

Ledbury Town Council

LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 2016-2031: RESPONSE TO PUBLIC CONSULTATION

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 We welcome the extension that has been provided to the consultation period. This has enabled us to provide an input which would have been impossible under the original timescale due to our published meeting schedule and to the timing of the Christmas and New Year holiday periods.
- 1.2 The Town Council is providing a narrative response to Herefordshire Council's consultation on the Transport Strategy & Policy. We have found the online format of the preferred response to be difficult to use and would like to express our concern that no downloadable response form has been made available for people to use. It is likely that these factors will have inconvenienced and deterred others from responding to the public consultation.

2 THE VISION AND OBJECTIVES FOR HEREFORDSHIRE: GENERAL POLICIES IN LTP4 'STRATEGY CONSULTATION DRAFT'

- 2.1 The Marches LEP Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) fails to recognise the importance of East-West transport links and over-emphasises the A49 North-South 'spine' through the county. Business and personal travel to principal markets and population centres depends more on connections to the east of the LEP region. The county's north-south routes are used primarily to access these east-west transit routes with much of the heavy traffic on the A49 wishing to travel east peeling off the route at Leominster and travelling across country to the Trumpet crossroads and either on to Gloucester or to Ledbury and the M50.
- 2.2 Ledbury and Ross have much better existing connectivity than is acknowledged in the SEP or LTP4. We object to the map graphics failing to properly represent the motorway connections at these locations through the appropriate use of colour, line thickness and recognition of the (just) out-of-county junction points.
- 2.3 The absence in LTP4 (and the Core Strategy) of any option for a Hereford eastern river crossing, sometimes referred to as 'The Ledbury Link', and link to the Rotherwas Enterprise Zone further distorts the false emphasis on the A49. An eastern link is supported by the EZ Board, the local MP, and is also the preferred policy option of Hereford City Council.
- 2.4 Such a link would provide significantly improved connectivity from Ledbury to the Hereford Enterprise Zone which would benefit the town economically and would also benefit our residents, 40%+ of whom already commute to work elsewhere in the county and beyond.
- 2.5 Page 10 of the SCD focuses on partnerships within the LEP and with Highways England. Rail should be a key part of LTP4. Opportunities for better partnership working with Network Rail and franchise holders (Arriva Trains Wales, London Midland and First Great Western) appear not to have been sufficiently explored and are certainly not adequately acknowledged from the council's perspective in the text of the draft strategy/policy documents.
- 2.6 In comparison to Shropshire's nine stations on the Arriva operated Newport-Manchester line Herefordshire has only two, with no interim rail stations at all (except Colwall) between its main

population centres. We would welcome more action from the Council and the LEP to press Network Rail and franchise holders to redress that imbalance and to re-open stations and halts, for example at (or near) Trumpet/Ashperton, Tarrington, Bartestree route into the city from Ledbury.

- 2.7 A more comprehensive and improved rail service must be co-ordinated and integrated with an improved rural and inter-urban bus service. We believe such an integrated public transport network and service would be commercially viable and key to enabling the 'modal shift' from private car use.
- 2.8 Insufficient consideration is given in the documents to the travel modes across the county boundaries. This is the case for bus travel, but also for the 'Choose How You Move' pick-up point network, e.g. there are no points in Ledbury and none between Ledbury and the Worcestershire border or in Colwall. Significant number of our residents commute out of county on a daily basis and numbers of workers also commute into county. These strategies should properly reflect the reality of the dynamic people movement system of the county and its residents and employers.

3 STRATEGY FOR HEREFORD

- 3.1 An eastern river crossing and link to Rotherwas EZ is the preferred option of Hereford City Council, the local MP and the Enterprise Zone board (see 2.3 and 2.4 above). We remain concerned at the Core Strategy emphasis on investment in city infrastructure. We do not feel that the stated benefits of a Western Relief Road for Hereford will deliver sufficient community benefits here in Ledbury to justify the allocation of locally generated Community Infrastructure Levy towards the funding of this Hereford road project.
- 3.2 Whilst fully recognising the complex and competing demands and policy requirements for growth, conservation and sustainability in the Core Strategy and LTP4, we question whether the main, and the most costly, planned infrastructure elements will deliver value for money. We are concerned that other infrastructure projects elsewhere in the county have the capability to make a larger contribution to the long-term growth and sustainability of the city and the county as a whole.

4 STRATEGY FOR MARKET TOWNS AND RURAL AREAS

- 4.1 Too little regard is given in the Core Strategy and LTP4 to the growth potential and capacity of the market towns, and to the SME and self-employed sectors that are – and will increasingly be – a vibrant element of the county economy.
- 4.2 Most of the market towns have as good (Leominster) or better (Ledbury and Ross) connectivity to out of county population centres and business markets as Hereford. They also have good connectivity out-of-county which the policy/strategy documents fail, in our view, to take sufficiently into account.
- 4.3 The east-west pinch-point for travel at the 'Top Cross' in Ledbury is not recognised in the documents and no plans are given for road infrastructure investment to provide improvements to the road network in this area. Such road infrastructure improvements for Ledbury would provide significant economic benefits both to our immediate locality but also to the whole eastern and southern axis of the county. We would like to strongly request that this omission in the plans is reviewed.
- 4.4 Options to address the east-west traffic movement in Ledbury also need to be considered in conjunction with the problems already experienced at the Junction of the Hereford & Bromyard

roads at the station in Ledbury. Decisions being made specific to the proposed strategic housing development on the viaduct site are not being joined-up with the bigger picture relating to vehicle movements east-west and at this junction.

- 4.5 These traffic movement issues also affect our neighbours in Wellington Heath and at Staplow and at Parkway.
- 4.6 Clarification is sought regarding the funding being provided for 'public realm' planning and whether these issues should be brought into the scope of such plans.
- 4.7 Planning and budget support for Ledbury and Leominster to develop integrated plans for investment in town centre public realm improvements is welcomed. We look forward to working with Herefordshire Council and its public realm partners to develop and to realise these plans.
- 4.8 Any 'core bus service' must include services between the market towns as well as from those towns to Hereford. Bus services between Malvern and Ledbury via Colwall and Wellington Heath are important to local residents. Also out of county links to Gloucester, Cheltenham and to Ross.
- 4.9 It is unclear from these strategic documents quite how the council proposes to bring forward bus services funded at parish and community level without commensurate consideration being given to the hypothecation of precepts from all relevant parishes and the mechanisms by which collective funding may be facilitated and enabled. We express our reservations regarding the deliverability of this policy and seek assurance that it is feasible and equitable.
- 4.10 Equally, the slow rate at which Traffic Regulation Orders are processed and highways improvements implemented continues to have a significant detrimental effect on local residents and our visitor economy. These strategic documents need to be developed in conjunction with addressing the process and procedural issues which impede their implementation; and alongside addressing the co-funding, licencing and statutory responsibility issues previously highlighted.
- 4.11 Specific to Ledbury's rail connection, it is not acceptable for there to be no safe means by which pushchairs and wheelchairs/disabled buggies can access the eastbound platform. Presently travellers are advised to travel to Hereford, cross the line via lift and bridge there, and travel east from there. Of course people choose to cross the track dangerously at Ledbury rather than take this course of action. This dangerous situation needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.
- 4.12 The Town Council welcomes recognition in these strategic documents of the need for greater parking provision for the station in Ledbury and the council looks forward to discussing options to realise this improvement in facilities ... along with the provision of safe pedestrian and disabled access to the eastbound line, at officers' earliest convenience.

5 RESPONSES TO SPECIFIC POLICIES IN LTP4 'POLICY DOCUMENT' (DRAFT)

5.1 POLICY LTP SM2 – Residential 20mph Zones

- 5.1.1 Aim to introduce a 20mph limit in all residential areas of the city, the market towns and the main villages.
- 5.1.2 Encourage communities to engage with the Safer Roads Partnership and Community Speed Watch

5.2 POLICY LTP PT1 – Supported bus network

- 5.2.1 Recognise the commercial potential of a more comprehensive and fully integrated service
- 5.2.2 Recognise the social and environmental and transport benefits of such a service, with 'investment' where necessary, or where community transport schemes are not viable, to achieve them

5.3 POLICY LTP PT3 – Bus infrastructure improvements, PT4 - Passenger transport information

- 5.3.1 Install GPS and other available technologies to enable 'real-time' location of buses in service from mobile phone apps, etc. The policy is over-reliant on expensive and inflexible hard copy timetables.
- 5.3.2 Recognise and plan to use improved broadband and internet access across the county for information delivery to facilitate travel modes.
- 5.3.3 Ensure fully co-ordinated and integrated rail and bus timetables, especially at times which facilitate work and school travel.

5.4 POLICY LTP PT7 – Rail improvements

- 5.4.1 See 2.5-2.7 above

5.5 POLICY LTP HN5 – Motorway and Trunk Road Network reliability improvements

- 5.5.1 See 2.2-2.3, 3.1, and 4.2-4.3 above.

5.6 POLICY LTP SC4 – Smarter Choice Initiatives

- 5.6.1 Park and Choose sites must be appropriately distributed, properly signed and better publicised to maximise take-up
- 5.6.2 Herefordshire Council must work proactively with City and Town Councils to develop Car Clubs, successfully implemented - on an urban-wide basis - in a number of UK cities and towns such as York, and in the St James area of Hereford and the village of Colwall.