

Shaping our Place 2026

Local Development Framework

# Draft Preferred Options: Bromyard, Ledbury, Ross-on-Wye

July 2010

**Follow on consultation**





## **CONTENTS**

**Page**

<b>Section 1</b>	<b>Introduction and how to comment</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Section 2</b>	<b>Preferred Option for Bromyard</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Section 3</b>	<b>Preferred Option for Ledbury</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Section 4</b>	<b>Preferred Option for Ross-on-Wye</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Section 5</b>	<b>Consultation questions and response form</b>	<b>33</b>



## Section 1 Introduction

The Council has now analysed the results of the 'Place Shaping' consultation which took place in early 2010. In addition, emerging evidence based studies and reports have been taken into account to help develop the policies and proposals to this stage. This '**Preferred Options for the Market Towns Paper**' is a follow on consultation from the 'Place Shaping Paper'. It is one of three papers that will be out for consultation during July and August 2010. The other two papers also out for consultation are the '*Draft General Core Strategy Policies Consultation Paper*' and the '*Rural Areas Policy for Core Strategy Consultation Paper*'. The policies in all three papers will ultimately form part of the **Core Strategy**.

The Core Strategy is a long term strategic planning document, which sets out the vision and objectives for the county and establishes the policy framework and the broad locations for development necessary to deliver them. Once adopted in 2011, the Core Strategy will set the guidelines for development of new homes, businesses, open space and other facilities across the county to 2026. Following on from this there will be the drafting of the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan which will provide more detailed planning policy and non strategic allocations for the market towns and the wider rural area.

This Paper addresses the preferred options for growth in Bromyard, Ledbury and Ross-on-Wye. The other two market towns Kington and Leominster have not been included in this paper for consultation as they already reached a Preferred Option for growth in the earlier 'Place Shaping Paper'. The responses received did not significantly alter the policy direction for these locations. Consultation responses relating to these towns will be available on the website shortly. The 'Place Shaping Paper' is still available on the website to view at [www.herefordshire.gov.uk](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk).

### How to comment:

Your views are important to us to help further develop a planning strategy for these three towns. The paper is divided into three main sections as follows:

Section 2: Bromyard  
Section 3: Ledbury  
Section 4: Ross-on-Wye

At the end of this paper there are just two questions applicable to each town.

Please complete the back page, detach and return your answers by **29<sup>th</sup> August 2010**

### If you require more information, please contact us:

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# Preferred Option for Bromyard



## **Section 2.0: Bromyard**

- 2.1 Bromyard is situated in the east of the County on the A44 midway between Hereford and Worcester.

The population of Bromyard<sup>1</sup> is 4,700 (mid-year estimate 2008) and its age structure is broadly similar to that of the County as a whole, although with a slightly higher proportion of retirement age or above (28% compared to 25%). The current estimated total number of households is 2,100.

In terms of its economic situation; Bromyard has a relatively high proportion of people employed in manufacturing (22% compared to 17% for the County as a whole). In the Employment Land Study 2009, 50% of respondents to an Employer Survey rated Bromyard as a satisfactory location in the County for business similar to Hereford and the rural areas; Kington, Ross and Ledbury scored higher (86-89%). Supply of employment land is more limited in Bromyard than the other market towns and it rates from poor to moderate according to this same study. However, the highly constrained environmental nature of Bromyard and lack of suitable sites puts limitations on scope for new employment development within and around the town.

Bromyard has a net outflow of workers leaving the town for work elsewhere which would suggest it is not serving its rural hinterland to its full potential. Relatively high proportions of workers commute over 6 miles to get to work (37% compared to 27% for the County as a whole).

Bromyard's economic situation is, however, relatively vulnerable to future change due to its older than average population and its economic dependence on manufacturing. The Core Strategy and subsequent Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan will seek to ensure that opportunities exist to enable and promote the growth of a diverse range of employment opportunities in the town.

The residential growth proposed for Bromyard will ensure a sustainable population for the town and the Core Strategy's other policies will provide opportunities for and the encouragement of appropriate economic growth as well as the provision of appropriate community facilities and environmental enhancement and protection.

N.B unless otherwise stated, information has been sourced from the State of Herefordshire Report 2009 and Market Towns Area Profiles. These can be found on the Facts and Figures about Herefordshire website ([www.herefordshire.gov.uk/facts and figures](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/facts_and_figures))

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<sup>1</sup> For statistical purposes this includes the parish of Avenbury as well as Bromyard – it is not possible to obtain figures for Bromyard parish alone.



## **BROMYARD**

Bromyard will continue to fulfil a diverse range of important roles as a centre for residential, employment, cultural and recreational uses. It will continue to act as a service centre to its rural hinterland. The strategy seeks to promote the continued development of the town, taking into consideration its needs, opportunities and constraints.

The **Preferred Spatial Policy Option** for Bromyard will be delivered in the following way: (see plan on page 12):

- The provision of 500 new homes (2006-2026) of which 250 will be provided in a single strategic urban extension to the north west of the town at Hardwick Bank. Of the outstanding 250 homes, around 200 of these have been completed since 2006 or are existing commitments (planning permissions and existing allocations). The remaining 50 dwellings will be provided through smaller scale non-strategic sites within the existing built up area;
- A target of 40% of new housing on sites above 15 dwellings will be required to be affordable homes to help meet housing needs in this high price area;
- Five hectares of employment land will be developed in the Linton area close to the existing trading estate with contributions towards improved sustainable access to the town. Mitigation measures will be required to protect the high sensitivity landscape of this area;
- Proposals for suitable small scale employment sites for example in the form of live/work units will be encouraged within the town;
- Developers will need to ensure there is no adverse impact on water quality in the River Frome;
- Improvements to Petty Bridge Sewage Treatment Works will be required at Petty Bridge which could be part funded by developer contributions.

The **Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan (MTRAP)** will also address the following local issues:

- The non-strategic housing allocation sites;
- The type and mix of housing to be provided to meet local needs;
- The siting of a formal park within the Hardwick Bank residential development;
- The need for additional or improvements to open space/recreational facilities pending further studies;
- Safeguarding appropriate existing employment land in and around the town and encouraging appropriate new small scale employment proposals;
- The need for further retail floorspace post 2016;
- The need for car parking and traffic management.

The MTRAP will address further the more detailed area specific issues for Bromyard.

The **urban extension at Hardwick Bank** will bring forward the following:

- 250 new homes at 30 dwellings per hectare in the next 6-10 years.
- An affordable homes target of 40%.
- Suitable vehicular access to the site via residential roads leading off Winslow Road and access off Leominster Road;
- New development which integrates well with the existing built up area and contributes to the distinctiveness of this part of the town.
- The provision of live/work units as part of the new urban extension.
- New pedestrian and cycle links between the site and the town centre funded by developer contributions.
- A new formal park can be developed as part of this residential development funded by developers.
- Contributions towards any identified need for new/improved community facilities.

## **2.2 Explanation**

The preferred spatial option for Bromyard has come out as Option 3, a northern and western focus for development. This is as a result of the Place Shaping consultation, evidence based studies, reports, Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment.

The potential housing allocations at Hardwick Bank and Leominster Road are located on medium to high and high sensitivity landscape according to the Urban Fringe Sensitivity Analysis. However such landscape constraints are common to all three Place Shaping Options for Bromyard. The Tenbury Road site falls completely into a high sensitivity landscape category. The highly constrained environmental situation of Bromyard must be balanced with the spatial strategy for the County. The spatial strategy proposes to direct some development to Bromyard to support its service centre role and meet local housing needs. It will be necessary to provide significant landscape mitigation measures that are acceptable in visual terms for Hardwick Bank to offset any unfavourable impacts on the environment.

There were further concerns regarding archaeological value of the Hardwick Bank site and the Leominster Road site (see below). It was considered that the archaeological merits of the Hardwick Bank site could be incorporated as part of a site layout and design using the existing historic field patterns. The development of the Leominster Road site would be a greater environmental loss due to evidence of prehistoric activity on the site with potential to be of national importance. There were no concerns about the archaeological value of the Tenbury Road site but this site is completely located in high sensitivity landscape.

There was some concern over how the Linton area should be developed as an employment site as part of the Place Shaping consultation. The potential of the east of Linton Trading Estate is hampered by multiple ownership issues relating to access into the site. Proposals to develop to the west of Linton Trading Estate have come forward in the free write text comments of the Place Shaping consultation. However, this site would need a great deal of earthworks to create areas of relatively flat land within the site suitable for employment development. It would also be very prominent in the landscape as part of the rural approach route into the town. Any new development in the Linton area would require significant landscape mitigation measures due to its sensitive landscape location. Such measures would include the formation of earth bunds and vegetation planting. Some of the comments received objected to any further development at Linton on the basis that it is too remote from Bromyard and encourages the need to travel by car. However there is a footpath along the A44 to Linton which would need improving to cater for pedestrians. The disused railway line has potential to be developed as a footpath/cycle path as an access into town other than by car but this would require the active co-operation of the landowner.

Bromyard has an under provision of parks and gardens according to the PPG17 study. Therefore it would be desirable for the development site at Hardwick Bank to be sufficiently large to incorporate significant areas of public open space..

## **2.3 Links to Core Strategy objectives**

This preferred option will help meet the housing needs, job opportunities and help maintain the viability of the town. The option will therefore address a range of objectives including 1,2,3,4,6,8,10,11 and 12.

## 2.4 What the evidence is telling us:

### 2.5 Option 1 Tenbury Road - Evidence

**Landscape:** According to the **Urban Fringe Sensitivity Analysis** a high sensitivity landscape designation meaning the site is highly vulnerable to change.

**Green Infrastructure Strategy:** situated in an enhancement zone to the north of the town stretching from the A44 in the west to the B4214 to the east. Any new development in the vicinity should provide green infrastructure to redress the abrupt edge that exists between the settlement and open countryside.

### 2.6 Option 2 Leominster Road site -Evidence

**Landscape:** According to the **Urban Fringe Sensitivity Analysis**, a sensitivity designation of 'medium to high and high' meaning the site is vulnerable to change with higher vulnerability in parts.

**Archaeology:** Highly visible in landscape terms with recorded levels prehistoric activity which could indicate a nationally important site.

**Green Infrastructure Strategy:** situated mainly in a local strategic corridor which provides the opportunity to provide refined linear infrastructure linking local sites and ensuring connectivity of assets. However, it also falls into a Fringe Zone which has a visually sensitive plateau landscape where protection and enhancement of the area is recommended therefore an encroachment into the fringe zone of this area would have more impact than an encroachment into the fringe zone where Option 1 and 3 exist.

### 2.7 Option 3 Hardwick Bank - Evidence

**Landscape:** According to the **Urban Fringe Sensitivity Analysis**, a sensitivity designation of 'medium to high and high' meaning the site is vulnerable to change with higher vulnerability in parts.

**Archaeology:** historic field patterns represent the sole surviving remnants of the medieval town fields.

**Green Infrastructure Strategy:** situated in an enhancement zone to the north of the town stretching from the A44 in the west to the B4214 to the east. Any new development in the vicinity should provide green infrastructure to redress the abrupt edge that exists between the settlement and open countryside.

## 2.8 Study evidence for Bromyard – general

2.9 The **Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)** favours only some of the land at Hardwick Bank as having any potential. The majority of land around Bromyard has been ruled out on landscape sensitivity or flooding issues.

### 2.10 **Water Cycle Strategy**

The ecological status of the River Frome upstream is poor and developers would need to ensure there are no adverse impacts as a result of any new development.

### 2.11 **SFRA/Environment Agency - HRA**

The land where all three Options are proposed will need significant assessment to ensure that there is no increased risk of flooding or pollution of the River Frome. This will be managed through a Surface Water Management Plan to accompany any development proposals.

## 2.12 **Employment Land Study**

Land at Linton Trading Estate was considered to be of moderate quality while the UDP allocated land to the south of Linton Trading Estate was classified as poor in the Employment Land Study.

## 2.13 **Open Space Study**

Bromyard has an extensive under provision of parks and gardens according to the PPG17 study. There is extensive over provision of natural and semi natural greenspace. There is under provision of amenity greenspace and outdoor sport. The provision for children and young people is average.

## 2.14 **Retail and Employment Study refresh.**

These studies are currently being refreshed.

## 2.15 **What the Place Shaping consultation has told us**

2.16 The options of developing land to the north and west of Bromyard were considered at Place Shaping consultation. A completely northern focus was the least favoured option with only 13% of respondents choosing Option 1. The allocation of growth to the west of Bromyard either side of the A44 was favoured by 39% of respondents in Option 2. The most favoured option was a northern and western focus in the Hardwick Bank area of the town with 48% of people choosing Option 3 out of a total 92 respondents.

115 responses were received in total to the free write text on questions relating to Bromyard.

## 2.17 **Stakeholder responses**

**Natural England:** a new park should draw upon the recommendations of the Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy (GIS). Opportunities to enhance the River Frome as a strategic green infrastructure corridor in line with the GIS should be promoted. Improve the ecological condition and recreational use of the Bromyard Downs to accommodate increased population use.

**Bromyard Market Town Plan Committee, Bromyard Regeneration Partnership:** Affordable housing is necessary. Improvements to sewerage works needed. Car parking is a major problem and 4 suggested sites have been put forward by the Committee.

**Bromyard and Winslow Town Council:** Need a relief road near Petty Bridge to access the industrial estate. No need to diversify the business base. Need for further employment opportunities.

**Bromyard and District Chamber of Commerce and Industry:** Quote median house price values alongside mean. Refer to connectivity as a key issue. Review existing industrial areas.

**Cradley Parish Council:** Bromyard does not entice visitors from rural hinterland

**Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce:** Land to the west of Linton and Porthouse Farm does have employment land potential.

**English Heritage:** Concern regarding visual integration with built up area and landscape. Bromyard Conservation area was identified as at risk in the Heritage at Risk Register.

**Sport England:** An up to date playing field and sports strategy is needed.

**Environment Agency:** The land where the three Options are proposed will need significant assessment to ensure that there is no increased risk of flooding through a Surface Water Management Plan

**English Heritage:** Welcome the Historic Environment Development Impact and Designs Study (HEDIDS) study as it informs the Options and interested in its progress for the Market Towns and Rural Area Plan (MTRAP).

**CPRE:** All the options involve development on high sensitivity landscape and cannot be supported. The MTRAP should identify smaller and less sensitive plots for housing development and not the Core Strategy.

**Bromyard Market Town Plan Committee:** Concern over the infrastructure necessary to accommodate new development including sewerage and broadband services. Consider family needs in new developments.

2.18 There was general support for new housing development with more people supporting the proposals than opposing them. Individually each Option received very little objection. There were some suggestions from the Place Shaping consultation to look at the south of the town for possible housing sites but the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment ruled out these sites based on landscape issues which were considered to be more sensitive than the sites put forward in the three options.

#### **2.19 What national, regional planning policy and other relevant strategies are telling us:**

**PPS3 Housing** (June 2010) The national advisory minimum housing density of 30 dwellings per hectare has been removed, (through changes to PPS3) allowing Local Planning Authorities more discretion over densities of residential development in their areas.

#### **2.20 How the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) / Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) have influenced the preferred option**

The recommendations of the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment have been taken into account and adjustments to the text have been made to ensure that the preferred options for Bromyard are consistent with the aims of sustainable development. The following is a summary of where the policy has been amended for Bromyard.

- The reference to the need for developer contributions to accommodate additional places at the local schools has been removed and replaced with a reference to contributions towards community facilities. This is to address the requirements of the wider community needs for example community facilities, schools and health facilities.
- A preamble outlining the economic and social character of Bromyard has been added to the beginning of the section.
- A reference to small scale employment sites has been added to the Preferred Spatial Policy Option to encourage this type of development while waiting for the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan to be adopted.
- The SA requested a reference to standards of sustainable design but this has not been added to this policy as there will be a separate Core Strategy policy on sustainable design standards.
- A reference to mitigation measures to protect the high sensitivity landscape has been included in section 2.20.

#### **2.21 Alternative options not taken forward and why**

#### **2.22 Option 1 of the Place Shaping Paper**

Of all the options this was the least favoured option chosen by the public and stakeholders. There was no obvious reason stated but considering there were a number of comments received in relation to the need for a north/south north/west

relief road there may have been concern about additional traffic usage on Tenbury Road.

### **2.23 Option 2 of the Place Shaping Paper**

This was the second most favoured option. There were some concerns about severance of the A44 to access the housing site. Of all three options this option raises the most sensitive environmental concerns. The Leominster Road site is highly visible in landscape terms and there are recorded levels of prehistoric activity which could mean a nationally important site that would deserve protection therefore impeding residential development. Further evidence from the Urban Fringe Sensitivity Analysis highlights the southern side of the A44 as falling into a Fringe Zone which has a visually sensitive plateau landscape where protection and enhancement of the area is advised. The Biodiversity Action Plan has prioritised part of the site as an area of local biodiversity importance.

### **2.24 A hybrid of Option 2 and 3**

This option was raised by a respondent during the Place Shaping consultation. Given the archaeologically sensitive nature of the sites in Option 2 it would not be reasonable to pursue this option as part of any new alternative for residential development.

### **2.25 Develop land to the south of the town off the Hereford Road area close to the Hope Centre and Top Garage.**

A few respondents raised this as a possibility as a result of the Place Shaping consultation. This land was considered as part of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment but ruled out due to its high sensitivity in landscape terms. The land here also falls away dramatically to the south and in this respect, development here would not relate satisfactorily to the existing built form of the town.

### **2.26 Bromyard needs more housing**

This option has been raised through the Place Shaping consultation. The total amount of new housing within the Core Strategy plan period allocated to Bromyard is 500 which equates to 25 dwellings per annum which is similar to past build rates. The river Frome's flood plain flanks the eastern boundary of the town therefore restricting the possibility of development in this location. This leaves the north, the south and the west as potential areas of development. However, in the Urban Fringe Sensitivity Analysis the majority of the landscape around Bromyard falls into the category of high sensitivity landscape with only a small portion in the medium to high category. It is therefore evident that Bromyard is heavily constrained in landscape terms more so than any of the other market towns. Therefore any encroachment into the countryside must be minimised as much as possible hence why it is plausible to have a restriction on the amount of housing Bromyard can accommodate.

### **2.27 No strategic housing allocation just dispersal of smaller sites around the town**

The spatial strategy for Bromyard aims to support the status of the market town as a service centre to its rural hinterland, to support rural regeneration and meet local housing needs. The Place Shaping consultation had minimal objection to the three options for growth and the majority of the respondents were in favour of the growth proposed. This would indicate that the public responding to the consultation are in favour of a strategic housing allocation for Bromyard. The less sensitive areas in landscape terms exist within the town however, there is limited land available within the main body of the Town and there are consequently insufficient sites suitable for the kind of intensive residential development needed to meet the strategic needs of the Town by infill alone. This is evident from the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and the responses to it.

**2.28 No need for a new employment site, refurbish the existing Linton Trading Estate site.**

The existing Linton Trading Estate is protected employment land in the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and is considered to be of moderate quality as outlined in the Employment Land Study. However, the existing units are in use and it is the purpose of the Core Strategy to find new employment land. The UDP employment allocation site to the South of the Linton Trading Estate was rated as poor in the Employment Land Study and unlikely to be delivered in the plan period for a number of practical reasons. Therefore attracting a developer to refurbish the site would be difficult to achieve. The most reasonable proposal would be to extend the Tile Works site to the east or west.

**2.29 No further development at Linton, an alternative site should be identified.**

Some of the comments received in response to the Place Shaping consultation objected to any further development at Linton on the basis that it is too remote from Bromyard and not convenient to travel to and from the town other than by car. However, on land that is closer to town the environmental constraints that Bromyard faces are high as identified in the SHLAA study, in trying to identify suitable residential land. Therefore a 5 hectare industrial site on the outskirts of Bromyard would result in a conspicuous development in the landscape. No other alternative sites have been suggested outside of the Linton site.

**2.30 Review existing industrial areas within and around the town**

Identify levels of activity at the Station, Porthouse Farm and Bishops Frome. There is no further space within these sites to accommodate any significant new employment development.

**2.31 Need for a north/south north/west relief road.**

This is unlikely to happen as it is not economically feasible and the limited scale of growth in Bromyard during this plan period would not be able to fund a new road.

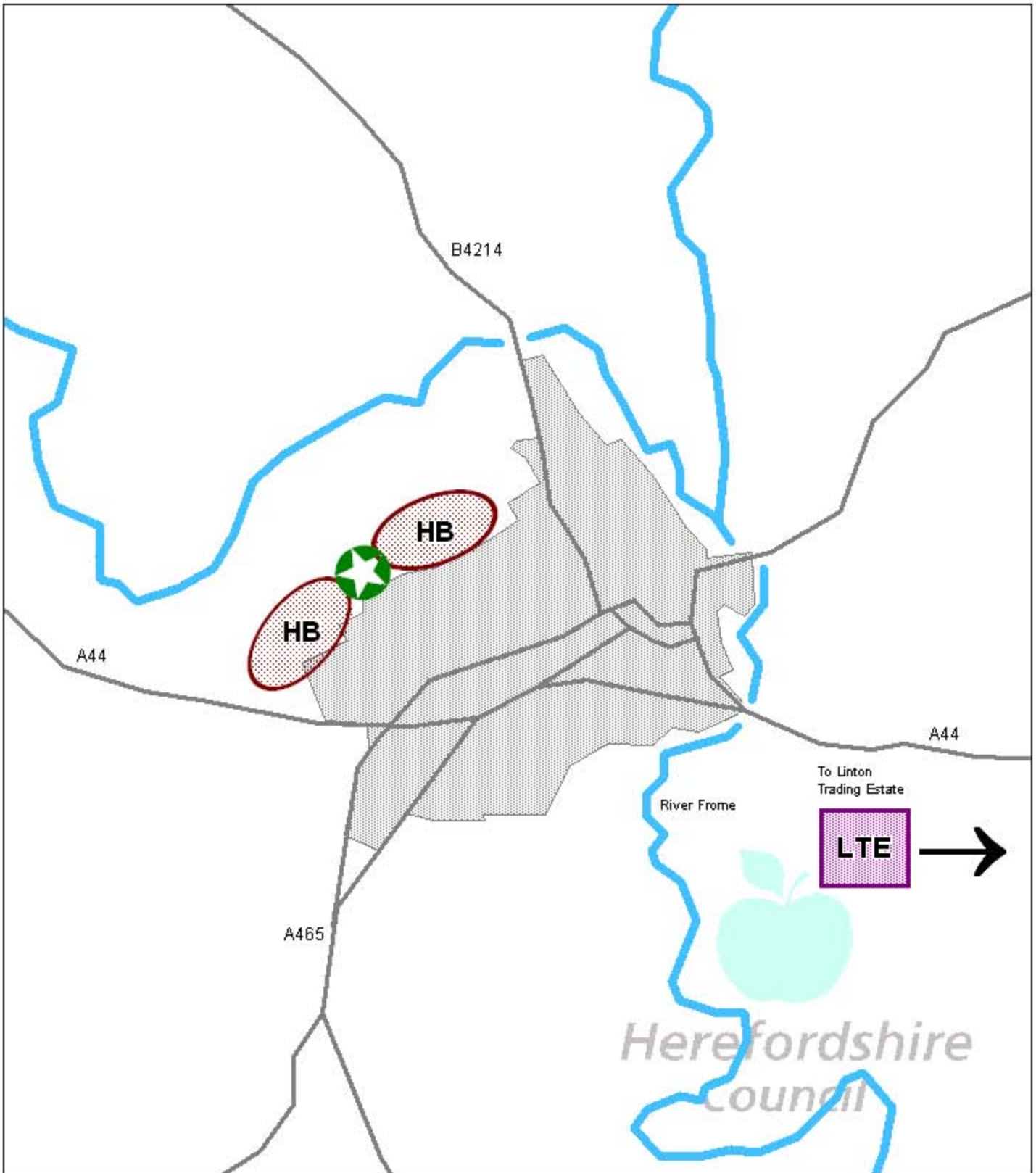
**Your Views:**

**1. Do you agree with the preferred spatial policy option for Bromyard?**

**Yes/No**

**2. If not, please explain which elements you don't agree with and why?**

Please complete your answers on page 33



## Preferred Option Bromyard



**NORTH**  
Not to Scale

Key



Option for housing growth  
HB - Hardwick Bank



Options for Recreation



Option for employment growth

 River  
 Roads



# Preferred Option for Ledbury



## Section 3.0 Ledbury

- 3.1 Ledbury is situated on the eastern edge of the County, just over 15 miles east of Hereford and is easily accessible from the M50. The railway station provides good transport links to Worcester, Oxford and Birmingham.

The population of Ledbury is approximately 9,900 (mid-year estimate 2008). It has a relatively high proportion of younger adults than Herefordshire as a whole, but also of older people - particularly aged 75+. In the 2001 Census, areas of Ledbury had some of the highest proportions of lone pensioner households in the County. Current estimates suggest the population occupies around 4,400 households.

Although Ledbury has a high level of economic activity amongst its population, workers are more likely to than those in any other town in the county to commute over 6 miles. Over 40% of its 16-74 year olds in employment are commuting more than 10km to get to work, which could be reflective of its public transport links. This issue is being addressed in the Preferred Options through replacement employment allocations including sustainable transport links and the promotion of live-work units for the town to encourage greater self-containment in employment terms.

Ledbury residents are amongst the least likely in Herefordshire to experience employment deprivation. Jobs in utilities and manufacturing industries are over-represented in Ledbury, but despite this, only the central area has a high proportion of residents working in manufacturing. The town is unusual in that “real estate, renting and business activities” is one of the top three sectors in which residents work; it accounts for most employees in England but is under represented in the County. The town continues to attract a significant number of tourists and this plays an important role in the town’s economy according to the Parish Plan.

Ledbury’s economic situation is, however, relatively vulnerable to future change due to its relatively older population and its economic dependence on manufacturing. The Core Strategy and subsequent Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan will seek to ensure that opportunities exist to enable and promote the growth of a diverse range of employment opportunities in the town and ensure sufficient service provision.

The residential growth proposed for Ledbury will ensure a sustainable population for the town and the Core Strategy’s other policies will provide opportunities for and the encouragement of appropriate economic growth as well as the provision of appropriate community facilities and environmental enhancement and protection.

N.B unless otherwise stated, information has been sourced from the State of Herefordshire Report 2009 and Market Towns Area Profiles. These can be found on the Facts and Figures about Herefordshire website ([www.herefordshire.gov.uk/facts and figures](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/facts_and_figures))

## LEDBURY

The preferred strategy for Ledbury is to promote its role as a multi-functioning centre for its own population and that of its rural hinterland. The strategy seeks to promote the continued development of the town, taking into consideration its needs, opportunities and constraints.

The **Preferred Spatial Option** for Ledbury will be delivered in the following way (see plan on page 22):

- The provision of 800 new homes (2006-2026) of which 700 will be provided in a single strategic urban extension to the north of the Viaduct to the north of Ledbury subject to a satisfactory transport assessment and likely improvements required to the junction between the Bromyard and Hereford Roads. Of the outstanding 100 homes, 50 dwellings have already been completed since 2006 or have the benefit of planning permission. The remaining 50 dwellings will be provided through smaller scale non-strategic sites within the existing built up area.
- A target of 40% of new housing on sites above 15 dwellings will be required to be affordable homes to help meet housing needs in this high house price area.
- The provision of around 12ha of new employment land between the Little Marcle Road and the Ross Road to the west of the bypass to counter people travelling long distances for work and support economic regeneration. Developer contributions will be required towards: sustainable transport to the town centre, green infrastructure and biodiversity enhancements along the Leadon Valley to promote sustainable communities.
- Proposals for suitable small scale employment sites for example in the form of live/work units will be encouraged within the town;
- New pedestrian and cycling links from the urban extension directly to the Town Trail, railway station and town centre funded through developer contributions to promote walking, cycling and the use of public transport to ease congestion and limit CO2 emissions.
- The retention of the existing cricket and football grounds for recreational use.

The **Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan (MTRAP)** will also address the following local issues:

- The non-strategic housing allocation sites.
- The type and mix of housing to be provided to meet local needs.
- The need for, and siting of, a formal park and other open space requirements following further evidence base studies currently being prepared.
- The need for new non-strategic retail development and possible locations to support local trade.
- Car parking and traffic management.
- The need for new tourist accommodation to promote tourism in Ledbury.

The MTRAP will address further the more detailed area specific issues for Ledbury

The **urban extension at the Viaduct site** will bring forward the following:

- 700 new homes at up to 50 dwellings per hectare in the next 6-10 years (avoiding the floodplain).
- A target of 40% of these will be affordable homes.
- The provision of live-work units.
- Land to facilitate a restored canal, to be funded by developer contributions.
- A new linear informal park to link to the existing "Town Trail" and enhanced green infrastructure, funded by developer contributions.
- Contributions towards any identified need for new/improved community facilities to include land for the provision of a 210-place primary school (1ha) within the Viaduct site, funded by developer contributions.
- Vehicular access to the site from the Bromyard Road.
- Development that contributes to the distinctiveness of this part of Ledbury.

## 3.2 Explanation

The preferred option for Ledbury, which takes forward an amended Option 2 from the Place Shaping Paper options, has been developed taking on board the consultations to date, updates to the evidence base and other studies, and the results of the Sustainability Appraisal (including Habitats Regulations Assessment).

The reduction in size of the strategic housing allocation from 1000 to 800 dwellings for Ledbury reflects the concerns of consultees and minor readjustments to the strategy. The reduction comprises of 100 homes taken off the overall county allocation from 18,100 to 18,000 following from comments by the West Midlands Regional Assembly and 100 further dwellings to be allocated to rural areas across the county generally,

The amount of housing development now allocated to the Viaduct site has increased from 500 to 700 new homes. This is a greater number than the 600 dwellings proposed in the original **Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment** (SHLAA) and constitutes a higher housing density requirement i.e. from 30 to 50 dwellings per hectare. (Site Ref HLA/198/004 and 004a). This is considered reasonable in respect of the contained nature of the site and its location on the edge of the town centre.

Concentrating housing development to the Viaduct site and employment development to land south of Little Marcle Rd allows for not only economies of scale but constrains development to land considered of low-medium sensitivity in landscape terms. This option renders unnecessary the need to develop land to the west and south of the bypass on land of higher sensitivity in landscape and other environmental terms (including agricultural value, biodiversity interest and historical landscape interest). Developing land to the north of the viaduct also addresses aspirations of the **Green Infrastructure Strategy** which identifies the area as an Enhancement Zone.

Developer contributions from the urban extension will be required for the provision of land for the restoration of the canal and contributions towards ongoing maintenance as identified in Unitary Development Plan Policy RST9 (a saved policy). This is considered necessary to create a defined edge to the development and protect and enhance the setting of the listed viaduct and also address flooding concerns. Contributions will also be required for the creation of a linear country park to soften the visual impact of the development from views into the site from the north and west of Ledbury.

The cricket and football ground have not been progressed as a housing option partly in response to the level of objection received to this suggestion in the Place Shaping Paper and because no firm alternative provision for these facilities has been secured (Government policy in PPG17 would require equivalent or better replacement facilities and, in order to perform the same function as the existing facilities, they would need to be equally conveniently accessed from Ledbury itself).

## 3.3 Links to Core Strategy objectives

The preferred option will meet housing needs, job opportunities and help maintain and improve the vitality of the town as well as conserve and enhance the setting of the town in the surrounding landscape. In this respect the preferred option will comply with objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11 and 12.

### 3.4 What the evidence is telling us:

#### 3.5 Option 1 Viaduct Site, Cricket Club and Dymock Road - Evidence

Agricultural Land Grade 1 to south of bypass

Hazel Farm is a listed building

High- medium sensitivity in landscape terms

#### 3.6 Option 2 Viaduct Site, Little Marcle Road and Cricket Club- Evidence

Semi natural biodiversity habitat in parts of site to west of bypass

Fairtree Farm is a listed building

High – medium landscape sensitivity

Land of biodiversity interest with semi- natural habitats

Part of site is at higher risk of flooding than Option 1

### 3.7 Study evidence for Ledbury– general

3.8 **Green Infrastructure Strategy** – Enhancement zones exist to north and south of the town

3.9 **Water Cycle Strategy** – The River Leadon is sensitive to eutrophication and has poor ecological status under the Urban Waste Water Directive. In this respect high standards of treatment of effluent discharge would need to be maintained in future sewage treatment associated with any new development. The water company has advised that there is adequate “Headroom” in local capacity for the level of development suggested.

3.10 **Affordable Housing Viability Study** – This records that Ledbury has a greater need for affordable housing due to high house prices locally, and therefore the target of 40% of all new housing to be affordable is appropriate for Ledbury.

### 3.11 What the Place shaping consultation has told us

3.12 For those responding to Question 20 of the Place Shaping paper, Option 1 was favoured with around 70 people choosing Option 1 (to develop land at the viaduct site and land to the south of the bypass at Ledbury) as opposed to Option 2 (to develop land at the viaduct site land to the west of the bypass at Ledbury). This represents 57% of those choosing Option 1 over Option 2 (122 people in total).

However, slightly more people who responded to the free-write text for Question 20a (i.e 76 out of 127 people) preferred neither option 1 or 2 for Ledbury.

For question 20b regarding the inclusion of the football/cricket club in either option 1 or 2, 58% (total 153 respondents) thought the cricket/football club should NOT be included in the Options.

### 3.13 Stakeholder responses

**Ledbury Civic Society:** opposed to building beyond the bypass and concerned at capacity of infrastructure.

**Ledbury Town Council:** concerned that the infrastructure of the town is at capacity. Retain football and cricket ground.

**The CPRE** is concerned about the loss of agricultural land by the options in the Place Shaping paper.

**The Nature Trust** are concerned regarding the visual impact of employment proposals on the western entrance to the town

**Natural England:** The River Leadon is sensitive to eutrophication

**Severn Trent Water:** Have confirmed adequate capacity for water treatment.

**Environment Agency:** River Leadon is affected by eutrophication and this may affect phasing of development.

**Welsh Water:** Have advised that they can accommodate all of the existing commitments plus an element of the projected growth, However, confirmation of final growth figures are awaited and if required, further improvements will be subject to funding approval from the Water Industry Regulator through water companies' 5 year investment plans.

3.14 In summary, there is concern from the public and other stakeholders that the options to extend Ledbury beyond the existing bypass would affect the character of the town and create separate communities remote from the town centre. There are some strong representations to the effect that the existing football/cricket club grounds should be retained as open space. There is general support for developing the Viaduct Site for housing.

### **3.15 What national, regional planning policy and other relevant strategies are telling us**

Ledbury Town Plan – respondents to the questionnaire for the town plan felt that Ledbury should not be extended beyond the bypass.

### **3.16 How the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) have influenced the preferred option**

The Sustainability Appraisal has recommended some further clarifications to the text of policies and the provision of more clarity over the full range of services needed to support new development. Overall, however, the appraisal has concluded that the preferred option is likely to have a positive impact on sustainability objectives. The Habitat Regulations Appraisal has not identified any specific adverse effects on sites of national or international significance for nature conservation. The following is a summary of where the policy has been amended for Ledbury.

- The reference to the need for developer contributions to accommodate a new school has been added to with a reference to contributions towards community facilities. This is to address the requirements of the wider community needs for example community facilities, schools and health facilities.
- A preamble outlining the economic and social character of Ledbury has been added to the beginning of the section.
- A reference to small scale employment sites has been added to the Preferred Spatial Policy Option to encourage this type of development while waiting for the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan to be adopted.
- The SA requested a reference to standards of sustainable design but this has not been added to this policy as there will be a separate Core Strategy policy on sustainable design standards.
- The word 'existing' has been added to point 5 under the urban extension to address the fact that the urban extension will be included as a link to the town trail.

### **3.18 Alternative new options not taken forward and why**

#### **3.19 Option 2 of the Place Shaping Paper**

Whilst this option was favoured by those people choosing between options 1 and 2 of the Place Shaping paper, more respondents favoured neither Option. Further analysis of the options and review of the strategy has meant reconsideration of the Viaduct Site to support an increased capacity of housing. In this respect it is not considered necessary, this plan period, to breach the bypass to the south of Ledbury for new homes on land which is of higher landscape sensitivity than that at the Viaduct site.

#### **3.20 Sub-options 1 and 2 of the Place Shaping Paper**

These options involved utilising the existing cricket and football ground for housing. This option has been discounted at this stage because insufficient evidence is available to establish the need for playing pitches in Ledbury (a Playing Pitch Strategy is currently being developed which will establish this need), public concern at the loss of the facilities and the fact that no suitable, as easily accessible, alternative site for a replacement facility as yet come forward.

#### **3.21 Develop land to the east of Bosbury Road and north of the railway station for housing**

This option was raised during the Place Shaping paper consultation. The land was considered as part of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (Ref: HLAA/062/001) but rejected as an option due to its high sensitivity in landscape terms, location within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, high sensitivity in historic landscape terms, its sloping topography and poor relationship with other housing. For these reasons it is considered unreasonable to include this land as part of the preferred housing options.

#### **3.22 Develop strip of land from the Full Pitcher to the Gloucester Road alongside ring road for housing**

This option has been raised through the Place Shaping Paper and was not considered as part of the SHLAA. This land is designated as Protected open space under Policy HBA9 of the Unitary Development Plan. It is a thin wedge of land which separates existing development at Deer Park from the bypass and is considered to form a necessary buffer zone between the two providing visual screening and noise abatement. For these reasons it is not considered reasonable to include this area of land for housing as part of the preferred options.

#### **3.23 Retain the Viaduct site for employment only and build more housing to west of bypass**

This option has been raised through the responses to the Place Shaping Paper. The Viaduct site was discounted as an option for employment land at an early stage in the process as part of the assessment of this site through the Employment Land Study and the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. The site was considered of poor quality in the Employment Land Review and has not come forward for such a use because of constraints regarding access through the Listed Viaduct. Of all the potential sites this site is the most well related in terms of built form to the existing town centre and in this respect housing represents a good alternative use for the site subject to sufficient buffer screening from the existing employment uses.

With respect to increasing the amount of housing to be built to the west of the bypass, the SHLAA highlights that if all the sites identified to the west of the bypass north of Little Marcle Road were developed, then sufficient housing to meet the

spatial strategy could be accommodated in pure capacity terms. This option could also result in contributions to the rebuilding of the canal and improvements to the linear park alongside the Leadon or even the introduction of a formal park (which has also been suggested as an option through the Place Shaping consultation). The area could also facilitate the building of a new primary school which has been highlighted as a requirement for the allocated housing growth to Ledbury.

However, although this and the viaduct site are at the same risk of flooding, the land to the west of the Ledbury bypass is of higher landscape value in visual terms and historic landscape terms, is of greater biodiversity interest and it is also more fundamentally divorced from the existing built form of the town by virtue of the bypass. In this respect developing the entirety of the proposed housing for Ledbury to the west of the bypass is not considered as reasonable and as realistic as the preferred option proposed above.

### **3.24 Mixed use of Viaduct site**

It was also suggested that the Viaduct site be used for mixed use as part of the Place Shaping Paper. This is not possible if the whole site is to be used for housing (plus a new primary school) as per the preferred option.

### **3.25 Divert housing to Ross/other market towns and/or villages**

It is not realistic to divert homes to Ross as this is already receiving a significant quota of new homes through the spatial strategy and Ross has its own environmental constraints. Likewise, other market towns (except Kington where there is not the capacity for strategic sites) are already receiving significant housing allocations and it would not be reasonable to expect further homes to be delivered in these locations in the plan period.

### **3.26 Move formal park to existing recreation ground or walled garden or Bye St/Orchard Lane or to Little Marcle (West of Bypass) site**

The need for a formal park has been highlighted by the Open Space Study. It is not considered reasonable to locate a formal park to an existing recreation ground in Ledbury as these are already performing an open space function and the “additional” need for open space would not be remedied. The site for housing to the west of Ledbury is not being progressed as a preferred option and therefore siting a formal park to this area is not considered reasonable. Therefore, these options have not been taken forward in the preferred options.

### **3.27 Land to south of bypass (DR) could be used for employment only**

This option has been raised through the Place Shaping Paper responses and relates to reducing the amount of housing in Ledbury with the viaduct site only being used. And use land to the south of bypass identified for housing in the Place Shaping Paper (DR) for employment only. This was not considered a reasonable option because the landscape in this area is visually very open and gently rising and large industrial buildings here would appear an obtrusive feature in the landscape from all directions of approach. Housing, on the other hand, it is considered could possibly be acceptable in visual terms subject to significant landscape mitigation.

### **3.28 Keep cricket field and build on football ground only**

This is not considered to be a reasonable option as the capacity of the football site is insufficient in housing terms to be classified as a strategic site. Also to develop only part of the site could represent a visually discordant feature in the townscape of this area, as it would be sandwiched between two open areas and not relate well to the existing built form.



**3.29 Continue bypass northwards to Bromyard Road**

A northern bypass route is safeguarded in saved policy T10 of the Unitary Development Plan but would have to be provided by any developer of the viaduct site. However, it is not suggested as part of the preferred option as it is not considered realistic in deliverability terms for a new road and canal and park to be provided all by developer contributions. In addition, the new road is not considered necessary if the use of the site is for housing purposes only (the new road was a requirement for the use of the site for employment purposes).

**3.30 Combine viaduct site and western option with canal restoration**

This option is taken on board in part in the preferred option. The land to the west of the bypass is not considered realistic to develop this plan period

**3.31 Use empty homes**

This option was raised as an alternative to the Place Shaping options but is considered unrealistic as whilst empty homes will make some contribution towards meeting housing needs, the forecasts for household change over the plan period suggest that there is likely to be a significant need for new housing. Therefore the release of greenfield sites will be required in Ledbury to meet this need.

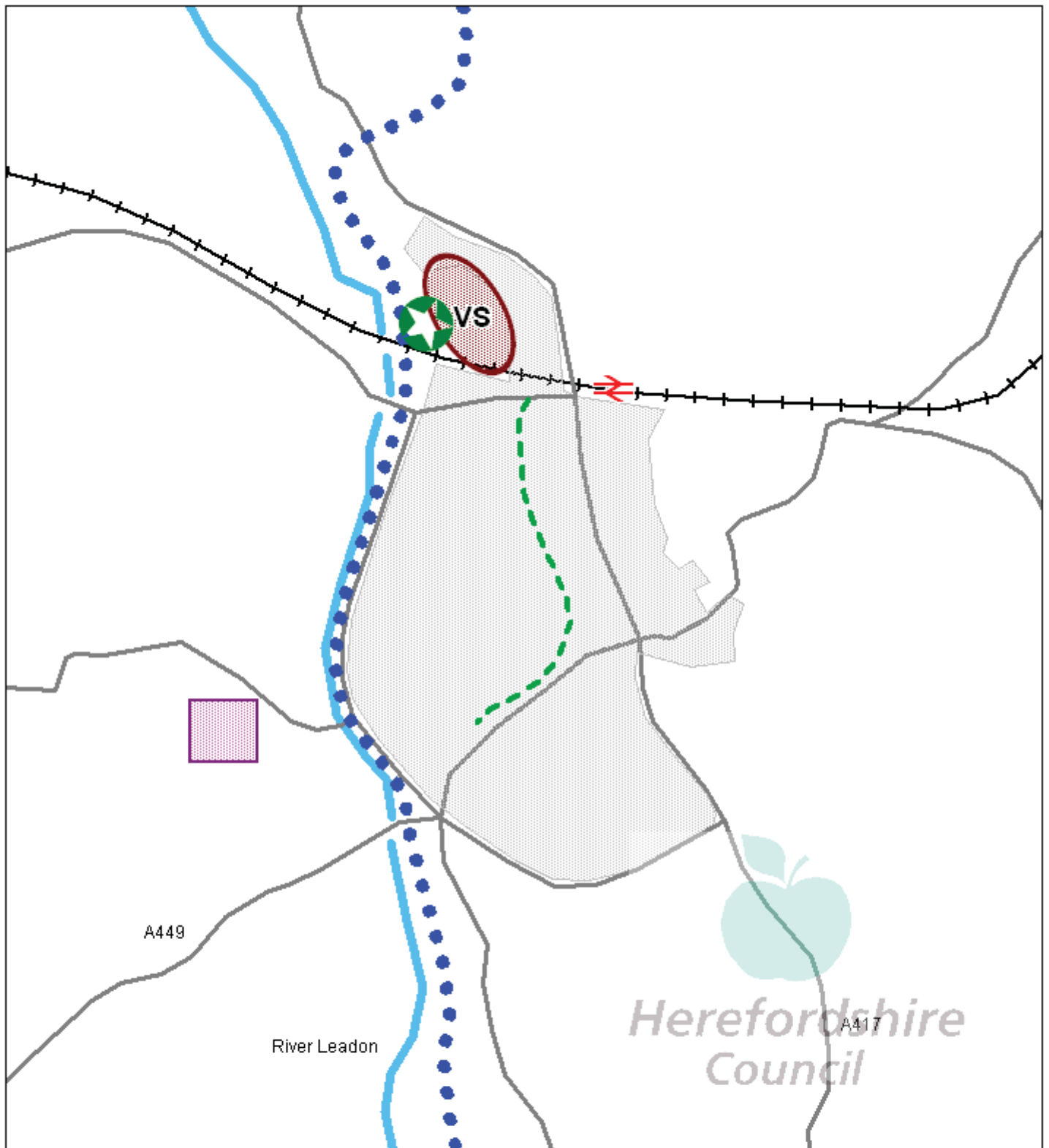
**Your Views:**

**3. Do you agree with the preferred spatial policy option for Ledbury?**

**Yes/No**

**4. If not, please explain which elements you don't agree with and why?**

Please complete your answers on page 33








## Preferred Option Ledbury



**NORTH**  
Not to Scale

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### Key

-  Preferred options for housing growth  
VS - Viaduct Site
-  Employment growth
-  Options for Recreation
-  Hereford & Gloucester Canal Route
-  Town Trail

# Preferred Option for Ross-on-Wye



## Section 4.0 Ross-on Wye

- 4.1 Ross-on-Wye is situated in the far south of the County and is the only principal settlement within Herefordshire with direct links to the motorway network. The town is located 15 miles south east of Hereford and is easily accessible from both the A40 and the M50.

The population of Ross-on-Wye is approximately 10,000 (mid-year estimate 2008) and although its age structure is broadly similar to that of the County as a whole, it has a slightly higher proportion of people of retirement age or above (28%). The population occupies around 4,500 households.

In terms of its economic situation; Ross-on-Wye has a strong relationship with Hereford, both as a source and destination of labour. Its other main travel to work links are with settlements to the south in Gloucestershire and Gwent. In comparison with the West Midlands region, the town has a relatively high level (60%) of employment self-containment (i.e. the proportion of working people who live in the town and also work there) and experiences new in-flow of workers across all occupational groups, but particularly amongst lower wage earners<sup>1</sup>.

Ross-on-Wye serves as an important service centre. This is reflected in a high proportion of employment in distribution, hotels and restaurants, standing at 31% compared with the regional average of only 24%. A further 18% of employment is in the banking, finance and insurance sector, slightly above the regional level<sup>2</sup>.

The 2001 Census indicates that 23% of the economically active population of Ross-on-Wye are employed in manufacturing, which is higher than the County average (17.4%), with a lower proportion working in agriculture. The town continues to attract a significant number of tourists and this plays an important role in the town's economy.

Ross-on-Wye's economic situation is, however, relatively vulnerable to future change due to its older than average population, its economic dependence on distribution, hotels and its remoteness from large urban areas. The Core Strategy and subsequent Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan will seek to ensure that opportunities exist to enable and promote the growth of a diverse range of employment opportunities in the town.

The residential growth proposed for Ross-on-Wye will ensure a sustainable population for the town and the Core Strategy's other policies will provide opportunities for and the encouragement of appropriate economic growth as well as the provision of appropriate community facilities and environmental enhancement and protection.

N.B unless otherwise stated, information has been sourced from the State of Herefordshire Report 2009 and Market Towns Area Profiles. These can be found on the Facts and Figures about Herefordshire website ([www.herefordshire.gov.uk/facts and figures](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/facts_and_figures))

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<sup>2</sup> West Midlands Rural Economy Study. Prepared for Advantage West Midlands by SQW and Land Use Consultants, 2007

## ROSS-ON-WYE

As with other market towns, Ross-on-Wye is a multi-functioning centre for its own population, yet also has a role as a service centre for an extensive rural hinterland. Its connections to the motorway network make the town an important gateway into the County and it is a tourist destination in its own right. The strategy seeks to promote the continued development of Ross, taking into consideration its needs, opportunities and constraints.

The **Preferred Spatial Option** for Ross-on-Wye will be delivered in the following way (see plan on page 31):

- The provision of 1000 new homes (2006-2026), of which 350 will be located on a single strategic urban extension to the south east of the town at Hildersley. Of the outstanding 650 homes, around 550 dwellings have been completed since 2006, are existing allocations or have the benefit of planning permission. The remaining 100 dwellings will be provided through smaller scale non-strategic sites within the existing built up area;
- A target of 40% of new housing on sites above 15 dwellings will be required to be affordable homes, in order to meet identified housing needs in this high house price area;
- The 10ha Model Farm strategic employment site, identified through the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan, has planning permission and it is anticipated that it will be developed during the first half of the plan period.

The **Market Town and Rural Areas Plan** will also address the following local issues:

- Non-strategic housing allocation sites;
- The type and mix of housing to be provided to meet local needs;
- Safeguarding appropriate existing employment land in and around the town and encouraging appropriate new small scale employment proposals;
- The need for, and siting of, open space, sport and recreation facilities, following further evidence base studies currently being prepared;
- The need for new non-strategic retail development and possible locations to support local trade;
- The need for new tourist accommodation and facilities to promote Ross-on-Wye's continued role as a tourist destination;
- Ways in which to address the identified areas of deprivation in parts of the town;
- The upgrading of Ross-on-Wye police station;
- The provision of additional pre-school facilities, increased high school capacity and improved youth and children's services;

The MTRAP will address further the more detailed area specific issues for Ross-on-Wye.

An **urban extension at Hildersley** will bring forward the following:

- 350 new homes at 25-30 dwellings per hectare in the period in the next five years;
- An affordable homes target of 40%;
- The inclusion of an on site recreation space to replace that existing, or the funding of an off-site similar area, through developer contributions;
- The creation of green infrastructure within the site for the benefit of both new and existing inhabitants, as well as local bat populations, which enhances the sites proximity to the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- New pedestrian and cycle links between the site and the town centre, funded by developer contributions. The proximity to Model Farm, an existing business park and the Town Trail, provides opportunity to ensure positive and sustainable transport improvements;
- An appropriate acoustic and visual buffer between the development and the MOD rifle range, funded by the developer;
- Contributions towards any identified need for new/improved community facilities, including public open space.

## 4.2 Explanation

The variation of Option 2, to put the entire strategic housing requirement on the Hildersley site, reflects the concerns of consultees, new evidence base studies produced since the Place Shaping Paper, the site's positive relationship to the existing town and future employment land, as well as the conclusions drawn from the Sustainability Appraisal (including the Habitats Regulations Assessment).

During the Place Shaping stage of the Core Strategy's production it was thought that there may be problems with developing more than 180 homes in Hildersley due to the potential damaging impact on bat foraging and roosting sites. For this reason the second greenfield strategic site at Overross was also considered. However, a new evidence base study, Greater and Lesser Horseshoe Bats in South Herefordshire 2010, has indicated that the area to the south east of Ross-on-Wye can accommodate more housing without negative impacts on greater or lesser horseshoe bat species.

The option of developing the Overross site raised a number of concerns, including: being an area of medium to high landscape sensitivity; being physically and visually separated from the rest of Ross by the adjoining A40 (which may be difficult to overcome) and having limited vehicular access opportunities. In addition, once the northeastern side of Ross bounded by the A40 is breached, consultees raised concerns that there would be potential for future growth on a large scale, since there are no natural physical features which could form boundaries to any new built form. It is not considered that this would be beneficial to the town at a time when a more sensitive approach to new development is available.

As well as being able to accommodate 350 homes on a less landscape sensitive area, there is sufficient land available at Hildersley to provide all necessary infrastructure, landscaping and public open space which may be required on a development of this size. Economies of scale will assist in the achievement of good levels of community benefits, which may not be as feasible on two smaller sites.

## 4.3 Links to Core Strategy Objectives

A preferred variation on Option 2 will (along with additional dispersed growth on a number of smaller sites in and around the town), will meet Ross-on-Wye's housing needs, including the provision of much needed social rented and intermediate affordable homes, job opportunities and help maintain and improve the vitality of the town and well as conserve and enhance the setting of the town in the surrounding landscape. In this respect the preferred option will comply with objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11 and 12 of the Core Strategy.

## 4.4 What the evidence is telling us

### 4.5 Option 1 Overross - Evidence

**Landscape:** According to the **Urban Fringe Sensitivity Analysis**, a sensitivity designation of medium to high, meaning the site is vulnerable to change.

**Highways:** the Overross roundabout is unlikely to be able to accommodate another arm. The most viable option for a new vehicular access linking the site to Ross-on-Wye would be via the new roundabout proposed for the adjacent Tanyard Lane housing development.

**Green Infrastructure Strategy:**

a) The course of the Rudhall Brook (forming the southern boundary of the Overross site) is an important green biodiversity corridor.

b) The eastern edge of Ross is identified as an enhancement zone, where the eastern edge of the town and the Rudhall Brook could be improved.

c) Urban Fringe Zone. The Overross site is in an area which has been partially eroded by agricultural intensification. The Green Infrastructure objectives seek to restore and repair the character and connectivity of such habitats.

#### 4.6 Option 2 Hildersley - Evidence

**Landscape:** According to the **Urban Fringe Sensitivity Analysis**, It is not considered to be a particularly sensitive landscape, having a low-medium designation. The Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is located fairly close to the site.

**Biodiversity:** The site is within 10km of the Wye Valley Woodland SAC and the Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC. The nearby Town & Country Trail, in particular, is important to foraging bats.

**MOD Rifle Range:** The rifle range site is surrounded by a significant buffer zone, also owned by the MOD, and is currently in predominantly agricultural use. This area cannot be developed unless the MOD relocates its operations to an alternative site. The MOD is receptive to discussions on this matter.

**Water Resources:** The northern section of the site lies within a Groundwater Source Protection Zone 2.

**Green Infrastructure Strategy:**

a) The Ross Town Trail forms a strategic corridor along the southeastern boundary of the town. The network of public rights of way and paths along the trail should be protected and enhanced and, where possible, new access points should be created which link it to development areas.

b) Urban Fringe Zone. The south east of Ross is an area where the objective is to protect and enhance grasslands and orchards beneath the wooded slopes of neighbouring hills.

#### 4.7 Study evidence for Ross-on-Wye – general

#### 4.8 **Water Cycle Study**

In terms of water resources, consultations indicate that there is an available supply of water to meet demand for the projected growth of Ross. However, various delivery partners involved in the new development should aim for sustainability in water usage i.e. decreasing water consumption and using water in more efficient ways. The UK NGO Waterwise will be able to assist planners and developers in these important matters.

The River Wye is a Eutrophic Sensitive body of water and there is a need to ensure that high standards are maintained in respect of effluent discharge at the Ross Lower Cleeve Sewage Treatment works, which discharges into the River Wye.

#### 4.9 **Building Biodiversity into Herefordshire's Local Development Framework**

a) The Wye Valley AONB covers much of Ross town and the land to the south.

b) The River Wye is identified as a SAC and SSSI.

c) Wye Valley Woodlands SAC, Upper Wye Gorge SSSI and Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bats Sites SAC and SSSIs provide good woodland habitats and key breeding and roosting areas for bats, including the greater and lesser horseshoes. Although the bat sites are some distance away, development in the Ross area will need to avoid adverse impacts on these species and adopt a precautionary principle. Development proposals that could affect the conservation status of a SAC will be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).

d) The Rudhall Brook and River Wye provide strong habitat linkages around and through Ross, with cover and forage for many species such as otter and bats.

e) Linear features such as the Town and Country Trail provide important semi-natural habitats and their retention and strengthening is vital to maintaining connectivity between habitats and populations and securing their long term survival and viability.

- f) Retention of 'buffer zones' along water courses to improve water quality.
- g) Retention and enhancement of field boundaries and their buffer zones.

#### 4.10 **Affordable Housing Viability Study**

Ross-on-Wye has a higher market value than in most other parts of the county. Potentially a figure of 40% affordable housing could therefore be achieved on the strategic and other housing sites of over 15 dwellings.

#### 4.11 **What the Place Shaping Consultation has told us**

Question 25a) of the Place Shaping Paper asked which options for growth in Ross-on-Wye were preferred.

The majority of respondents (54%) (68 people) favoured Option 2 (a split of housing between sites at Overross and Hildersley). However, amongst the comments made in the free write boxes of the Place Shaping Paper, of the 21 who had ticked in favour of Option 2, eight stated that in fact they wanted either all or most of the housing to go to Hildersley. A further four wanted no development at Overross at all, referring to its poor relationship with the existing town, access and landscape concerns. Those in Favour of Hildersley thought that it was less sensitive in landscape terms, has a better relationship with the existing town, has sufficient land area to provide open space, green areas and any other infrastructure requirements.

46% (57 people) favoured Option 1 (350 homes being sited at Overross alone). However, concerns were raised over where the new vehicular access to the site should be located. It was thought that this site might provide the greatest opportunity for public open space and community facilities provision and future growth over subsequent plan periods. It was also stated in the free write comment that development at Overross would be closer to links to employment areas outside Ross-on-Wye. It was also mentioned by a small number that the Hildersley site would increase traffic congestion in the south of the town.

Of the 87 people who made comments in the free write box of the Place Shaping Paper questionnaire relating to the future development of Ross, eight stated that a dispersed approach to new housing growth should be adopted, rather than one or two larger sites. The Place Shaping Paper details why this approach is not considered viable. There is an absence of sufficient and appropriate smaller sites close to the town to achieve the housing target in the spatial strategy. However, as part of the development of 500 homes for Ross-on-Wye, other suitable non-strategic smaller sites will be identified through the preparation of the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan.

#### 4.12 **Stakeholder responses**

**Ross Civic Society:** Overross site should have sustainable access connections to the town. Support for homes at Hildersley. Concerns over road congestion.

**Ross Town Council:** A dispersed growth approach is more favourable. Concern over road congestion and sewerage capacity. Need for improved recreational and leisure facilities, more employment opportunities and improved sustainable transport opportunities.

**Natural England:** support for Overross site as it can best deliver community infrastructure.

**MOD Defence Estates Operations North:** Although there are no plans to dispose of the rifle range at Hildersley, it could be relocated if alternative sites were to be found.

**Herefordshire Council Archaeology:** Both the Overross and Hildersley sites are close to Romano-British sites and there is uncertain potential. The Hildersley site



also carries additional historic landscape concerns due to the prominence of parts of the site.

**English Heritage:** Include information on the potential impacts on the historic character of Ross and its surrounding landscapes and heritage assets. The Rapid Characterisation Assessment should inform development.

**CPRE:** Do not support either option. Hildersley could accommodate 350 dwellings. Overross would be an unnecessary extension.

**Marstow Parish Council:** Ross cannot support the proposed levels of growth. Parking is inadequate. Schools, medical and dental facilities would be strained.

**Upton Bishop Parish Council:** All development should be at Hildersley. No support for development at Overross due to potential impacts on the cattle market area.

**Aconbury Parish Council:** the Overross site is remote from the town and would be too separated from it.

**Little Birch Parish Council:** Land to the north of the A40 (the Label/Focus site) should be developed for housing and industrial uses in preference to Hereford because of access to the M50.

**The Association of Ross Traders:** Why is there a need for additional comparative floorspace towards the end of the plan period? The loss of the Read Meadow car park is not supported.

**Ross Town Plan Steering Group:** There is a current need for additional or improved community facilities, particularly for the young. Sports and leisure provision is poor. Need for a new cinema. Developer contributions should be sought and this requirement should be built into the LDF.

**Herefordshire Environment Partnership:** Option 1 is preferred as there is scope to enhance open space on the town's edge and there are opportunities to achieve sustainable transport gains and developer contributions towards addressing AONB management plan priorities and the potential to accommodate more houses exists.

**Herefordshire Nature Trust:** Option 1 is preferred as there is scope to enhance open space on the town's edge and there are opportunities to achieve sustainable transport gains and developer contributions to addressing AONB management plan priorities and the potential to accommodate more houses exists.

#### **4.13 What national planning policy and other relevant strategies are telling us**

**PPS3 Housing (June 2010)** The national minimum housing density of 30 dwellings per hectare has been removed, leaving it up to Local Planning Authorities to consider the most appropriate densities for residential development in their areas. This means that for sites of particular sensitivity, densities may be reduced in order to protect the area's particular characteristics and to achieve a better integrated built form.

**Ross Town Plan** The demand for more affordable/social homes has been identified, particularly low cost starter homes and mid-range family homes. Up to date data on housing need is essential.

#### **4.14 How the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) / Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) have influenced the preferred option**

The recommendations of the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Appraisal have been taken into account and adjustments to the text have been made to ensure that the preferred options for Ross-on-Wye are consistent with the aims of sustainable development.

- The reference to the need for developer contributions to accommodate additional places at the local schools has been removed and replaced with a reference to contributions towards community facilities. This is to address the requirements of the wider community needs for example community facilities, schools and health facilities.
- A preamble outlining the economic and social character of Ross-on-Wye has been added to the beginning of the section.

- A reference to small scale employment sites has been added to the Preferred Spatial Policy Option to encourage this type of development while waiting for the Market Towns and Rural Areas Plan to be adopted.
- The SA requested a reference to standards of sustainable design but this has not been added to this policy as there will be a separate Core Strategy policy on sustainable design standards.

#### **4.15 Alternative options not taken forward and why**

##### **4.16 Allocate land to the south west of Ross for significant development**

This proposal was not taken forward due to the impact of a strategic allocation on the AONB and areas liable to flood. However, as around 150 new homes will need to be built on smaller non-strategic sites around Ross, there may be the opportunity to build in the south western part of the town where appropriate.

##### **4.17 Dispersed housing in/around Ross as smaller sites**

This proposal was discounted and the reasons have been discussed above.

##### **4.18 Option 1 of the Place Shaping Paper (Jan. 2010)**

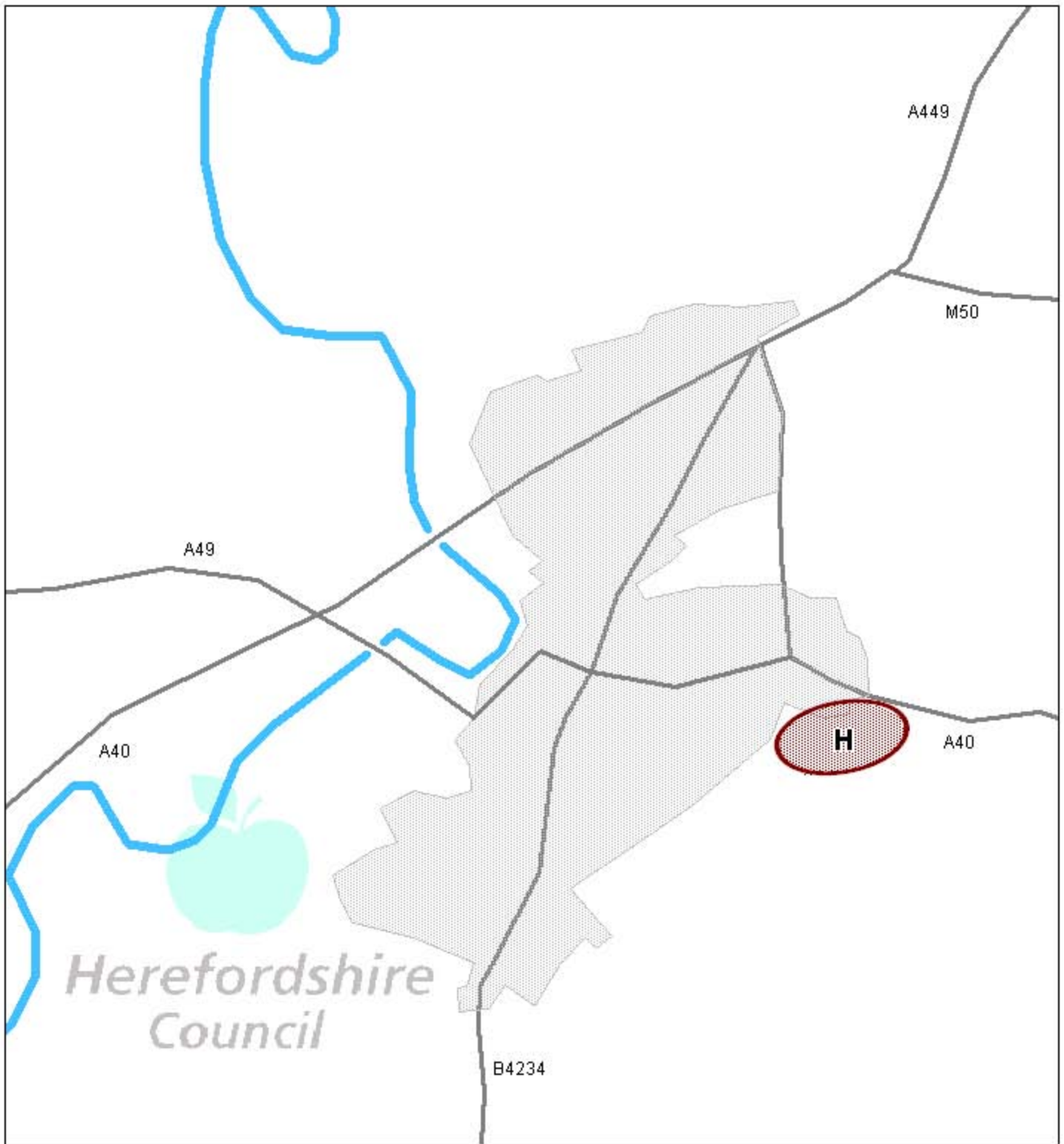
to focus all of the strategic housing growth (350 new dwellings) at Overross, was rejected since the area is clearly separated from the built up part of Ross-on-Wye on the other side of the A40. It would be difficult to ensure the provision of satisfactory links by sustainable modes of travel to the eastern part of the town. In addition, the landscape in this area is identified through expert studies as of medium to high sensitivity and is therefore vulnerable to change. There are no natural physical features which could form boundaries to the future large scale growth of Ross-on-Wye in this area. This is not considered to be favourable, in planning terms, when opportunities exist at Hildersley to provide a more sensitive and naturally limited form of development. These issues were raised a number of times during the Place Shaping Paper consultation.

#### **Your Views:**

**5. Do you agree with the preferred spatial policy option for Ross-on-Wye?  
Yes/No**

**6. If not, please explain which elements you don't agree with and why?**

Please complete your answers on page 34






## Preferred Option Ross on Wye



**NORTH**  
**Not to Scale**

### Key

-  Preferred Option for housing growth  
H - Hildersley
-  River
-  Roads

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### **Section 5.0 Consultation questions and response form**

When completed this page can be detached and sent to the contact details overleaf.

#### **Bromyard Questions**

**Your Views:**

**1. Do you agree with the preferred spatial policy option for Bromyard?**

**Yes/No**

**2. If not, please explain which elements you don't agree with and why?**

#### **Ledbury Questions**

**Your Views:**

**3. Do you agree with the preferred spatial policy option for Ledbury?**

**Yes/No**

**4. If not, please explain which elements you don't agree with and why?**

## Ross-on-Wye Questions

<p><b>Your Views:</b></p> <p><b>5. Do you agree with the preferred spatial policy option for Ross-on-Wye? Yes/No</b></p> <p><b>6. If not, please explain which elements you don't agree with and why?</b></p>
---

Please ensure you complete the following table:

<b>LDF reference number: (if you have one)</b>	
<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Organisation (if applicable)</b>	
<b>Address</b>	
<b>Postcode:</b>	
<b>E-mail:</b>	
<b>Telephone number:</b>	

**Thank you for taking the time to complete these questions.**

Please post it (no stamp required) to:

Local Development Framework  
Licence No. – RRJX-TLSH-SCYH  
Freepost, Forward Planning  
Herefordshire Council  
PO Box 4  
Plough Lane  
Hereford HR4 0XH

Response form can also be  
faxed to:

01432 383031