Area

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

- i) Expand community facilities and businesses serving the community.
- ii) Protect, enhance or restore the historic identity of the town.
- iii) Strengthen the connection with the town centre, increasing pedestrian access.
- iv) Deliver innovative design or design excellence which provides visual interest.
- v) Contribute positively to the Conservation Area.
- vii) Enhance public spaces and green infrastructure.

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

7.22 As this area is located mostly within the defined town centre and Ledbury Conservation Area, there needs to be an emphasis on high quality design and the conservation or enhancement of its character and appearance. This need not exclude innovative design where this fits sensitively into its surroundings. Should it be possible to increase pedestrian links through to the defined shopping frontages, then this would also create benefits. A co-

ordinated approach will be achieved by ensuring that the design and access statement for appropriate developments indicates how any proposal fits sensitively into the townscape at the time it is advanced. This approach should take account of any previously approved proposals and not prejudice the development of other gap sites and other areas currently detracting from local character.

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

8. Built Environment

Built Environment - The Background



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

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

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

Built Environment – Objectives & Policies

Objective BE1:

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

Policy BE1.1

Design

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

8.4 Both national and county planning policy guidance identify the need to encourage high quality development that responds to the characteristics of the immediate and wider area. One of the main features of Ledbury is the number of listed buildings. It is important that developments seek to maintain this historic character. Developers should comply with the design policies in this NDP and utilise the associated guidance contained within Appendices 1 and 2. Significant elements of the Ledbury Design Guide have been incorporated into this NDP together with supporting information produced in association with the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy. Further, the design review process can provide an opportunity to save time and money and speed up proposals through the planning process by getting design issues resolved early on. Early consultation with the local community is also recommended and a further explanation of the approach which Ledbury Town Council advocates is explained in Chapter 12.



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

Policy BE2.1

Protecting and Enhancing Heritage Assets

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

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

8.5 The area's heritage is reflected in the presence of a Scheduled Ancient Monument, 173 Listed Buildings, historic landscapes and other locally important monuments, buildings and assets. Although there is only one Scheduled Ancient Monument there are some 440 records for the Town's area on Herefordshire Council's Historic Environment Record. There is therefore potential for further archaeological assets to be found. Many heritage assets and, where appropriate, their settings¹⁴ are important and need to be preserved, not the least because of the contribution they make to the wider setting of the Malvern Hills AONB. They also contribute to the local economy. Ledbury Conservation Area covers the town centre and extends to important surrounding streets and areas. No detailed conservation area appraisal has been undertaken and until one is produced, development proposals should be informed by appropriate analysis, taking into account characteristics identified for the relevant character areas described in Appendix 1. Part of Eastnor Castle Historic Park¹⁵ falls within the Parish, having been registered by Historic England in 1986. The parkland does rely upon views between its various parts and of an important obelisk. Locally important heritage assets should also be recognised for their contribution to the townscape and landscape character. These include unregistered parks and gardens and historic farmsteads among others. This policy should not restrict development, but influence the approach taken to it

¹⁴ NPPF paragraph 194

¹⁵ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1000459>

which may include stimulating the re-use of buildings so that they contribute towards regeneration.

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



Ledbury Conservation Area

8.7 Ledbury Conservation Area is fundamental to the character of the town. National policy and guidance, particularly that set out in Chapter 16 of the NPPF (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) and Core Strategy Policy LD4 (Historic environment and heritage assets), or any Policy which may replace it, work together with policy BE2.1 to protect this valuable resource.

9. Natural Environment

Natural Environment - The Background



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

9.2 The **Parish's** natural assets perform a multitude of functions, both individually and in combination. They make the town a very attractive place in which to live and to visit, with **tourism being one of the principal areas of economic activity. Conserving the town's natural environment** has consistently been shown to be very important to the Ledbury community, especially the health and wellbeing of residents. Access to green space, including its natural areas, needs to be retained where available and also increased where possible. Increasing biodiversity is recognised as both a national and local imperative. Map 5 identifies key areas of green space and natural features that permeate or surround the town contributing to its social, environmental and economic wellbeing. **This map does not show all the Parish's natural assets**, but those structural elements that form the basis of green infrastructure within and surrounding **Ledbury's built-up area**.

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

Strategy policies, making sustainability an important and recurring theme throughout the Ledbury NDP.

MAP 5 – Key Areas of Green and Open Space



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

Natural Environment - Objectives & Policies

Objective NE1:

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

Policy NE1.1

Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity and Geodiversity

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

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

- a) Contribute towards the wider ecological network, biodiversity, green infrastructure and network of local wildlife sites by enhancing the ecological corridors and stepping-stones identified by Herefordshire Council in its Ecological Network Map 2013 and the biodiversity objectives in Malvern Hills Management Plan 2019 – 2024¹⁶ (or any subsequent successor documents).
- b) Ensure the integrity of the Ridgeway Wood, Ledbury Cutting, and Upper Farm Quarry and Grassland SSSIs, maintaining or enhancing their conservation status.
- c) Maintain the natural qualities of green spaces and provide habitat improvements for areas of green infrastructure identified as Strategic Corridors, Enhancement Zones and Fringe Zones for Ledbury utilising objectives identified in Appendix 2.

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

9.5 Given its long history in a very rural setting, Ledbury is rich in open spaces and wildlife habitats that contribute to the distinctive character and setting of the town and the surrounding countryside, which are demonstrably enjoyed by the population. The community has a clear and overwhelming desire to protect the existing wildlife habitats and level of open space in the town. Further information on open spaces and habitats in the area can be found at www.ledburynaturalists.co.uk.

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

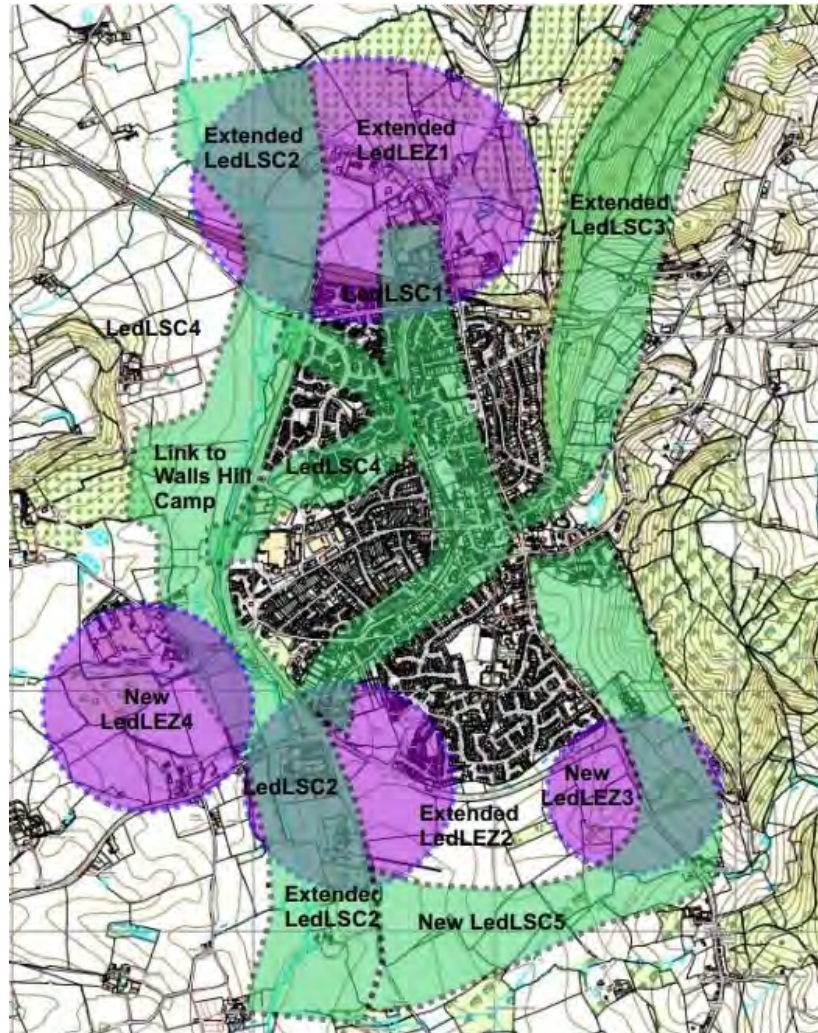
9.7 Elements of both the ecological networks defined for the County and Malvern Hills AONB fall within Ledbury Parish. The integrity of the combined networks is important, and their coherence and resilience should be maintained. Information about the network may be updated from time to time through the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

9.8 There are three SSSIs within Ledbury Parish and one outside, but immediately upon its border. Ridgeway Wood and Upper Farm Quarry and Grassland SSSIs are currently in favourable condition, but Ledbury Cutting SSSI is unfavourable and declining. Mayhill Wood SSSI, which is immediately adjacent to the Parish's eastern boundary, is favourable, but at

¹⁶ <http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/64217-Malvern-Hills-AONB-Management-Plan-2019-24-v06.pdf>

risk. There are 10 local wildlife and 3 local geological sites identified within the parish although the condition and continued existence of many is unknown in that most were last surveyed around 40 years ago.

MAP 6 – Local Strategic Corridors and Enhancement Zones for Green Infrastructure



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9.9 Herefordshire Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy defines a range of corridors and zones. The Strategy was produced before the inception of neighbourhood plans although it acknowledges that the strategy needs to be developed further, including to provide guidance on measures that might be introduced to retain and enhance important characteristics, opportunities, and associated management measures. Map 6 identifies Local Strategic Corridors (LSCs) and Local Enhancement Zones (LEZs) for Ledbury, and Appendix 2 defines objectives for these corridors and zones, including for additional areas identified through further analysis and supported by the local community¹⁷. The enhancement zones comprise those areas where change is expected either through proposals in this NDP or outline planning permissions that have been granted. **They are 'areas where the provision of green infrastructure is required to create the most sustainable living and working places'.**

¹⁷See Ledbury NDP Issues and Options Report, May to July 2021 in Evidence Base – 89% of respondents: <https://www.ledburytowncouncil.gov.uk/en-gb/ndp-documents>

They provide opportunities to improve a range of measures to benefit green infrastructure, including access to natural green space. Other benefits include contributing towards mitigating the effects of climate change as well as promoting social cohesion, economic vitality, alternative means of movement and transport, and functional, healthy places.

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

Objective NE2:

To conserve the landscape and scenic beauty of the Parish

Policy NE2.1

Conserving the Landscape and Scenic Beauty of the Parish

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

Acceptable development proposals should, where appropriate:

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

street trees should be taken. Tree planting should be consistent with good arboricultural practice.

9.11 Development proposals need to show how they meet the provisions of Core Strategy Policy LD1. Part of the plan area falls within the Malvern Hills AONB and national policy requires development within it to conserve and enhance its landscape and setting. Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan¹⁸ together with relevant information produced by Natural England for the Malvern Hills National Character Area¹⁹ should inform positive measures within any landscape scheme. The remainder of the plan area falls within the Herefordshire Lowland National Character Area²⁰ and its guidance is relevant. In addition, more specific advice is available within Herefordshire **Council's Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Guidance**²¹. This identifies the character and features for particular landscape types which fall within various parts of the plan area. The objectives for various green infrastructure strategic corridors and enhancement zones have been set through a study that considered the most appropriate landscape features among other matters.

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

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

Policy NE2.2

Protecting Important Views and the setting of the Town

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

- a) From Bradlow Knoll looking south-west to the church spire – a rural scene the church spire framed by green sloping hills and woods.
- b) From the western edge of Frith Wood looking west – panoramic views covering the viaduct, the north of the town and looking west and south-west to Marcle Ridge and May Hill.
- c) **From Dog Wood southern tip 'the Cricket Pitch' looking south-west over the town**
- d) From approach roads to the west (Ross Road and Lilyhall Lane) looking east to the Malvern Hills. Views from these roads are vulnerable to being affected by housing,

¹⁸ <https://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/managing-the-aonb/management-plan/>

¹⁹ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/3039205>

²⁰ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4827527503675392>

²¹

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

farm and light industrial buildings in the foreground particularly as you approach the fringes of Ledbury.

- e) From within the town views to the church and Barrett Browning buildings – care should be taken that taller buildings do not obscure these views as they make a strong contribution to the sense of place.
- f) From Dog Wood north-eastern edge looking north towards the hills and south-east to the town.
- g) From footpath LR11 which runs through the fields west of the river there is a very clear view of the viaduct.
- h) Panoramic long views from the edge of Conigree Wood looking west to Marcle Hill and south-west to May Hill.

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

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

9.14 These views are identified on Map 7 which have been identified by the community and are important because of the following reasons:

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

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

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

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

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

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

View g) – this represents a fine view of the viaduct, an important Grade 2 listed building, with fields and trees in the fore and middle ground and unimpeded by built environment.

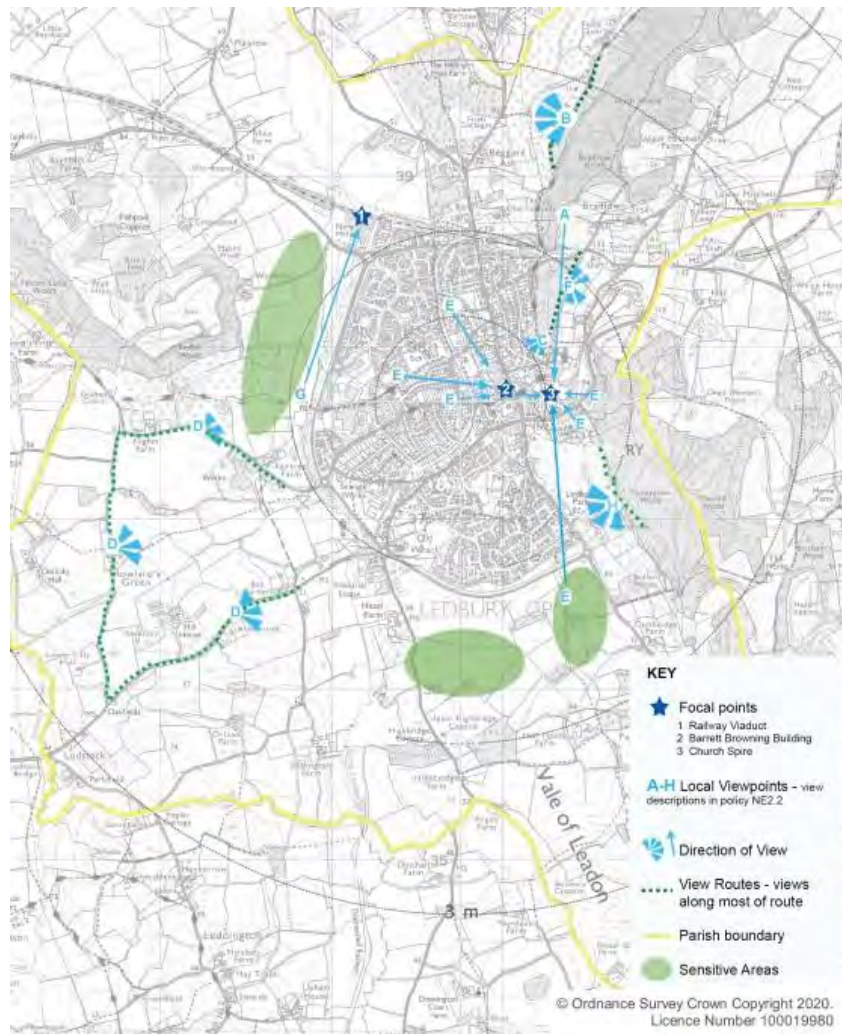
View h)- this panoramic view looks over the town, the sensitive areas south-west of the Gloucester Road Roundabout and to the east of Dymock Road towards Marcle Ridge. The view shows the town in its' setting with the characteristic farming landscape to the south and west of the town, the Leadon valley to the west and terminates in the Marcle Ridge and May Hill.

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

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



Map 7 – Important Views and Sensitive Landscapes



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Objective NE3:

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

Policy NE3.1

Allotments and Community Gardens in and around Ledbury

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

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

Objective NE4:

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

Policy NE4.1

Farming Landscape around Ledbury

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

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

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

should inform both design and location. Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy policy RA5 covers other aspects associated with the re-use of rural buildings.

Objective NE5:

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

Policy NE5.1

Protecting Ledbury's Woods

The conservation and/or enhancement of Frith, Connigree, 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.

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

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

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

10. Community & Leisure

Community & Leisure - The Background



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

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

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

10.4 As for leisure facilities, and especially as a means of helping to reduce the demands on health care, there is substantial evidence from consultation on the NDP and Town Plans,

that the community highly values the town's public and green spaces for recreational use. However, there is a shortfall in playing fields that needs to be addressed. They also want to see an enhanced footpath network in and around Ledbury.

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

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



Community & Leisure - Objectives & Policies

Objective CL1:

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

Policy CL1.1

Community Services and Facilities

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

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

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

10.7 Improvements to community services and facilities are needed as growth takes places in and around Ledbury from housing and other development. These improvements may include the delivery of new on-site facilities, or cumulative contributions may be required towards provision off-site or through complete relocation where this will achieve greater benefits. This will ensure the existing community of Ledbury and the surrounding area suffers no detrimental impacts upon their facilities and services as a result of development growth, whilst at the same time ensuring that new residents and occupiers are able to receive the services and facilities they need. In terms of health facilities, a new Health Partnership has recently been formed and there is pressure to provide improved or new facilities to accommodate a surgery and possibly complementary services reflecting a holistic approach to health care within the community and also population growth which has placed significant burdens upon services available within current premises. Accommodation needs for the partnership has been identified as a high priority for which a solution needs to be found. Options will need to be assessed and it is too early to be able to determine exact needs and identify a site although the public showed strong support for retaining health care facilities in the town centre if it was possible²². Delivery of a new facility depends upon central funding channelled through Herefordshire and Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Group.

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



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

²²See Ledbury NDP Issues and Options Report, May to July 2021 in Evidence Base – 88% of respondents (Question 4b): <https://www.ledburytowncouncil.gov.uk/en-gb/ndp-documents>

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

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



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

Policy CL2.1

Protection of Open and Green Spaces and Playing Fields

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

- a) It provides relief within an otherwise built-up frontage or within developments.
- b) It creates and maintains a well-defined edge to the settlement.
- c) It provides a buffer between incompatible uses.
- d) It provides important views into or out of settlements and of attractive buildings and their settings, or of attractive landscapes.
- e) It provides an important amenity of value to the local community.
- f) It represents a familiar or distinctive element within an attractive street scene.

- g) It represents a historic element within the origins or development of the settlement or area.
- h) It provides wildlife corridors or stepping-stones within built up areas.
- i) It contributes in other important ways to the objectives for green infrastructure set out in Appendix 2.

*10.11 NPPF guidance indicates that access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important in order to help meet diverse objectives – including recreation, amenity, environmental, nature conservation and biodiversity and climate change. This policy identifies those notable areas that should be protected and sets out criteria for other areas which are too small to be shown or have yet to be identified. The form of protection is that offered through Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy policies OS3 (Loss of open space, sports, or recreation facilities) and LD3 (Green infrastructure). The first does allow for its loss provided it is surplus to requirements or there is a replacement facility. It also acknowledges the contribution such space makes to green infrastructure, which the second policy covers. Appendix 2 to this NDP indicates what green infrastructure elements are important for certain green corridors and enhancement areas. Of particular **importance are the town's Riverside Walk and Town Trail**. The local community expressed support for the protection, enhancement and extension of green infrastructure and, in particular the protection of open spaces identified within and surrounding the town²³.*

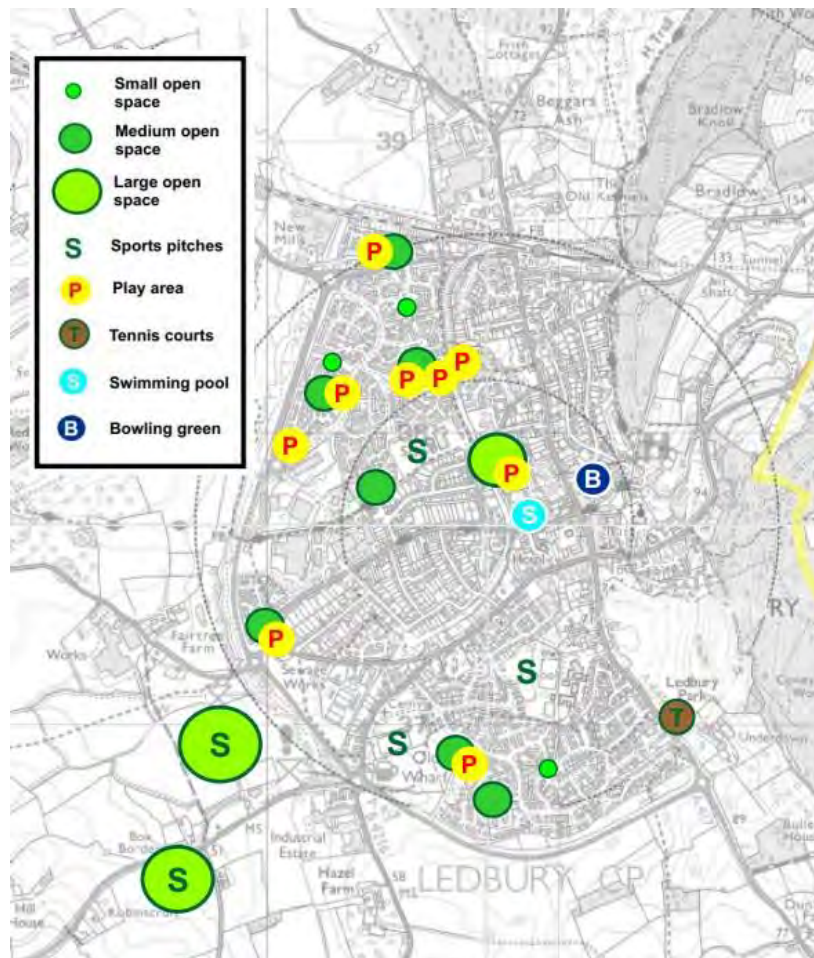
10.12 Although a number of other NDP policies address the benefits of open and green space to the conservation, wildlife and historic areas, this policy affords protection to land valued locally for recreational, health and wellbeing, and amenity purposes where it contributes to the character of the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



²³ Ibid – 93% of respondents in relation to green infrastructure generally (Question 5a[iii]) and 96% in relation to identified open spaces (Question 5b): <https://www.ledburytowncouncil.gov.uk/en-gb/ndp-documents>

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

Map 8 – Location of Sports and Play Facilities



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

Policy CL2.2

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

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

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

*10.15 An investment plan to deliver facilities to meet playing field needs within the town, prepared in 2016, has been pursued since that time and which sought to address deficiencies in football, rugby and cricket. The latter saw improved facilities through the relocation of the Cricket Club to a new site in 2017. The outstanding requirements for Rugby would be addressed through the Rugby Club utilising land it obtained through an asset transfer and currently rented to Ledbury Swifts Football Club, resulting in the latter losing much of its pitches. Ledbury Town FC is also under pressure to relocate, its current pitch being located adjacent to a housing development site where parking, its use of floodlights and crowd noise is not ideal in terms of protecting residential amenity. Various amounts of land and site options have been investigated through a sports partnership comprising the clubs, Herefordshire Council, Herefordshire Football Association, The Football Association, Ledbury Town Council and other relevant sporting bodies. The FA and Sports England are very clear that the best way forward is for a joint football facility housing Ledbury Swifts and Ledbury Town in order to sustain football in the future with the two clubs providing **junior and senior football respectively and to enable the development of women's football**. The development of a sustainable football hub for Ledbury also has wider support with 86% of respondents indicating expanding provision for sport should have a high priority when consulted²⁴. There was also a high level of support for the use of the site off Little Marcle Road as a combined facility for adult and youth football.*

10.16 This policy seeks to address the shortfall in terms of football pitches by supporting the use of an appropriate area of land to the west of the town. Alternatives were investigated²⁵ and the site indicated has in principle support of the two Councils and relevant sporting bodies. The initiative will also free up land at Ledbury Rugby Club so that it can meet both existing needs and deficiencies based on future growth requirements.

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

²⁴ Ibid – Questions 2a and 2b: <https://www.ledburytowncouncil.gov.uk/en-gb/ndp-documents>

²⁵ See Topic Paper 3: Recreation Leisure and Open Space: <https://www.ledburytowncouncil.gov.uk/en-gb/ndp-documents>

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

11. Transport

Transport - The Background



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

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

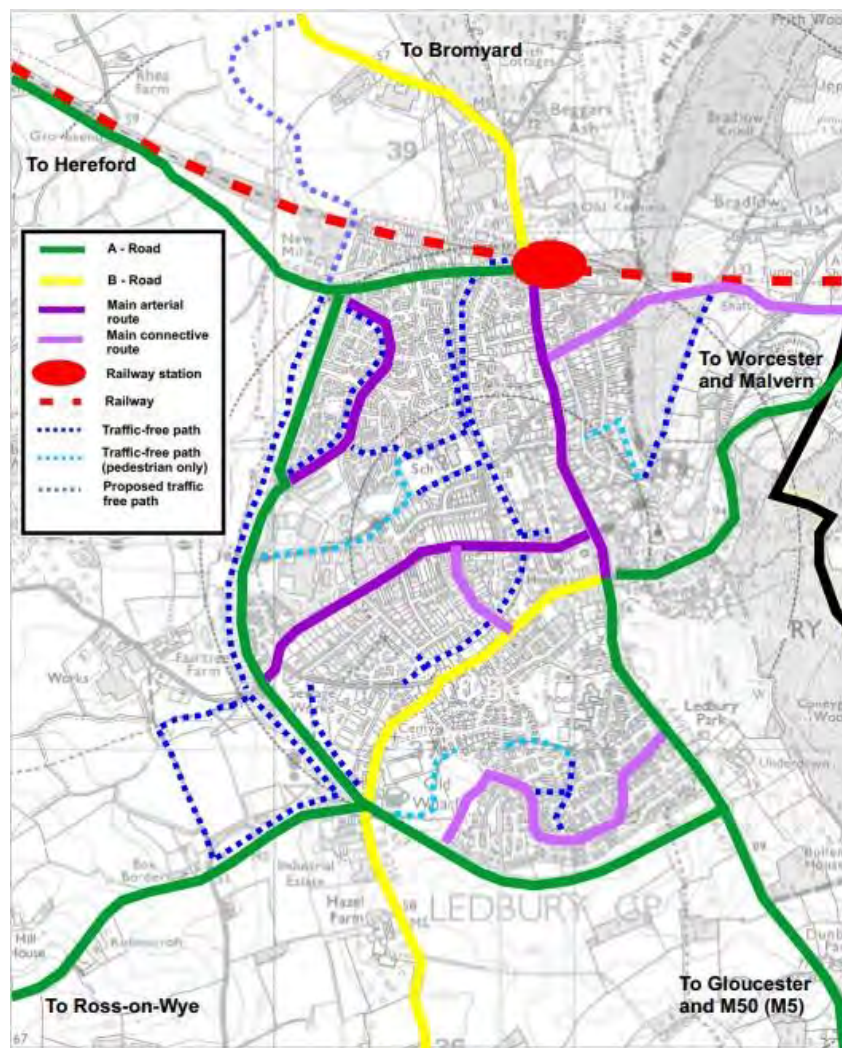
11.3 Ledbury is fortunate to have a mainline railway station, which has direct services to Hereford, other regional centres and London. The limited capacity for parking at the station is exceeded daily, causing overspill parking on the adjacent main roads and in surrounding residential areas. Increasing use of train services for work, business and leisure needs to be supported by appropriate, dedicated parking provision nearby. The Herefordshire Council Local Transport Plan (2016-2031) specifically identifies the need for improved access and car parking at Ledbury railway station.

11.4 There is currently no access, other than a footbridge, to the north side, east bound Malvern/Worcester platform. The station is unmanned so crossing on the level is impossible. People unable to use the footbridge (wheelchair users, parents with pushchairs etc.) can only travel in the Malvern/Worcester direction by first going to Hereford. This is an intolerable burden on the less mobile and needs to be addressed.

11.5 Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy policy SS4 indicates that Herefordshire Council will work with local communities and others to bring forward improvements to the local transport network to reduce congestion, improve air quality and road safety, and offer

greater transport choices. A number of transport related issues and actions are identified in the Ledbury Public Realm and Transport Appraisal²⁶ and these might form the basis for the working relationship between the Town Council, Herefordshire Council and others under that Core Strategy policy. They cover measures such as traffic calming, improvements to footpaths and cycle routes, junction improvements and remodelling, upgrading public transport infrastructure, environmental enhancements involving the highway, road safety including safe routes to school, and car parking strategy including residents parking.

Map 9 Transport and Connectivity



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Transport - Objectives and Policies

Objective TR1:

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

²⁶ Prepared by Balfour Beatty Living Places – see <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/22384/ledbury-public-realm-and-transport-appraisal>

Map 10 Public Footpath Connectivity



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Policy TR1.1

Footpaths and Cycleways

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

- Create appropriate crossing facilities dedicated to cycle, pedestrian and disabled access from the proposed strategic housing location north of the viaduct to give safe access to the station, schools, out of town shops and the town centre.
- Improve cycling, pedestrian and disabled access to and from the station and the town, especially where junctions create a hazard.
- Improve the Ledbury Town Trail to provide better cycling and disabled access along its whole length, including provision of street lighting and wider footbridges.
- Extend the Ledbury Town Trail at the Ross Road roundabout over Leadon Way to provide safer cycling, pedestrian and disabled access to the Rugby Club and the new Cricket Club. and the expanding business premises along the Ross Road.
- Provide an appropriate crossing facility across Leadon Way at the Little Marcle Road roundabout for cyclists, pedestrians and the disabled, going to and from the Little Marcle business, farming and planned new sports areas. At the same location, providing ramped access for cyclists and the disabled down to the Riverside Park going north in order to extend the Park and give safe and continuous off-road access for all active means of

transport from the Ross Road roundabout to the Hereford Road roundabout, with access from there to New Mills and the planned Viaduct development.

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



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

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

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

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

Policy TR1.2

Highway Design Requirements

Where development proposals are advanced, these should ensure:

Highway Design

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

Active Travel Measures

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

Parking Arrangements

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

Related Sustainable Transport Infrastructure

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

11.10 With the need to accommodate further development, it is essential that the highway requirements are met through a comprehensive approach covering design requirements, promoting active travel, managing parking and ensuring associated infrastructure is incorporated. Safety of all residents, and especially children, older people and those with disabilities, is paramount and the network should be capable of coping with the traffic generated. This applies not only in the locations where growth is proposed, but also

elsewhere in the plan area. It is also important that residential amenity and the wider environment are protected from the impact of traffic. Design measures should be used to calm traffic, fit layouts into the landscape and avoid clutter. Areas where access should be provided to local or natural green space and the public rights of way network are highlighted in Appendix 2.

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

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

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

Objective TR2:

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

Policy TR2.1

Ledbury Railway Station

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

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

enhancement and doubtful whether any social or economic scheme benefits would outweigh the permanent environmental harm that would be caused. Other alternatives might be investigated including a lift for which there was substantial support during the consultation or the redirection of railway lines to the same platform with extended car parking south of the station.

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

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



12. Community Involvement, Implementation and Monitoring

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

12.2 Developers and other applicants for planning permission are encouraged to consult with the Town Council, and the community more generally, in a manner consistent with the scale of the proposal. In relation to significant applications²⁷ the Town Council would encourage developers to consult with it prior to the submission of a planning application including, where appropriate, attending one of its meetings. These meetings are open to the public. Community consultations are encouraged. **Herefordshire Council's Statement of Community Involvement**²⁸ sets out a number of methods and techniques that it will consider undertaking and Ledbury Town Council would encourage developers to consider these for use at the pre-application stage. Developers and other applicants for planning permission should consider their duties **for community consultation as set out in paragraph 10.17 of Herefordshire Council's Statement of Community Involvement** and may wish to discuss the most appropriate approach to be taken with the Town Council in advance. A statement on the consultation undertaken should be submitted with any planning application.

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

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

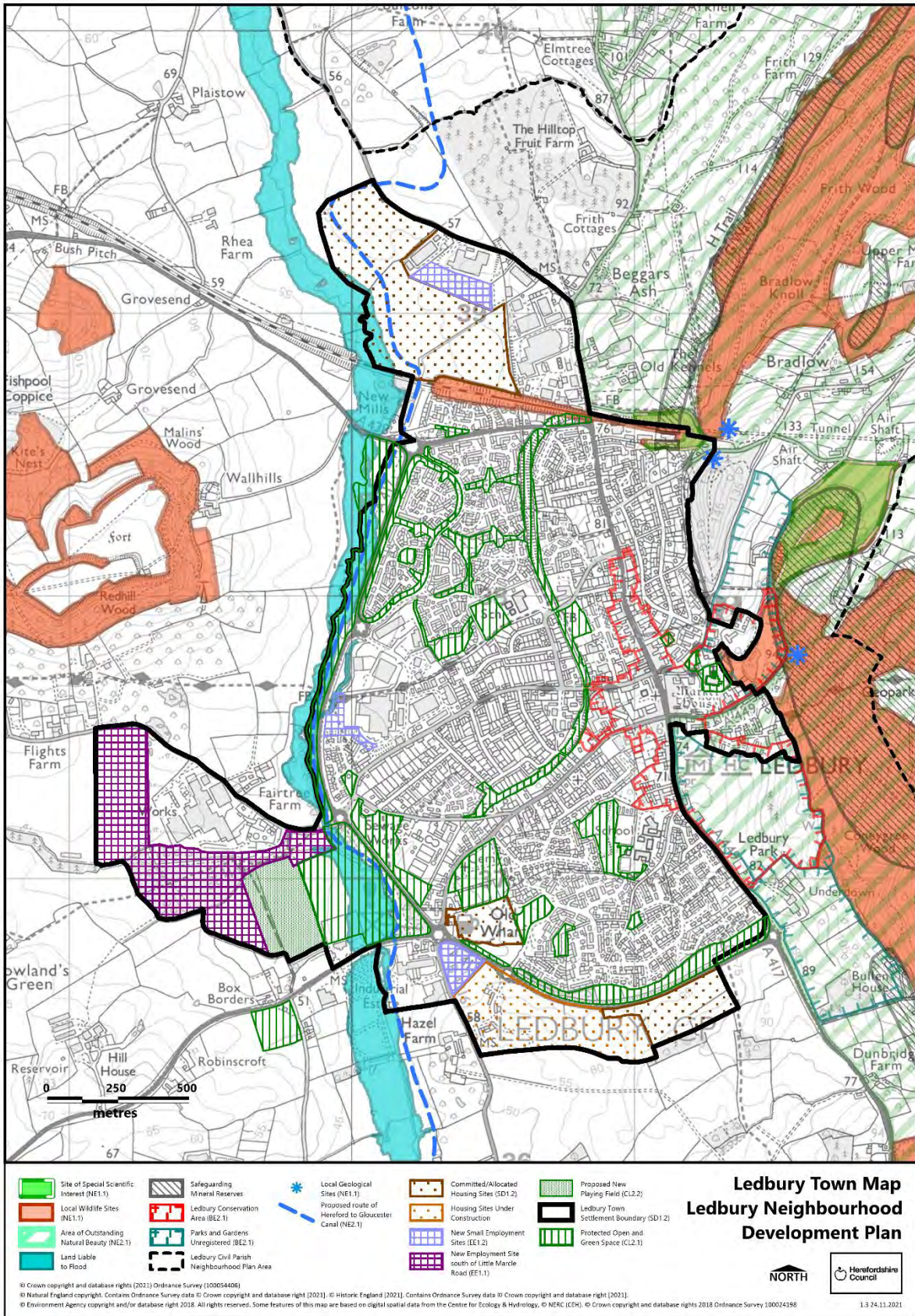
- i) The number of dwellings granted planning permission within the **Town's area**, including a running total covering the Plan Period.
- ii) A list of planning applications for other matters received during the year indicating whether they are covered by policies in this NDP, the Town **Council's representations**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

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

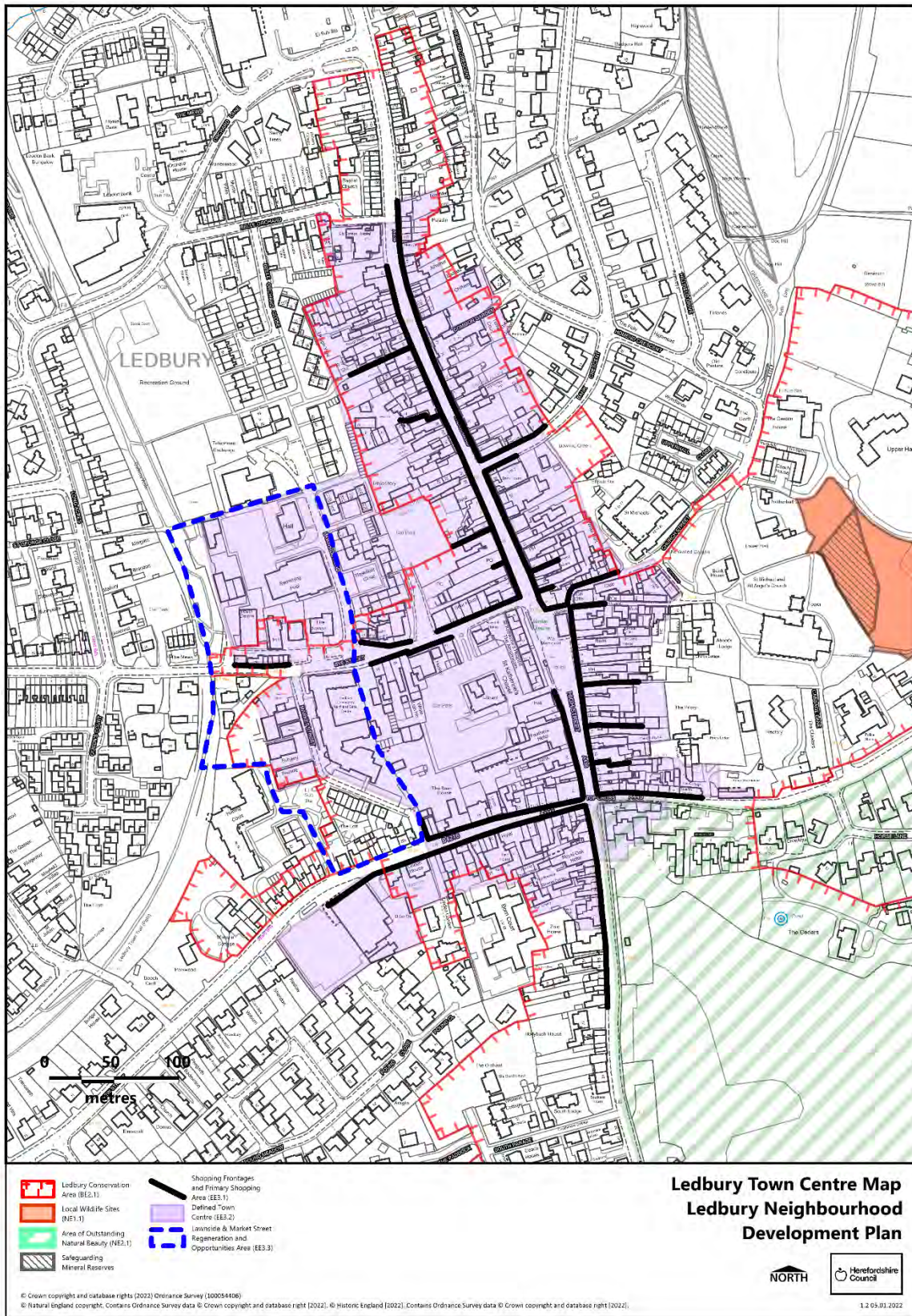
²⁷ See paragraph 10.16 in Herefordshire Council's Statement of Community Involvement at <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/1566/statement-of-community-involvement-january-2017>

²⁸ Ibid paragraph 8.4

Map 11: Ledbury Town Policies Map



Map 12: Ledbury Town Centre Policies Map



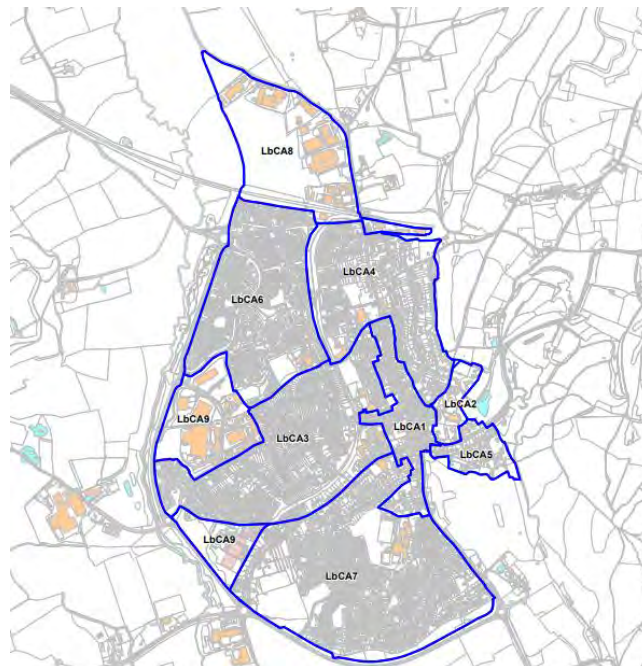
APPENDIX 1: Design Influences for Ledbury Character Areas

The following characteristics and features have been identified for various areas within the built-up area of Ledbury which should be used to inform the design and/or appearance of new development within them, including alterations and extensions. The areas comprise those defined in the Ledbury Rapid Townscape Assessment²⁹ and the characteristics distilled mainly from that document, with some limited additions where these relate to matters from the previous Ledbury Design Guide where they are considered useful.

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

Not all built-up areas of the town are included in the assessment with a number of new developments on the periphery of the town having taken place since it was prepared. Where appropriate, small or medium sized developments³⁰ in peripheral areas should utilise information contained in the assessments for the immediately adjacent areas. Larger developments should set out the approach proposed in a comprehensive design statement and the use of design review is recommended.

Map 13: Ledbury Rapid Townscape Assessment Character Areas (Source Herefordshire Council)



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²⁹ <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/1687/ledbury-rapid-townscape-assessment>

³⁰ NPPF paragraph 69 defines small and medium sized site in relation housing. Other forms of development should be assessed within the context of the particular landscape setting.

Ledbury Historic/Commercial Core Character Area (Reference LbCA1)

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

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

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

Church Street: built-form comprises mostly three storey buildings on the north-side and two storey on the south. Its narrow width again heightens the sense of

enclosure which should be retained. The buildings are mostly red brick with some roughcast. The footway is cobbled. Detailing is again important as in Church Lane.

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

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

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

New Street: New Street extends westwards from the Lower Cross. It is narrow at the east end, becoming wider further west. The townscape scale is less regular than elsewhere in the character area, with the exception of Bye Street although the street frontage is continuous at the east end with gaps further to the west to allow access

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

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

Ecclesiastical Precinct Character Area (Reference LbCA2)

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

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

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

- Much of the development in the area is of a standard and repetitive urban estate form and character. Locally distinctive character and features found within the particular residential streets include:

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

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

Belle Orchard comprises a linear plan. Houses are of two storeys constructed of a mixture red and yellow brick with slate roofs, and some stone dressings, bay windows, and false timber-framing. On the south side of the street most houses are detached; on the north side most are semi-detached or short terraces. There is a range of plot sizes and features include small front gardens, shrubs, hedges and redbrick boundary walls.

Woodleigh Road comprises plain two-storey brick houses, semi-detached and short terraces, with slate roofs, some with stone lintels or bay windows. They are set on narrow plots with small front gardens enclosed by brick walls. There are some later built houses and bungalows of brick or render, occupying larger plots. Most are set back further from the street behind front gardens.

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

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

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

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

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

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

North-East Residential Character Area (Reference LbCA4)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Worcester Road Civic/Residential Character Area (Reference LbCA5)

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

New Mills Residential Character Area (Reference LbCA6)

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

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

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

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

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

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

Deer Park Residential Character Area (Reference LbCA7)

- Residential development on cul-de-sacs linked by several sinuous access roads. Footpaths also link residential neighbourhoods.
- Plot sizes are small or very narrow.
- Architectural details are minimal with little variety in house design.
- Housing density is high and development fine-grained, particularly in the central area of smaller terraced houses on narrow plots. The secondary school building, a supermarket and a large block of flats occupy large footprints. A block of flats, off New Street, at three storeys, is also the tallest building in the character area.

Biddulph Way comprises mainly of two-storey detached houses and bungalows of brick with hung tile or wooden cladding and tile roofs. They have open front gardens, lawns and hardstandings. In the central area there are smaller brick houses and flats, in short terraces of two storeys on small or very small plots with open paved forecourts, limited soft landscaped areas and some off-street parking areas.

Oakland Drive and Elmsdale Road are long access roads with short cul-de-sacs. Dwellings comprise brick bungalows and two-storey semi-detached houses and short terraces with front gardens, open or enclosed by hedges or walls, many with parking.

Mabel's Furlong Lane is made up of two-storey semi-detached houses of plain brick, short rows and bungalows with front gardens generally enclosed by hedges or fences. Within this area John Masefield High School consists of a group of large linked buildings with several smaller ancillary buildings. The main buildings are of modular frame construction and brick. The school occupies a large site with sports field, games courts and surface car parks.

New Street is an area of a mixed townscape more variable in terms of building age, architectural design, function, massing and set-back from the street. Dwellings comprise detached brick houses on large plots, some with mature gardens, hedges and mature trees. Two short cul-de-sacs sit off this with short rows of smaller homes on narrow plots. Other uses include a modern brick and glazed church, a supermarket, and several large blocks of flats. Set-back distance from the street, building height and roofscape are variable.

- Open green spaces in the character area include a large sports ground, with adjacent football field (north side), recreational space and playground (east side) and open area, located in the western part of the character area; the school sports field; a lineal green space extending along the southern edge of the character area between the Leadon Way by-pass and the residential area; several smaller neighbourhood green spaces in the Biddulph Way area.

North Ledbury Trading/Industrial Estates (Reference LbCA8)

- The area is characterised by modular frame buildings with low profiles and large footprints, and adjacent surface parking and storage areas. The western part is open agricultural land.
- The industrial and commercial facilities are of similar character to those of any other late 20th Century trading estate.
- Cladding materials include steel and brick; roofs are generally shallow-pitched or flat.
- Most large buildings are adjacent to surface parking and storage areas.

- Surviving railway infrastructure, including the brick arched viaduct that crosses the Leaden Valley, embankment and bridge, Station House and the decorative brick retaining wall at the station approach road, are a reminder of the history of Ledbury, and create a sense of place and an area of local interest. In addition, there is a small wooden prefabricated station and waiting room, a footbridge and a signal box.
- In the northwest, several groups of oak trees and other species are the subject of a Tree Preservation Order.

West Ledbury Trading/Industrial Estates (Reference LbCA9)

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

Appendix 2: Green Infrastructure Objectives.

(Refer to Map 6)

Local Strategic Corridor 1 (LedLSC1) Objectives

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

Local Strategic Corridor 2 (LedLSC2) Objectives

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

Local Strategic Corridor 3 (LedLSC3) Objectives

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

- Improve the conservation status of SSSIs within the corridor.
- Community access to the area and all footpaths within it should be protected and, where possible, increased.

Local Strategic Corridor 4 (LedLSC4) Objectives

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

Local Strategic Corridor 5 (LedLSC5) Objectives

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

Local Enhancement Zone 1 (LedLEZ1) Objectives

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

- Soften the transition from built form to open countryside through the introduction of new linear woodland, orchards and hedgerows around any new development.
- **Maintain a green gap between Ledbury's built-up area and the settlement of Wellington Heath** that complements that included in Wellington Heath NDP and improving connectivity between habitats.
- Ensure new green infrastructure is introduced, particularly trees and hedgerows, in association with new housing and employment development.
- Include measures to limit or reduce both existing and further light pollution in this zone.

Local Enhancement Zone 2 (LedLEZ2) Objectives

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

Local Enhancement Zone 3 (LedLEZ3) Objectives

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

Local Enhancement Zone 4 (LedLEZ4) Objectives

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

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