

# Agenda

## Cabinet

Date: **Thursday 16 December 2021**

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Time: **2.30 pm**

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Place: **Herefordshire Council Offices, Plough Lane, Hereford,  
HR4 0LE**

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Notes: Please note the time, date and venue of the meeting.

For any further information please contact:

**Sarah Buffrey**

Tel: (01432) 260176

Email: [sarah.buffrey@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.buffrey@herefordshire.gov.uk)

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If you would like help to understand this document, or would like it in another format, please call Sarah Buffrey on (01432) 260176 or e-mail [sarah.buffrey@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.buffrey@herefordshire.gov.uk) in advance of the meeting.

# **Agenda for the meeting of Cabinet**

## **Membership**

**Chairperson** Councillor David Hitchiner, Leader of the Council  
**Vice-Chairperson** Councillor Liz Harvey, Deputy Leader of the Council

**Councillor Ellie Chowns**  
**Councillor Pauline Crockett**  
**Councillor Gemma Davies**  
**Councillor John Harrington**  
**Councillor Diana Toynbee**  
**Councillor Ange Tyler**

## Agenda

		Pages
1.	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b></p> <p>To receive any apologies for absence.</p>	
2.	<p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b></p> <p>To receive declarations of interests in respect of Schedule 1, Schedule 2 or Other Interests from members of the committee in respect of items on the agenda.</p>	
3.	<p><b>MINUTES</b></p> <p>To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2021.</p>	11 - 28
<p><b>HOW TO SUBMIT QUESTIONS</b></p> <p><i>The deadline for submission of questions for this meeting is:</i></p> <p><i>9:30am on Monday 13 December 2021.</i></p> <p><i>Questions must be submitted to <a href="mailto:councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk">councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk</a>. Questions sent to any other address may not be accepted.</i></p> <p><i>Accepted questions and the response to them will be published as a supplement to the agenda papers prior to the meeting. Further information and guidance is available at <a href="https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/getinvolved">https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/getinvolved</a></i></p>		
4.	<p><b>QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC</b></p> <p>To receive questions from members of the public.</p>	
5.	<p><b>QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS</b></p> <p>To receive questions from councillors.</p>	
6.	<p><b>MARKET TOWN INVESTMENT PLANS</b></p> <p>To approve the Market Town Investment Plan (MTIP) for each of Herefordshire's market towns.</p>	29 - 222
7.	<p><b>GRANT ACCEPTANCE AND PURCHASE OF ACCOMMODATION TO MEET STRATEGIC HOUSING PRIORITIES, AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE RESTRICTIONS CAUSED BY COVID-19</b></p> <p>To accept a grant from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) via the Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme and the associated grant terms and conditions and to approve the acquisition of up to six properties from the open market.</p>	223 - 230





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We will review and update this guidance in line with Government advice and restrictions. Thank you for your help in keeping Herefordshire Council meetings safe.

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- Inspect background papers used in the preparation of public reports for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting. (A list of the background papers to a report is given at the end of each report). A background paper is a document on which the officer has relied in writing the report and which otherwise is not available to the public.
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- Have access to a list specifying those powers on which the Council have delegated decision making to their officers identifying the officers concerned by title. Information about councillors is available at [www.herefordshire.gov.uk/councillors](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/councillors)
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<http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/1597/hereford-city-bus-map-local-services->

## Guide to Cabinet

The Executive or Cabinet of the Herefordshire Council consists of a Leader and Deputy Leader and six other Cabinet Members each with their own individual programme area responsibilities. The current Cabinet membership is:

Cllr David Hitchiner (Leader) (Independents for Herefordshire)	Corporate Strategy and Budget
Cllr Liz Harvey (Deputy Leader) (Independents for Herefordshire)	Finance, Corporate Services and Planning
Cllr Diana Toynbee (The Green Party)	Children's and Family Services, and Young People's Attainment
Cllr Gemma Davies (Independents for Herefordshire)	Commissioning, Procurement and assets
Cllr Ellie Chowns (The Green Party)	Environment and Economy
Cllr Pauline Crockett (Independents for Herefordshire)	Health and Adult Wellbeing
Cllr Ange Tyler (Independents for Herefordshire)	Housing, regulatory services, and community safety
Cllr John Harrington (Independents for Herefordshire)	Infrastructure and Transport

The Cabinet's roles are:

- To consider the overall management and direction of the Council. Directed by the Leader of the Council, it will work with senior managers to ensure the policies of Herefordshire are clear and carried through effectively;
- To propose to Council a strategic policy framework and individual strategic policies;
- To identify priorities and recommend them to Council;
- To propose to Council the Council's budget and levels of Council Tax;
- To give guidance in relation to: policy co-ordination; implementation of policy; management of the Council; senior employees in relation to day to day implementation issues;
- To receive reports from Cabinet Members on significant matters requiring consideration and proposals for new or amended policies and initiatives;
- To consider and determine policy issues within the policy framework covering more than one programme area and issues relating to the implementation of the outcomes of monitoring reviews.

### Who attends cabinet meetings?

	Members of the cabinet, including the leader of the council and deputy leader – these are the decision makers, only members of the cabinet can vote on recommendations put to the meeting.
	Officers of the council – attend to present reports and give technical advice to cabinet members
	Chairpersons of scrutiny committees – attend to present the views of their committee if it has considered the item under discussion
	Political group leaders attend to present the views of their political group on the item under discussion. Other councillors may also attend as observers but are not entitled to take part in the discussion.



**The Seven Principles of Public Life  
(Nolan Principles)**

**1. Selflessness**

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

**2. Integrity**

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

**3. Objectivity**

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

**4. Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

**5. Openness**

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

**6. Honesty**

Holders of public office should be truthful.

**7. Leadership**

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.



Herefordshire Council

**Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held at Herefordshire Council Offices, Plough Lane, Hereford, HR4 0LE on Thursday 25 November 2021 at 2.30 pm**

**Cabinet Members Physically Present and voting:** Councillor David Hitchiner, Leader of the Council (Chairperson)  
Councillors Ellie Chowns, Gemma Davies, Diana Toynbee and Ange Tyler

**Cabinet Members in remote attendance** Councillor Liz Harvey, Deputy Leader of the Council (Vice-Chairperson)  
Councillors Pauline Crockett and John Harrington

*Cabinet members attending the meeting remotely, e.g. through video conferencing facilities, may not vote on any decisions taken.*

Group leaders in attendance Councillors Toni Fagan, Jonathan Lester and William Wilding

Scrutiny chairpersons in attendance Councillors Elissa Swinglehurst, Jonathan Lester and Phillip Howells

Officers in attendance: Chief Executive, Acting deputy chief executive - chief finance officer and Interim Head of Legal Services

**64. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies from members of the cabinet.

**65. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**66. MINUTES**

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 October 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

**67. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Pages 7 - 16)**

Questions received and responses given are attached as appendix 1 to the minutes.

**68. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS (Pages 17 - 18)**

Questions received and responses given are attached as appendix 2 to the minutes.

**69. WASTE MANAGEMENT REVIEW – WASTE COLLECTION**

The cabinet member commissioning, procurement and assets introduced the item. She offered thanks to officers for their work on the proposal, to bin operatives for their hard work, particularly during the pandemic, and to all those who responded to the consultation.

The interim programme director – waste initiative and the head of environment, climate emergency and waste services summarised the key points of the report.

Cabinet members discussed the report and highlighted that:

- Communication was essential in implementing the new collection arrangements, the council currently had very few issues with waste collection and wanted to maintain this standard;

- Information would be provided to households on what was to be collected each week, the use of technology would be investigated to assist in this area;
- The council had 2 years to prepare and investigate ways to mitigate challenges such as those facing residents in flats or with limited storage space;
- There should be an emphasis on minimising food waste, while ensuring that the waste which was produced was collected regularly so it did not become a health hazard.

Group leaders and representatives also thanked bin operatives for their work and generally supported the proposals. There was a request for assurance that separation of recycling would lead to higher recycling rates and clarity on where the recycling generated in Herefordshire went. It was recognised that the proposed changes would have to be accompanied by a behaviour change campaign to reduce the amount of waste produced.

**It was resolved that:**

- (a) The Council supports residents to increase recycling by adopting the new waste collection model as outlined in this report with a view to being fully operational in November 2023. This includes:**
  - a. The introduction of a new two weekly garden waste collection service;**
  - b. The introduction of a new weekly food collection service;**
  - c. The adoption of a twin stream recycling service to enable residents to further segregate recyclable materials and;**
  - d. To adopt a three weekly residual collection model.**
- (b) A further report is brought back to Cabinet in July 2022 outlining the capital costs that it will be recommended are added to the council's 2022/23 capital programme to ensure successful implementation of the preferred model in terms of fleet, waste containers, equipment and depot alterations;**
- (c) A further report is brought back to cabinet in July 2022 detailing service specification and seeking permission to commence the tendering process for the new service;**
- (d) Authority is delegated to the Section 151 Officer to take all operational decisions to implement the above recommendations**

## **70. WASTE MANAGEMENT REVIEW – WASTE DISPOSAL**

The cabinet member commissioning, procurement and assets introduced the report. She highlighted the intention to extend the current contract for 5 years and the move to reduce waste to landfill to just 1% in 2022. Work would take place with local community groups to try and stop waste going into landfill.

The interim programme director – waste initiative and the head of environment, climate emergency and waste services summarised the key points of the report. They explained that better separation of recycling as set out the waste collection proposals previously discussed would result in more income for recycled material which would offset some of the increased costs in disposal. The proposed 5 year extension of the current contract would give the council time to investigate options and how to make best use of the facilities available. The council would have control over its recycling including where material was sent for processing.



The cabinet member thanked colleagues at Worcestershire County Council and the district councils within Worcestershire. She noted the continued opportunities to work together and learn from each other.

Cabinet members discussed the report and noted that the wording of the variation agreement was under discussion but the contractor understood what was expected. The proposal would generate a financial savings for both Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

Group leaders and representatives commented on the proposals. There was general support for the proposed extension of the contract. In respect of the energy from waste plant it was noted that this appeared to be used properly but the council would keep opportunities under review and explore new technologies such as carbon capture as they became viable.

Concerns were expressed about an increase in fly tipping. It was stressed that this was a criminal offence and that if waste was traced back to the producer of the waste the council would seek to prosecute. Households were urged to do due diligence on anyone offering to dispose of waste.

**It was resolved that:**

- a) Cabinet agrees that the current position within the Parameters set out in Appendix 1 represents an acceptable position for the council to progress Mercia Waste Management Limited's ("Mercia") proposals for extending the duration of the Waste Management Service Contract ("WMSC") for a period of five years until 11 January 2029 by entering into a variation of the existing WMSC**
- b) Subject to recommendation (a), that the Section 151 Officer following consultation with the Service Director for Transport, Environment & Waste be authorised to negotiate the form of a variation to the existing WMSC with Mercia to put into effect Mercia's proposals:**
  - 1) to extend the duration of the WMSC by 5 years provided that the Variation is in compliance with the Financial, Contractual and Technical Parameters as set out in Appendix 1**
  - 2) to vary the WMSC to achieve the council's preferred waste collection model as determined by Cabinet in response to the accompanying Cabinet Report 'Waste Service Review - Waste Collection'**
  - 3) to accelerate the reduction of municipal waste to landfill and achieve a maximum of 1% to landfill starting in 2022 at a cost of £120k per annum until the extension commences in March 2024**
- c) Cabinet, having regard also to any further report from the Section 151 Officer on the details of the council's position as potential providers of appropriate funding for the project, to:**
  - i. amend its Treasury Policy Strategy and associated Treasury Management Statements to reflect the extended loan arrangement in the extension period;**
  - ii. to authorise the Section 151 Officer to conclude all financial due diligence requirements remaining with the parameters stated in Appendix 1;**
  - iii. amend the Medium Term Financial plan (MTFP) assumptions to reflect the WMSC variation as appropriate;**
- d) Cabinet authorises the expenditure of up to £75k from the council's waste reserve and delegates authority to the Service Director Highways,**

**Environment and Waste to commission a future options paper and to develop a capital business case for future site and facilities requirements beyond the proposed extension period; and**

- e) **The Section 151 Officer be authorised to update the Joint Working Agreement between Worcestershire County Council (WCC) and Herefordshire Council to reflect the extended term of the WMSC and future arrangements between WCC and the Council.**

#### **71. QUARTER 2 BUDGET & PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The cabinet member finance, corporate services and planning introduced the report and highlighted the key points. The projected budget outturn was noted as an underspend of £152k. The impact of covid on service delivery continued with not all areas eligible for grant funding. The capital programme was broadly on track and the re-profiling that had taken place resulted in a saving on the projected costs of borrowing. Some other planned savings were proving difficult to achieve.

Cabinet members discussed the report and highlighted key achievements and challenges from the second quarter. It was noted that the council had a legal obligation to balance its books but central government did not. Inadequate funding from central government led to a need to deliver savings.

Group leaders and representatives presented their comments on the report. Points highlighted included that:

- the council needed to be realistic about the level of savings that could be achieved, particularly in children's services with the improvement process currently underway;
- investment in the Hereford Enterprise Zone was welcomed but debate continued as to whether a southern link road should be constructed;
- communities needed support to recover from covid and a number of positive things were coming out of this;
- it was unfortunate that savings were required but teams were to be congratulated for achieving them.

**It was resolved that:**

- a) **Cabinet, having reviewed the performance and financial forecast for year 2021/22 as set out in appendices A – F, has not identified any additional actions to be considered to achieve future improvements.**

#### **72. REVIEW OF THE STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (SCI)**

The cabinet member finance, corporate services and planning introduced the report. She highlighted the importance of engagement with communities during the update of the council's Local Plan. The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was a legal requirement, the current document had been adopted in 2017 and it was now due to be updated.

Cabinet members discussed the report. It was noted that determination of individual applications was based on the policy framework, currently the Core Strategy adopted in 2015, and underlying evidence base. It was important that communities responded to the consultation processes that would be taking place in 2022 to update these policies and evidence base documents.

Group leaders and representatives presented their comments and queries. In response to points raised it was noted that:

- General scrutiny committee wanted to review the planning service in January;

- The SCI was an outward facing document and the language used reflected this, more detail on the role of councillors was set out in other documents;
- The council now had a near seven year land supply which gave a buffer and helped to resist unplanned developments;
- It was important to get the policy framework right and include the right amount of flexibility, however some changes would need to be made at a national level.

**It was resolved that:**

- a) The revised Herefordshire Council Statement of Community Involvement at appendix A as amended in line with the table in appendix B be recommended to Council for adoption.**

*The meeting adjourned at 4:42pm and resumed at 4:50pm.*

### **73. MAYLORD ORCHARDS INTERIM MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The cabinet member commissioning, procurement and assets introduced the report. She highlighted previous decisions to bring support services into Hoople.

The strategic property services manager summarised the report. He explained the strategy and improvement plan for management of the centre. A new centre manager had recently been appointed.

Cabinet members welcomed the report and were pleased to see plans to work with smaller businesses and charities.

Group leaders and representatives presented their comments. There was general support for the strategy and in response to points raised it was noted that:

- There was a lot of interest in units in the centre despite the challenges which were facing every city centre, the council was working through plans with those businesses currently in arrears on how this could be repaid;
- the audit and governance committee had received a report on 24 November which noted the current volatility in the value of commercial and retail property and there was an overall downward valuation in the council's retail properties, however the council had already owned the freehold of the centre when it bought the long lease and had combined these two elements;
- no projects would be negatively impacted by the stronger towns programme, it was expected that the projects supported would attract additional footfall and deliver social value.

**It was resolved that:**

- a) Cabinet approve the adoption of the Interim Management Plan for Maylord Orchards Centre;**
- b) The S151 Officer in consultation with the Director of Economy and Place and following consultation with the cabinet member commissioning, procurement and assets has delegated authority to amend and update the plan as required.**

### **74. SECTION 106 PORTFOLIO OF WORKS - DELIVERY PROPOSALS**

The cabinet member finance, corporate services and planning introduced the report. She explained the purpose of Section 106 contributions and the approach taken by the council as set out in the adopted supplementary planning document. An audit had taken place to confirm that there was adequate oversight and this had identified a need for

more comprehensive reporting, consistent governance processes and consistent recording.

The council had previously approved flexibility to forward fund projects ahead of contributions being received and there should not be delay in getting infrastructure in place to support new housing. The focus would be those priorities already agreed in the delivery plan and public realm plans. This report set out the process for taking this forward and spending the outstanding monies.

Cabinet members discussed the report and confirmed that, where there was flexibility in the legal agreement associated with a contribution, the updated Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) would be used to guide the use of these funds. Parish and town councils could also use the JSNA to inform their requests for infrastructure which would inform discussions with developers.

Group leaders and representatives welcomed the report. The need to get projects moving was recognised and it was noted that the council intended to make use of local contractors where and when possible.

**It was resolved that:**

- a) Cabinet approves the procurement route and implementation of the new delivery proposals and processes and expenditure of up to £9.3m of Section 106 monies, including resources required, to deliver Section 106 schemes;**
- b) Cabinet delegates to the Section 151 Officer to take all operational decisions relating to the above recommendations following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate Service and Planning, the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Transport and the Cabinet Member for Children's and Family Services.**

The meeting ended at 5.25 pm

**Chairperson**

## PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO CABINET – 25 NOVEMBER 2021

### Question 1

**From: Ms S Newbert, Walford**

**To: Cabinet member, infrastructure and transport**

With the current state of our rivers in Herefordshire so concerning to those of us who live by it and see the deterioration daily. I would like to ask the question who is responsible for the water quality of our rivers and who is responsible for informing the public when the waters are unsafe for bathing and watersports.

### Response

Thank you for your question and I agree we should all be very concerned about the quality of our rivers and other natural resources. With regard to the question about who is responsible for the water quality of our rivers, in simple terms it is the Environment Agency (EA) on the English side of the border and National Resources Wales (NRW) on the Welsh.

However, all of us who use or live near to a river or stream have a responsibility for water quality. For example, land owners are responsible for managing their land, through good practice and permitting, so as not to cause damage to water quality through manure, chemical or soil pollution and water companies have a responsibility to operate their Treatment Plants so that they only discharge treated waste into a river catchment strictly within the conditions of their permits. The EA and NRW issue and/or monitor those permits.

In special conservation areas such as the Lugg catchment, Herefordshire Council also has a responsibility through its planning function to ensure that they are certain that any new developments do not increase the level of phosphate pollution entering the catchment. The Council is also working to create Integrated Wetlands which remove phosphate pollution from Water Treatment Plants, most of this reduction will be used to enable new development in the Lugg catchment but some of it will be used to improve river quality.

The EA and NRW have a responsibility to monitor and report on water quality. They are also responsible, as already mentioned, for providing permits and regulating businesses, farms and homes that discharge water or waste water into rivers. The Environment agency also provide advice and enforce the rules about how land can best be used on farms so as to minimise detrimental impact water quality.

Natural England also have a role as a statutory consultee in the Council's planning process. We need to remember, as already mentioned, that the River Wye and the Lugg are located in two countries which are subject to different rules about how land is used. Natural Resource Wales (which combines the work that the Environment Agency and Natural England do on the English side of the border) has similar functions to Natural England but the rules they work by a different.

Even Herefordshire residents have a part to play in improving river quality too for example by not dropping litter in or near rivers and by carefully choosing and using the right angling equipment.

As you can see from the answer, although the Environment Agency has ultimate responsibility for the rivers in our county in terms of national governance, we all need to play our part and work together. In Herefordshire this is all brought together through a voluntary partnership called the Nutrient Management Board who keep oversight of a voluntary plan to improve river quality.

We think that there is more that can be done to improve water quality for everyone who uses or lives near our rivers and Herefordshire Council will continue to work with all our partners and to lobby government very hard too to ensure the much needed improvement that is needed in our rivers.

Turning lastly to your specific point about swimming and bathing. Councils have a duty to provide designated bathing areas but where they voluntarily choose to provide them then they must provide information to bathers using designated areas. Herefordshire has chosen not to adopt any designated swimming or bathing areas but will continue to work very hard with all our partners to improve river quality.

*Post meeting note:*

*Through a motion to Council on the 8<sup>th</sup> October the Council is exploring whether to designate the Wye and Lugg bathing water. See [Agenda for Council on Friday 8 October 2021, 10.00 am - Herefordshire Council](#) for full details.*

## Question 2

**From: Anonymous (name and address supplied)**

**To: cabinet member, children and families**

One year ago Cabinet responded to concerns over the Council's failure to learn safeguarding lessons in connection with peer-on-peer sexual abuse cases by commissioning an independent external review into

- why lessons from the CSO report were not shared with schools in 2017
- why the 2019 review of peer-on-peer abuse cases failed to mention the CSO report (Cabinet, 26 Nov 2020, Item 8)

One year on, there are still no answers. Campaigners who were praised at CYP Scrutiny (15 Sept 2020) have lost all confidence in the independence of the investigation and a key witness has as a result recently withdrawn from the process.

How is it that legal services, whose actions are under the spotlight, were allowed to draft the terms of reference for the review and have been involved in managing the contact between the investigating solicitors and witnesses?

## Response

The council has already commissioned solicitors to review the circumstances regarding the circulation of a report produced by Create Safer Organisations (CSO) for a third party in 2017. This work is in progress with a full review of documentation and conducting

interviews. The council is grateful of the participation and co-operation from different parties, but appreciate personal choices of those who do not wish to take part. This is an independent process.

On 15 September 2020 the children and young people scrutiny committee considered the Peer on Peer Review Herefordshire MASH 2017 - 2019 report and made recommendations to the Executive.

On 26th November 2020, Cabinet approved the executive response to the CYP recommendations; the link to this can be found at <http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?Ild=50035813>.

The Executive Response to recommendation 2 was 'Why the CSO Report was not circulated to all Schools will require investigation'.

The Cabinet approved that the owner for that Executive Response as the Chief Finance Officer and Deputy Chief Executive, who became the commissioning officer for the investigation. It was agreed with the Head of Legal that this investigation would be carried out by an external law firm as they were known for handling complex and sensitive investigations in the public sector and local government. In consultation with the Commissioning Officer the terms of reference were then drafted by Legal Services and agreed with the Independent investigator. The council has produced guidance to schools on peer on peer abuse that can be found on the council's website ([www.herefordshire.gov.uk/schools-education/bullying-1](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/schools-education/bullying-1))

*Additional response published 25 November*

To protect the interests of the council and to ensure solicitors were acting within professional conduct rules only those individuals in Legal Services who were not employed by the Council at the time of the CSO Report in 2017 or the issues leading to the CSO Report were involved in the drafting of the terms of reference and involved in managing the contact between the investigating solicitors and witnesses.

### **Supplementary question**

The response to my question does not address the concerns that I raised. The concerns are as follows:

- It is completely inappropriate for legal services to set the terms of reference for an external investigation into their own actions and inactions since 2017 to the current date
- It is completely inappropriate for legal services to be managing the contact between witnesses and the external investigators.
- The written response confirms that legal services did draft the terms of reference for this so called independent investigation and the written response does not deny that legal services managed the contact between investigators and key witnesses.

- In the written response the assertion is made that this is an independent process. Merely making that statement does not make it an independent process. Zero evidence has been offered to address the lack of independence so this claim is both meaningless and insults the intelligence of both members and the public.

My supplementary question is this:

Which members of the Cabinet have confidence in the independence of this investigation?

In response to the answer given to the supplementary:

“The point is not whether the people employed in 2017 were employed at the time of the publication of the CSO report. There has been lots of action and inaction from then to date to suppress information getting to scrutiny about the CSO report so anybody involved in any aspect of that is compromised. I believe that the person in charge of drafting those terms of reference is one of those people.

If you're losing key witnesses because they don't believe it is independent how can you confidently have the full picture of what happened?”

### **Response from leader of the council**

The leader stated he was confident that when the process was completed the report would be full and fair. Cabinet members would examine whether or not there was true independence and a written response would be provided.

### **Question 3**

**From: Ms B Shore, Hereford**

**To: cabinet member, finance, corporate services and planning**

I submitted a question to CYP Scrutiny committee on 7th September, followed up with a supplementary. The officer present could not answer. One month later, after an email to democratic services, they replied, "I will follow up on the response to your supplementary question as requested and provide an update on when a response can be provided." I have heard nothing, despite two further emails asking when I might expect an answer. It is 9 weeks since my question and 5 weeks since the above reply. Public accountability is essential to local democracy. It is a serious matter when public questions are ignored. It should be a given that a simple question will be answered. Does the Cabinet have a policy in place to ensure that public questions are answered promptly and that emails are not ignored?

### **Response**

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.



First may I apologise personally to you for the way in which your question has been handled, and also for the council's failure to communicate effectively with you regarding the reasons for the delay in providing you with a written response to your September scrutiny question.

I am disappointed that you have needed to submit a further question to this cabinet meeting in order to finally elicit the outstanding response.

I am advised that the response issued this week apologises for the delay you have experienced. I understand that it also states that the council should have kept you updated and should specifically have advised you that delay created by seeking detailed information from the Children's Service was further exacerbated by there being a current staff shortfall in our Democratic Service team which normally oversees the public questions process.

The council's constitution states clearly that a written response will normally be provided within 10 working days of a meeting taking place. This did not happen in your case, and whilst you have been given reasons for this, they are in no way offered up as excuses. We can and must do better.

I am sorry for the delay you encountered on this occasion. I hope and expect that this will not happen again.

The council is currently reviewing its process for public questions and this will be considered by the council in the new year as part of the ongoing and gallingly glacial governance review. I would like to take this opportunity to assure you that I am taking a very close interest in the Democratic Services and Governance Support aspects of this review. Hopefully we can all look forward to sustained service improvements in the New Year.

Thank you for your continued interest in council services and in particular the performance of our Children's Directorate. We welcome your and others' challenge of us when our performance falls below the standards you expect of us and, indeed, below those we set for ourselves

#### **Question 4**

**From: Mr P McKay, Leominster**

**To: cabinet member, infrastructure and transport**

Thank you for your written reply to my question of 28 October. The full definition of C.R.F & C.R.B. on the Schedule of Information raised by Parish Meetings, Approved by Rural District Councils, and Accepted by former Herefordshire County Council is "Public Carriage Road or Cart Road or Green Lane mainly used Footpath – C.R.F., or Bridleway – C.R.B.", but these were shown by Herefordshire County Council on Definitive Map as F.P. or B.R. without any explanation to detriment of other users. So I ask if as part of the review of best practice you would consider identifying these as prospective Restricted Byways, with the Schedules of Information having been digitised but not made viewable online the onus being with yourselves rather than the Parishes/Public to address this issue by 2026?

## Response

The council is not aware of any errors in managing the Parish Council's, Rural District and accepted by the County Council as part of the historical PRow submissions.

The information submitted by parish council is available to view at the HARC council offices in Rotherwas, when resources allow and if feasible, we will look into providing the information on the website.

The resource required to review would be significant and would divert limited resources from other priorities such as DMMO applications. If we are made aware of anomalies, we will manage the enquiry as we do with the Definitive Map Modification application process.

## Question 5

**From: Mr A Hill, Llangarron**

**To: cabinet member, commissioning, procurement and assets**

The new Waste Management Strategy review is laudable and focuses on many of the important issues.

However I strongly believe that there should be equal focus on the necessary evil of disposable nappies.

8 million disposable nappies go to landfill every day in the UK:

- That's 3 billion per year
- That's 500,000 tons per year
- That's more than 6.5% of domestic unrecyclable waste
- That's 500 years to rot down giving off methane
- Yet only 8% of parents use re-useable nappies, so clearly parents prefer the convenience of disposables

There is a potential solution, used throughout Wales.

Nappicycle provide bins and pick up nappies from the roadside. 100% is recycled. Councils do this alongside a cash promotion for mothers to buy re-useable nappies.

The new strategy writes of a promotion of re-useable nappies only, can we look into the 'welsh solution'?

## Response

Thank you for your positive feedback regarding the direction of the new Waste Management Strategy and question regarding disposable nappies.

As you have mentioned the new waste strategy sets out our plans to promote the use of reusable nappies throughout Herefordshire. We will be encouraging parents to use reusable nappies through a communications campaign on social media, via our website and by providing information to parents requesting larger general rubbish bins through our service. We will also be working to build upon our relationship with our local nappy

library group, utilising their expertise to provide a platform for practical advice for parents and offering workshops and promotional events.

We are currently assessing an additional proposal to consider introducing a financial incentive (cash back scheme) for the purchase of reusable nappy kits, or funding the purchase and distribution of the kits via the council or our local group. If introduced we believe these measure will help to increase the use of reusable nappies across Herefordshire.

Whilst it is very interesting to hear of the work going on with several Welsh local authorities and Nappicycle, our research shows no local authorities providing a 3 weekly collection for general rubbish in England offer a separate nappy collection. A recently proposed scheme at one of these local authorities was met with a very limited response by just two residents.

The separate collection of nappies for recycling is not an option we will be immediately considering as part of the proposed change to the collection service form 2023, but should the need ever arise we will keep it in mind through any future service development.

### **Supplementary question**

After Food waste, nappies and adult hygiene products are the biggest component of residual waste at around 12%.

Uptake of re-usable nappies is unfortunately proven to be no more than 10% of parents. 19 of 22 Welsh Local Authorities are doing or have signed up to recycle disposable nappies and adult hygiene products.

Whilst a little more expensive it diverts so much from landfill, and allows for residual waste to be collected even less frequently.

A big win for the environment and Herefordshire County Council.

Can the Cabinet please confirm that they have looked into the recycling of disposable nappies and AHP's within their review?

### **Response from cabinet member**

We are looking into this within the review. The decision today is not the end of the journey but just the start. We have approximately a year and a half to go through a number of different trials and look at best practice in other local authorities. I will provide updates when we have more information on what options we are taking forward.

### **Question 6**

**From: Anonymous (Name and address supplied)**

**To: cabinet member, children and families**

Why are Council officers withholding from Cabinet Members and from campaigners the name of the QC commissioned to provide legal advice on the issue of protecting victims of peer-on-peer sexual assault from further contact in school or college with the alleged perpetrator?

### **Response**

Peter Oldham QC from 11 Kings Bench Walk chambers has previously given external legal advice to the council and this advice is not disclosable because it is legally privileged and the council is not going to waive that. It is not a document open for public inspection.

### **Supplementary questions**

Peter Oldham's legal advice informed an answer to a public question to CYP Scrutiny in August. The question asked when it would be legal for a school to leave a rape victim in class with the alleged perpetrator.

The written answer to this question was withdrawn the day after publication. The answer had completely failed to take into account the implications for schools of the Human Rights Act and Equality Act.

This was an extraordinary omission since the Department for Education's guidance clearly states that schools must take into account the duties under both Acts.

Given these circumstances, it is a strange choice by Legal Services to go back to the same QC for further advice, particularly after Members asked that a different QC was commissioned.

How comfortable do Cabinet Members feel with Legal Services' decision making on this matter?

### **Response from cabinet member**

The cabinet member confirmed that she did personally have confidence in the process, in which a well-respected external expert was commissioned to look into the council's internal processes and the cabinet member's priority was that that work is effective and makes the council's decision making better. A detailed written response would be provided.

### **Question 7**

**From: Mr C Perryman, Hereford**

**To: cabinet member, commissioning, procurement and assets**

Can I ask what cities the council have looked at and which they have visited to further best practice?

Models are already up and running in many areas which could be adopted or modified to allow us to recycle more.

## Response

As part of the cross party Strategic Waste Review undertaken by General Scrutiny Committee, members and officers undertook a review of the service models at numerous other local authorities to ensure that the review considered and learnt from best practice.

Here the task and finish group considered a range of services provided elsewhere, focussing on those local authorities that have similar rural characteristics to Herefordshire but also including local authorities that:

- Are Unitary Councils like Herefordshire
- Services are already aligned to expected future requirements
- Are in the top 10 Unitary Councils in terms of recycling performance
- Have rural Characteristics (only Milton Keynes has been excluded)
- Report costs less than those of Herefordshire Council

The local authorities included within the review included:

- East Riding
- Dorset Waste Partnership
- Cheshire West and Chester
- Isle of Wight
- North Somerset Council
- Bath & North East Somerset
- South Gloucestershire Council
- Rutland County Council
- North Lincolnshire.

The analysis showed that all three main types of recycling collection methodologies used in the UK are represented in the top performing (for recycling) Unitary Councils. More details on this are available on pages 13 - 15 of Appendix 2 to the Waste Service Review – Waste Collection report (item 6).

<https://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/documents/s50095887/Appendix%20%20-%20Task%20and%20Finish%20Group%20Report%20Sept%202020.pdf>

Visits had been planned to Monmouth and Cheshire West and Chester to allow members of the T&F group to experience the operational elements of service provision using kerbside boxes, reusable bags, food waste collections and garden waste collections. Unfortunately these had to be cancelled due to COVID restrictions.

Officers working with the T&F group shared their experiences of the services provided in Rutland County Council, North Lincolnshire Council and Brent Council in London.



## COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS TO CABINET – 25 NOVEMBER 2021

### Question 1

**From: Councillor Jeremy Milln, Central Ward**

**To: Cabinet member, infrastructure and highways**

In the 20 months since Council passed Cllr Norman's 20mph Motion (6th March 2020), numerous local authorities – both urban and rural - such as Hampshire, Calderdale, Cheshire West & Chester, Scottish Borders, Lancashire and Merton have moved ahead with area wide adoption, recognising the benefits for public health, active travel, and the reduction of accidents and emissions. Edinburgh's 20mph-based safer streets plan is a prime example of how many are moving forward with this popular and progressive policy <https://www.livingstreetsedinburgh.org.uk/2021/11/17/slower-speeds-safer-streets-for-edinburgh-an-action-plan/>

The Welsh Government's 20mph steering group has invited cross-border collaboration from us and we may slip stream a scheme in Hay extending into neighbouring Cusop. However may I ask what our own future programme is for area-wide 20mph given the results of our 20 month period of investigation?

### **Response**

I support the ideal of aiming for a lower speeds in towns and villages across Herefordshire, although, I have to be realistic in that the level of resources the council has. Regrettably, we do not have the resources to implement fully engineered self-enforcing speed limits across the County.

The introduction of area wide 20mph limits without traffic calming as suggested by the 2020 Council motion is potentially a more affordable option for the Council to implement. Unfortunately, due to current resource constraints officers have not been able to progress an investigation into area wide 20mph limits. However, officers are working with colleagues from Powys on a 20 mph limits at Cusop (Hay on Wye) and Presteigne and we are also implementing a 20mph limit at Pembridge at the end of February 2022.

This will allow us to evaluate the effects at a local level, as the national 20mph Research Study by Atkins, AECOM and Professor Mike Maher (UCL) published by the DfT in November 2018 shows that the outcome of signed limits whilst positive and worthwhile, may not be as significant as communities might expect. The study found:

- Public support for 20mph (signed only) limits but concern about non-compliance
- Minor changes in driven speeds: median speed fell 0.7mph in residential areas and 0.9mph in city centre areas
- Faster drivers reduced speed more: 1.1mph and 1.6mph respectively (85th %ile)
- Road characteristics have a much larger impact on driven speeds than whether the road has a 30mph or 20mph limit
- No significant change in short term in collisions and casualties in the majority of case studies
- The majority of people have not noticed a reduction in the speed of vehicles, and do not perceive there to be fewer vehicles driving at excessive speeds

- Small increase in use of active travel modes; mode shift cannot be determined from data.

Notwithstanding the above, I feel that a rolling programme of area wide 20 mph limits without traffic calming in our towns and major villages could be very beneficial for our communities especially as advances in vehicle technology such as Intelligent Speed Assistance system (ISA) are likely to increase the levels of compliance with speed limits.

Therefore, I have asked officers to prioritise commissioning a study to identify the potential outcomes, practicality, and costs of introducing a rolling programme 20 mph speed limits across the county, as signed only limits, from the 2022 Public Realm Annual Plan so that an informed decision can be made on whether or not it is practical and value for money to take the project forward.

### **Supplementary question**

I thank Councillor Harrington for his reply confirming that he will ask the executive to investigate area wide 20 mph as agreed by Council following Cllr Norman's motion 20 months ago. However many would say we have already enough evidence and experience to proceed as other local authorities are doing. The National 20's Plenty Organisation 20's Plenty for Us (20splenty.org) have, at no cost, kindly offered to run a briefing/training session for officers and members to explain the practicalities and costs. Would Cllr Harrington agree to this?

### **Response from cabinet member**

The cabinet member confirmed that the council was commissioning a piece of work to look at this. He did not agree that there was already enough experience and evidence and stressed that any work done on speed limits needed to be done in an evidential and process-driven way. He agreed that the national 20s plenty organisation was fantastic and would take up their offer to help the council's officers and members explore the practicalities and costs.





## Market Town Investment Plans

**Meeting: Cabinet**

**Meeting date: Thursday 16 December 2021**

**Report by: Cabinet member environment and economy;**

### **Classification**

Open

### **Decision type**

Key

This is a key decision because it is likely to be significant having regard to: the strategic nature of the decision; and / or whether the outcome will have an impact, for better or worse, on the amenity of the community or quality of service provided by the authority to a significant number of people living or working in the locality (two or more wards) affected.

Notice has been served in accordance with Part 3, Section 9 (Publicity in Connection with Key Decisions) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

### **Wards affected**

Bromyard Bringsty; Bromyard West; Kington; Ledbury North; Ledbury South; Ledbury West; Leominster East; Leominster North & Rural; Leominster South; Leominster West; Ross East; Ross North; Ross West;

### **Purpose**

To approve the Market Town Investment Plan (MTIP) for each of Herefordshire's market towns. Through local engagement each MTIP identifies the vision for the future economic development of the town together with a programme of potential projects that support the delivery of the vision. To approve next steps in the development of business projects that have been identified and prioritised by stakeholders as part of the MTIP review process in order to seek the funding from the most appropriate source.

## Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) **The market town investment plans (MTIPs) in appendices 1 to 5 to the report are approved and adopted as providing direction for the identification of future economic development projects in the market towns;**
- b) **The MTIPs be used to guide the council’s capital investment in market towns, which will support the economic recovery and development of the market towns; and**
- c) **The Director for Economy and Place, following consultation with the Section 151 officer and the Cabinet member for Environment and Economy is delegated authority to take all operational decisions required to implement the above recommendations.**

## Alternative options

1. The council could decide not to approve the MTIPs. This option is not recommended due to the loss of an opportunity to both support the economic growth of the Herefordshire market towns, as well as the loss of development of employment land and potential loss to co-ordinate investment which could delay the council’s COVID-19 recovery plan and risks not meeting the objectives of the council’s County Plan.
2. The council could decide to not take forward the development of projects identified as potentially suitable for funding. However, this is not recommended as the need for additional employment land in the market towns, identified in the Core Strategy (2011 to 2031)<sup>1</sup> has not been met by the market. The projects identified by local stakeholders through the development of each MTIP offer the most likely schemes to start to meet the requirement for employment land in the market towns.

## Key considerations

3. The market towns are a key part of the Herefordshire economy and have an important role to play in the economic development of the county. The County Plan 2020 to 2024 recognises the important role of the towns and states “*Our ambition is for Herefordshire to be an exemplar of 21st century rural living where market towns and rural communities are properly valued and recognised for the contributions they make to the success of the county*”<sup>2</sup>. The Plan further states “*We want to emphasise the critical role the market towns and villages play in Herefordshire’s economy and we will ensure high quality employment land, business space and business support is made available throughout the county*”.
4. In support of this strategic aim, the council’s corporate Delivery Plan 2020 to 2022 includes the following action EC2.2: Develop & implement Market Town Economic Development Investment Plans for each of the five market towns

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<sup>1</sup> Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011 to 2031, adopted 16 October 2015

<sup>2</sup> Herefordshire Council County Plan 2020 to 2024, February 2020

(Leominster, Ross-on-Wye, Ledbury, Bromyard, Kington) to support recovery, growth and jobs.

5. In September 2020, the council commissioned Rose Regeneration to develop, through local engagement, 'bottom up' Market Town Economic Development Investment Plans for each of the five market towns: Leominster; Ross-on-Wye; Ledbury; Bromyard; and Kington.
6. The aim of the commission was to: *“develop a coherent set of investment plans through local engagement with market town councils and stakeholders to identify a longer term vision for the growth of the towns to enable sustainable economic development to meet the towns’ visions.”*<sup>3</sup>
7. Each MTIP is underpinned by an evidence base indicating the economic situation in each town, and is based on extensive local stakeholder engagement. Each MTIP identifies a wide range of potential pipeline projects to support economic development and delivery of each town’s vision. An indication of the impact of each potential project was analysed using the theory of change and, where appropriate, the MTIP identifies potential sources of funding, including: opportunities for external grant funding, institutional funding, or council funding. The MTIPs will, therefore, guide capital investment in market towns and support their economic recovery and development.
8. Overall, the development of the MTIPs has highlighted that there has been a long-term lack of investment in the five market towns with the suggestion that most require significant enhancement to infrastructure, public realm, shop front/ building etc. in creating the conditions for growth. Establishing a clear strategic rationale, local evidence base, and identification of prioritised projects with local stakeholders means the county is now well placed to seek support through future rounds of government funding, such as the Levelling up Funds, UK Shared Prosperity Funding or Future Towns Funding.
9. The council is committed to working with local partners to help take forward the projects, seeking the funds required including external grants and council funding. Subject to approval of the plans, the council will identify a lead member of the Economic Development Team to work with each town in identifying sources of, and applying for, potential grant funds to support the implementation of the MTIPs.
10. The MTIPs aim to increase the overall level of inward investment accessible to the market towns beyond that available through the council. This is achieved by these plans providing a firm foundation for parish and community-led applications for grants to funding bodies beyond the reach of the council. The vision and objectives in the plans will provide an evidence base and clear context for such grant schemes, showing how each project will contribute to the economic development of the town and improving the likelihood that such applications will succeed. The council is committed to using the MTIPs to support these parish and community-led grant applications.

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<sup>3</sup> CONSULTANCY AGREEMENT between HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL and ROSE REGENERATION LTD For the provision of Consultancy Services for Market Towns Investment Plans; 22 September 2020

11. A key aspect of economic development in the market towns is the availability of employment land. The table below shows a summary of the delivery of additional employment land in the market towns versus the requirement identified in the Core Strategy up to 2031.

Market Town	Additional employment land requirement	Additional employment land (sites over 1Ha)	Permission / planned development	Impacted by Nutrient Management Plan****
Leominster	10 Ha	None	None	Yes
Ross-on-Wye	10 Ha	None	10 Ha***	No
Ledbury	15 Ha	None	3 Ha**	No
Bromyard	5 Ha*	None	0.8 Ha**	Yes
Kington	Small scale employment and home working	N/A	None	Yes

Notes:

\* A revised forecast requirement of 2 Ha was provided in the Bromyard Employment Land Study, June 2019

\*\* Permission for the development of 3 Ha of employment land in the conditions for building 625 dwellings in Ledbury; 0.8 Ha of employment land including the erection of the first unit was included in conditions for the Porthouse Rise scheme – one unit was built but is still unused

\*\*\* Planning permission granted for 10 Ha of employment land at Hildersley – Ross Enterprise Park – site is not currently being developed

\*\*\*\* Any development in these market towns will have to demonstrate 'nutrient neutrality' which will add to the cost of any proposed scheme

12. In summary, in the period since 2011, there has been no significant (sites > 1 Ha) development of employment land in the market towns. However, there is an identified requirement for the period 2011 to 2031 of 40 Ha.
13. The council's capital programme includes an allocation for 'employment land and incubator space in market towns' (ELIS). The objective of the ELIS funding is to provide sufficient employment land and business premises to support business growth in the market towns.
14. The MTIPs have identified that in the majority of the towns there is a demand for additional employment land. For example, stakeholder feedback in Ross-on-Wye was that the lack of employment land is a significant barrier to growth, limiting business expansion and forcing existing or potentially new businesses to look elsewhere, often out of the county. As above, the Core Strategy has identified a clear need for additional employment land in the market town. However, the lack of almost any private sector led provision suggests there is a market failure in the commercial provision of these services.
15. Project definitions and initial draft business cases have been developed for projects identified through the MTIP process with the potential to deliver new employment land and business incubator space. However, further work is required to gather the evidence needed to develop Outline Business Cases and assess the feasibility and financial prospects of these projects.
16. At this stage, two of the projects from the MTIPs are likely to contribute to the ELIS economic objectives while having the potential to meet the ELIS capital requirements. Further feasibility studies will be required to assess their fit with the ELIS capital programme allocation i.e. the potential to generate an income to repay borrowing or generate land receipts:

- a. a potential mixed development on the council's Model Farm site in Ross-on-Wye (Appendix 1); and
  - b. the development of land in Ledbury currently owned by Heineken (Appendix 2).
- 17. The other identified projects are unlikely to be viable without grant support. Those that are likely to meet the requirements of government funding programmes will be developed in anticipation of calls for project applications.

## Community impact

- 18. Herefordshire's market towns play a critical role in the county's economy as focal points for employment; for retail/ tourism/ leisure/culture; for business investment and growth; for housing and for access to services. The market towns often provide the key interface between the wider rural areas, access to employment and local services, and connectivity to and from Hereford.
- 19. The development of the MTIPs has been led by stakeholders in each of the market towns, supported by Rose Regeneration and the council. The MTIPs have identified a range of potential projects that are important to the economic development of the market towns.
- 20. The County Plan 2020 to 2024 states that: *"We shall also build new community facilities and bring forward new employment sites throughout the county. In making these investments we will continue to balance environmental, economic and community returns and will carry forward measures which further manage demand for our services."*
- 21. The current review of Herefordshire's Core Strategy is about to commission an employment land review. This will provide evidence for the economic policy direction of the revised Local Plan Core Strategy and determine the likely future demands for additional employment land provision in the county and how to ensure that employment proposals come forward. The ELIS projects are one potential component of meeting the future demand for employment land.

## Environmental Impact

- 22. The Core Strategy 2011 to 2031 recognised that: *"Sustainable communities need economic growth to ensure they are active and thriving. Wealth underpins social and cultural activities and the conservation of our environment. Ensuring a strong and diverse economy will help give people in Herefordshire more opportunities for work within the county, which could reduce the number of people needing to travel outside the county, thus helping to reduce carbon emissions and increasing the prosperity of Herefordshire residents."*
- 23. Identifying potential economic development projects and schemes to develop employment land and incubation space locally in the market towns has the

potential to contribute to the reduction in the amount that people have to travel to work.

24. While this decision will not directly result in schemes being commissioned by the council, any future developments will be designed to deliver the council's environmental policy commitments and contribute to the environmental success measures in the County Plan.

## Equality duty

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

25. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires the council to consider how the council can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that the council are paying 'due regard' in decision making, in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. As this is a decision to adopt the MTIPs and assess the feasibility of the projects identified as potentially meeting the ELIS criteria, it is not believed that it will have an impact on the council's equality duty at this stage. An equality impact assessment (EqIA) has been carried out on the development of the MTIPs and is included in Appendix 6 and EqIAs will be carried out for any projects taken forward as part of the ELIS project.

## Resource implications

26. The revenue costs identified below relate to the development of feasibility studies to support MTIP projects. A specific revenue allocation was made to the Economic Development base budget by Cabinet to support the development of projects<sup>4</sup>. This will be used to bring forward the proposed technical feasibility works which will be procured in line with the council's Contracts Procedure Rules.

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<sup>4</sup> Budget and Corporate Plan, Herefordshire Council Cabinet - Thursday 30 January 2020

<b>Revenue cost of project</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>Future Years</b>	<b>Total</b>
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<i>Business Case Development</i>		100,000	100,000		200,000
<b>TOTAL</b>		100,000	100,000		200,000

<b>Revenue budget implications</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>Future Years</b>	<b>Total</b>
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<i>Economy and Place</i>		100,000	100,000		200,000
<b>TOTAL</b>		100,000	100,000		200,000

## Legal implications

27. The MTIPs are high level direction-setting documents and have no formal status. Any of the projects proposed in the MTIP will be subject to a further decision and therefore there are no legal implications arising from this report.

## Risk management

28. The following are the primary risks in delivering this decision:

<b>Risk / Opportunity</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
<p>There is a risk of reputational damage to the council as stakeholders may expect all projects identified as a priority to be funded by the council.</p> <p>However, funding available from the council generally, including for the MTIP projects, is constrained.</p> <p>The ELIS funding, for example, will be allocated on the condition that any projects funded will generate an income or capital receipt to repay the investment, or be successful in attracting grant /additional funding to fill any gap.</p>	<p>The purpose of the MTIPs has been clearly communicated at each stage, including the need for any ELIS funded projects to be able to generate a return to repay the investments. This is also clearly stated in the MTIPs.</p> <p>Regular stakeholder consultation sessions were held. Ward members attended each relevant market town stakeholders group.</p> <p>The fact that not all projects are suitable for capital spend was clearly communicated to the stakeholders.</p>

<p>Local stakeholders may not agree with the priorities identified in the plans</p>	<p>The MTIPs have identified a wide range of proposed projects to support the growth of each town through local engagement and consultation.</p> <p>Stakeholders were invited to moderated sessions to discuss and agree a prioritised list of projects.</p> <p>Final drafts of the reports have been shared with Town Councils.</p>
<p>Funding may not be available for identified schemes</p>	<p>The MTIP process has established an informed pipeline / prospectus of projects with a clear strategic rationale and evidence base to support future grant applications for government funding.</p> <p>While funding may not be immediately available for all the projects on the MTIPs, the plans are intended to support applications for current and future grant funding (as it becomes available). They are, therefore, intended to maximise the likelihood of successful grant applications in the future.</p> <p>Initial project descriptions have been drafted for each of the relevant ELIS capital projects. Further technical work and advice is required in order to develop the outline business cases and assess deliverability.</p>
<p>Phosphates risk in the County affecting the progression of certain projects.</p> <p>This is likely to affect North Herefordshire for 3 years.</p> <p>The main risk is that there will be a small increase in costs to obtain phosphate credits. The moratorium on planning permissions is expected to be lifted when the Integrated Wetlands mitigation scheme (phosphate credits) is in place at the end of 2021.</p>	<p>The council is working to mitigate the impact through the construction and management of integrated wetlands.</p> <p>It is anticipated that developments in the area will be able to buy 'phosphate credits' to contribute to the wetland scheme to ensure that the development maintains 'nutrient neutrality'. Schemes offering to contribute will then be considered for approval. The phosphate credit scheme is expected to be in place later in the year of 2021.</p>



There is, however, a more remote risk that the moratorium on planning will continue for longer than anticipated if the Integrated Wetland project is delayed.

The wetland project will be managed according to the council's project management regime in order to minimise the risk of delay.

29. These risks will be managed at a service level and added to relevant risk registers as required or escalated if appropriate and required.

## Consultees

30. This proposal has been developed in conjunction with Economy and Place directorate teams, Property Services, and the Finance and Programme Management Office teams. Legal Services have also been consulted.
31. The Cabinet Member for Environment and Economy has been involved in the process and consulted on the report.
32. Stakeholders in the market towns have been consulted throughout the process of developing the MTIP documents, including Town Councils, Ward members, local business and organisation leaders and owners, land and business owners, as well as charities and other employment support agencies.
33. Political Group Consultation and full Council briefing has taken place and those that responded were supportive of the proposals.

## Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Leominster Market Town Investment Plan
- Appendix 2 – Ross-on-Wye Market Town Investment Plan
- Appendix 3 – Ledbury Market Town Investment Plan
- Appendix 4 – Bromyard Market Town Investment Plan
- Appendix 5 – Kington Market Town Investment Plan
- Appendix 6 – Equality Impact Assessment

## Background papers

None identified.

**Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.**

ELIS	Employment Land and Incubation Space project
MTIP	Market Town Investment Plan
PMO	Project Management Office



# *Leominster Town Economic Investment Plan*



## ***Leominster Town Economic Investment Plan Statement 2021***

*Leominster aspires to be a model 21st century market town, building on its unique heritage, pivotal location and innate potential to create an ambitious and sustainable future.*

*At the heart of our vision is an inclusive and prosperous mixed economy which supports its residents and welcomes inward investment and new business creation in a stunning and affordable rural environment.*

*We will collaborate with others to develop lifelong analogue and digital skills, to create a thriving visitor economy and to realise our full potential as a cohesive and dynamic community.*

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Market Town Investment Plans

This Leominster Town Investment Plan is one of five Market Town Investment Plans (MTIPs) commissioned by Herefordshire Council. Herefordshire's market towns, including Leominster, play a critical role in the county's economy, as focal points for employment; for retail, tourism, leisure and culture; for business investment and growth; for housing; and for access to services. The market towns often provide the key interface between the wider rural areas, access to employment and local services, and connectivity to and from Hereford and other neighbouring areas.

The MTIPs identify a long term vision for the growth of the towns and a programme of potential projects to enable sustainable economic development to deliver the vision. The MTIPs will also play a key role in the development a new long term county wide 'big plan'. The big plan will identify how we will address long term economic challenges in creating new opportunities for growth across the county and how we retain/ attract younger generations, creating great places to live, study, work and invest.

## The Vision for Leominster

The key strategic objectives are for Leominster to:

- share its heritage and welcome visitors;
- commit to sustainable growth; and
- build on its strategic location on the Welsh border and in the Marches

## The Main Challenges facing the town

Leominster has a particular challenge with the skill levels of its working population and has a modestly smaller stock of jobs per capita than Herefordshire average. Wages are lower than the UK average and unemployment, which is higher than the UK average, increased during the pandemic.

There are a significantly higher proportion of low value properties than the national average in the town. Its public realm and amenities are in poor condition and the visitor economy is weak compared to the UK average.

## The Town's Assets and Strengths

Leominster has the second largest urban population in Herefordshire and is in a strategic location on crossroads of A49 and A44 with access to Wales and central location in the Marches. It has a railway station with good connectivity to Hereford and Shrewsbury and Cardiff and Manchester beyond.

The town has a wealth of heritage buildings which has been recognised by Historic England in awarding the town Heritage Action Zone Status with a substantial funding allocation. The town's heritage and strong antiques sector have the potential to attract a substantial number of tourists.

With the right investment, the strong manufacturing sector with a pool of skilled manual labour, excellent digital connectivity and well performing schools offer a strong base on which Leominster can build.

## Issues in Leominster

Issues in Leominster	Targets
Weak visitor economy	Visitor numbers and tourism spend will rise to regional average within 10 years
Low stock of jobs/ Employment opportunities	Employment opportunities in the town will rise to the county average within 5 years and the national average within 15 years
Low income Levels	
Low skills base	Skill levels to rise to national average over the next 10 years
Low Population of younger people of working age	Within 15 years a redistributed economic profile providing scope for young people to have an economic stake in the town and older people to live there independently and successfully
Improved housing offer	Leominster works effectively as a key visitor and living destination based on a town centre which works better and attracts more commercial investment
Poor quality of public realm	
Carbon management	Within 10 years carbon emissions to be reduced by 50%

## Project summary

The MTIP identifies a number of potential projects that will contribute to the delivery of the town's vision. These include:

Development of employment opportunities including new employment land and incubator space for new and expanding businesses:

- Facilitation of Marsh Court the Former Dales site
- Old Priory development after its community asset transfer
- Leominster Enterprise Park Extension
- Leominster Incubation Hub

Improvements to support the visitor economy and transport in the town:

- Leominster Railway Station/Mobi Hub
- Worcester Bromyard Leominster Greenway
- Corn Square (part of Heritage Action Zone)
- Shop/building frontage grant scheme (Part of Hereford Action Zone)
- Leominster Fire Station relocation and redevelopment / Leominster Watercourse Project / The Grange Masterplan
- Food and Drink Attraction
- Visitor Accommodation

Skills Development and projects aimed at young people

- The Skills Foundry

The MTIP shows how each of these projects contribute to the delivery of Leominster's Vision. It will provide a platform for successful funding bids as suitable funding opportunities become available.

Herefordshire Council will continue to work with Leominster Town Council and other local stakeholders to identify new project and funding opportunities, carry out feasibility and foundation work, and support local organisations to apply for funding.

## BACKGROUND

This Leominster Town Investment Plan is one of five Market Town Investment Plans commissioned by Herefordshire Council. Herefordshire's market towns, including Leominster, play a critical role in the county's economy, as focal points for employment; for retail, tourism, leisure and culture; for business investment and growth; for housing; and for access to services. The market towns often provide the key interface between the wider rural areas, access to employment and local services, and connectivity to and from Hereford and other neighbouring areas.

The MTIPs identify a long term vision for the growth of the towns and a programme of potential projects to enable sustainable economic development to deliver the vision. The MTIPs will also play a key role in the development a new long term county wide 'big plan'. The big plan will identify how we will address long term economic challenges in creating new opportunities for growth across the county and how we retain/ attract younger generations, creating great places to live, study, work and invest.

### Community Including the Impact of Covid-19

The damage to the economy and to health from Covid-19 has been felt across Herefordshire. During 2020 and the early part of 2021, the pandemic reached all corners of the county and has had an impact on every community. During 2020, the UK economy contracted by 9.9%.(Office for National Statistics<sup>1</sup>). It remains to be seen what the long-term impact of the pandemic will be, but within many sectors we are likely to see a shift to working, learning and engaging in commerce remotely on digital platforms.

The projects proposed in this Plan have been developed through engagement with key stakeholders in Leominster and will help the town to attract essential investment as the need to promote recovery opens up new funding opportunities.

Attitudes towards working from home have changed substantially since the start of the COVID pandemic and many workers may continue to work from home long after it has ended.

There could be positive implications for Herefordshire's market towns in what is being termed 'hybrid working'. The Centre for Towns recently reported that its research indicates "big potential for places to market themselves as online working destinations" as predictions indicate that the longer people are required to work at home, the greater the adoption of home working will be beyond the current situation.

The best performing towns are ones with a healthy mix of agegroups and professional types. An increase in home working would have a significant positive impact in rebalancing Herefordshire's market towns demographics and towns should therefore actively promote themselves to attract in and retain a thriving working age population.

Towns will need to work closely with Herefordshire Council to ensure that digital connectivity is adequate to support the needs of home workers. Clearly Herefordshire market towns have a significant 'quality of life' offer, with a good range of local services.

### Climate and Ecological Emergency

On 8 March 2019 Herefordshire Council declared a Climate Emergency following unanimous support for a climate emergency resolution at full council. This declaration was subsequently

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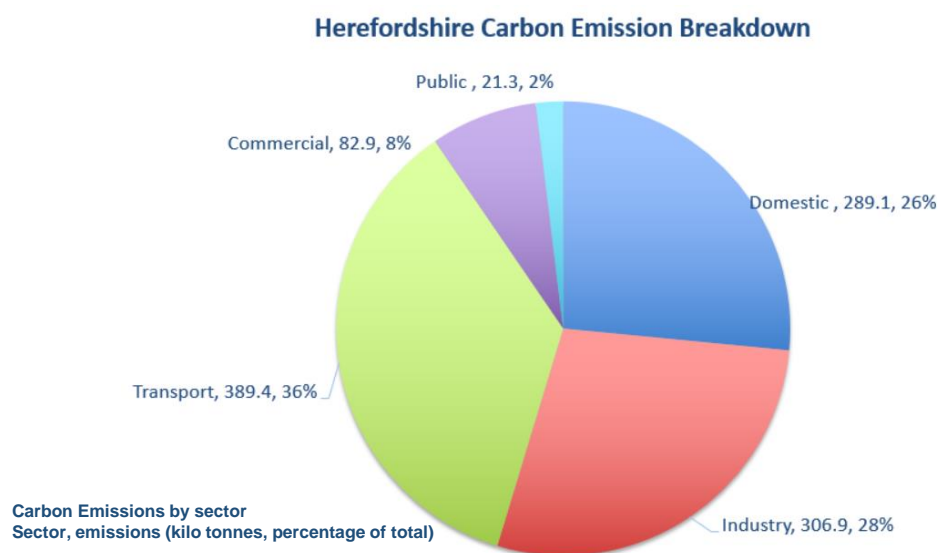
<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/nationalaccounts/articles/dashboardunderstandingtheukeconomy/2017-02-22>



updated and strengthened on 11 December 2020 when Herefordshire Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) following support for a climate and ecological emergency resolution at full council.

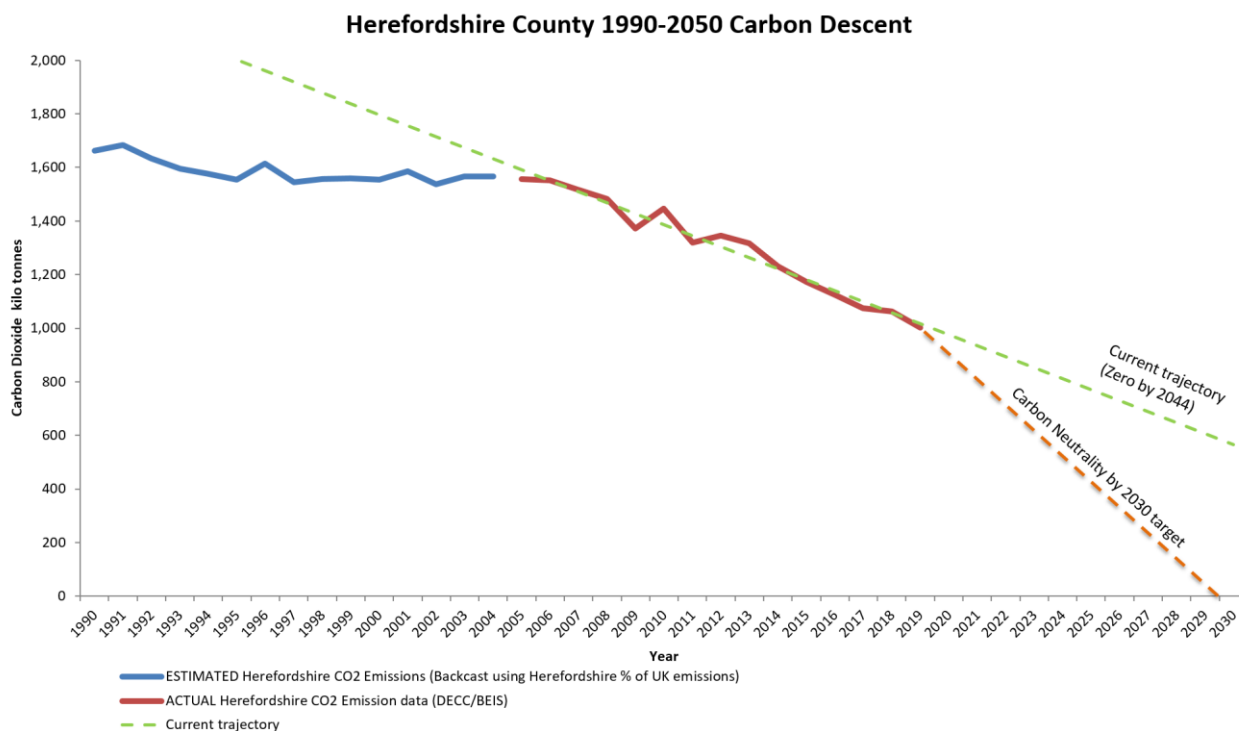
Further to these declarations the council approved the ambitious new target to become zero carbon and nature rich by 2030.

The below chart illustrates Herefordshire's current carbon emission split and the areas of focus for the Leominster MTIP to support the Herefordshire's journey to net zero.



In order to achieve this target, as illustrated below, a new Herefordshire Climate & Nature Partnership and Board have been established to catalyse and coordinate new action across the County. These actions have been grouped into a series of six different action plans including: Housing & Buildings; Transport; Energy; Farming & Land Use; Waste and Food.

The details of the Herefordshire Climate & Nature Partnership, including the six themed action plans are set out: <https://zerocarbon.herefordshire.gov.uk/>



As a key strategic plan the Leominster MTIP is strongly committed to delivering Herefordshire’s net zero and nature rich commitment and will work in partnership with its communities, businesses and the Herefordshire Climate & Nature Board to achieve this through the development and delivery of the plan.

### Economy

Herefordshire faces a number long term economic challenges such as the lowest level of productivity of any county in England<sup>2</sup>, a low wage economy (19% below the national average<sup>3</sup>), a deficit of higher level skills (41.4% of the population has NVQ level 4 national average of 43.1%<sup>4</sup>), an aging population (25% over 65 compared to a 18% nationally), and a significant shortage of labour (2.9% claiming unemployment benefits<sup>5</sup>).

However, the county has a significant number of opportunities, including local strengths in food and drink, tourism, and agriculture, specialisms in fast growing global markets like cyber security, an outstanding quality of life, and new University (New Model Institute in Technology and Engineering). The county is also very well placed to benefit from a post Covid lifestyle trend, as people now look to increasingly work remotely away from populated cities to locations offering a better quality of life.

The market towns have a crucial role to play in addressing the long term economic challenges, and realising the county’s many opportunities. They are key local centres for housing, culture, access to public services, tourism, with strong local communities and identities. Establishing great vibrant places to live and meaningful employment opportunities will be key to stemming the aging population, in retaining/ attracting younger generations to study, live and work in the county for generations to come.

<sup>2</sup> [ONS Regional Differences in Productivity July 2021](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Understanding Herefordshire ONS data 2019](#)

<sup>4</sup> [ONS Population Survey 2020](#)

<sup>5</sup> [ONS claimant count October 2021](#)

Leominster is particularly well placed to realise some of these opportunities, significantly contributing the future economic success of the county as a whole. A highly attractive and popular market town, offering a great place to live, visit and work.

As people's approach to work and quality of life requirements change, Leominster is well placed to benefit from an increasing transition to a digital economy, with people working from home or flexible workspaces in attractive, less densely populated locations away from city centres.

The Plan identifies a vision for growth and a programme of investment projects required to deliver the vision and support the economic development of Leominster over the next fifteen years. Funding from many different sources will be needed to achieve them. The Plan identifies the timetable for delivery, lead body and potential sources of investment for each of the projects.

## Tourism and the Visitor Economy

Visit Herefordshire through its Post Covid Tourism Recovery Strategy has taken the opportunity to re-energise and provide effective and strategic co-ordination to a sector that has been significantly underperforming for some time. The latest STEAM (Tourism Economic Impact Model) report for 2020 indicated a 54% drop in visitor spend due to Covid 19.

Tourism development and promotion in the county have historically been fragmented and largely product rather than market led which has failed to deliver the required scale of effort and investment in tourism promotion and management and which is clearly beyond the resources and capabilities of individual market towns.

A new cross county and cross sector Tourism Steering Group has been established to develop a marketing plan and has begun implementation of PR and Social Media campaigns, including an autumn and winter marketing campaign and an interim refresh of the Visit Herefordshire web site. A full rebranding with new website and national advertising campaigns will follow and profiles the key target audiences under the categories:

- Cultural Explorers
- Active Explorers
- Active Families
- Millennials and Generation Y

## Tourism projects and the Market Town Investment Plans

Across the market towns there is great opportunity for collaboration and joint working. The expansion of town markets, tourist trails for walking and cycling, the direct link to local food and drink production, festivals, promotion and the development of accommodation all feature to some extent in each investment plan.

It will be essential for towns and their tourism stakeholders and promoters to actively engage in strategic collaboration with the county-wide representative bodies in order to gain traction and commitment of resources to individual projects.

Market towns have proposed a number of tourism related projects within their Investment Plans and these must be considered and developed in the light of the emerging strategy. Specifically, market towns must consider their tourism projects as economic contributors that will enable the sector as a whole to push visitor spend in Herefordshire up to the UK average.

## The local economy, manufacturing and other sectors

Leominster has a strong manufacturing tradition and skilled manual base. In common with the rest of the county the economy is characterised by high rates of self-employment and a large number of micro businesses with some 90% of businesses employing nine people or less<sup>6</sup> and has better than average survival rates for new start-ups. Like the rest of Herefordshire, the town has relatively low levels of unemployment, but low productivity and lower average earnings are persistent challenges and a factor in poor social mobility and young people leaving the county to seek career opportunities elsewhere. Three of Leominster's LSOA's Leominster Ridgemoor, Grange and Gateway are within the 25% most deprived in the country in relation to employment and income deprivation.

Whilst the town has a large industrial estate and other employment areas there is a shortage of available employment land, units and business start-up space. There is an opportunity to build on the strengths in the town by providing the right premises for business to start-up grow and thrive,

The care sector is important to the town with many jobs in health and social care and there is a need to recognise the skills needs in this sector as demand continues to increase linked to an ageing population.

Retail continues to be an important sector for the town. The growth of the town requires a strong retail offer in order to retain and attract expenditure from the residents in the local catchment. Whilst the Core Strategy is now under review it has identified that Leominster has some convenience and comparison retail floorspace need which increases over the plan period. In terms of convenience retail, this could create the opportunity for an additional food store development in the town centre, which would draw more shoppers into the centre and complement the existing independent convenience shops. Small scale convenience retail will be provided within the urban extension to meet the day to day needs of the residents of the new development. The Core Strategy indicates priority should be to steer any new floorspace to the town centre as far as this is practical, and only to permit out of centre facilities if they would materially enhance the retail offer of the town. Relatively low rentals for retail premises have encouraged some retail start-ups in the Town over the last period.

## Digital Connectivity

Faster broadband is being rolled out across Herefordshire and Gloucestershire by the Fastershire broadband project. From a starting point in 2012 of only 0.6 percent of premises in Herefordshire with superfast broadband (30Mbps and above), there are now over 92 percent of premises in the county with access to superfast broadband.

Fastershire is a partnership between Herefordshire Council, Gloucestershire County Council and national Government. This is part of a commitment to the digital transformation of Herefordshire, which is vital for the future of our local economy and those who live and work in our communities.

Fastershire is not just about technology. The project also includes social and digital inclusion activities, and an extensive business support programme, designed to help small and medium size businesses get the most from fibre broadband and be more competitive.

As people's approach to work and quality of life requirements change, the market towns are well placed to benefit from an increasing transition to a digital economy, with people working

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<sup>6</sup> [Economy & place - Understanding Herefordshire](#)

from home or flexible workspaces in attractive, less densely populated locations away from city centres.

In considering how we enable the growth of Herefordshire's economy as a whole, we need to consider the essential current and future role of the market towns in creating and supporting sustainable higher value employment opportunities for local residents.

The Plan identifies a vision for growth and a programme of investment projects required to deliver the vision and support the economic development of Leominster over the next fifteen years. Funding from many different sources will be needed to achieve them. The Plan identifies the timetable for delivery, lead body and potential sources of investment for each of the projects.

## Leominster

Leominster is a typical English market town, with a population of 12,400 within the town itself (2019 ONS estimate). It is located approximately twelve miles to the north of Hereford and is the centre for many parishes in the north of the county of Herefordshire, as well as several local villages in neighbouring Shropshire. Taken together with the population in Leominster itself the wider area served by the town has an estimated population of 16,500.

The town has the potential to be a key tourist destination with a history dating back to the seventh century. The historic buildings and narrow streets in the town centre retain many Medieval and Tudor features. Other historic attractions include but are not limited to Leominster Priory Church, Leominster Museum and Grange Court.

The town is bisected by the A44 which was formerly a trunk road and still provides an important cross regional route for long distance freight, commercial and tourist traffic from mid Wales to the West Midlands.

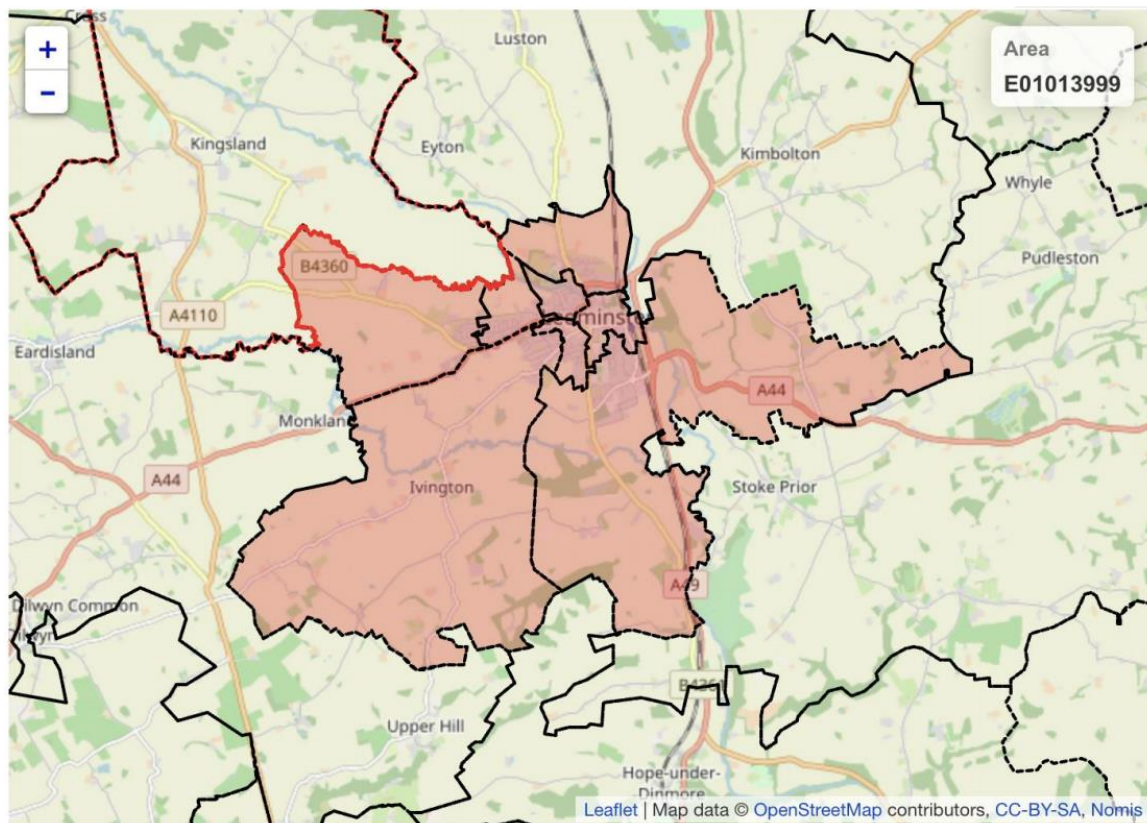
Leominster is a compact town with all areas well within 2 miles travel. The centre is flat with generous green spaces. Walking and cycling are highly practical for journeys to work, and to socialise and network. Currently the infrastructure for cycling is patchy and poorly marked and many pavements are uneven and in poor repair. Investment in improving walking and cycling routes in the town centre and out to the industrial and main housing estates have economic benefits by making the town more attractive to remote workers, professionals and businesses looking for good quality of life and reliable fast internet. Improving the infrastructure for walking and cycling will help make the town more attractive, improve fitness, reduce congestion and improve air quality on major routes. There are many relatively low-cost active travel projects that would have good economic impact such as an active travel link between Southern Avenue and the Enterprise Park. The Leominster Transport Plan provides some helpful context on commuting patterns and transport solutions to support the town's economy.

Leominster town centre is home to a variety of retail businesses and hosts a regular weekly market. The town is identified as one of the five market towns in the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy to have a good provision of independent retailers. Leominster is a location for food shopping and services for residents and those living nearby. Its historic environment and niche retail offer also makes it an attractive destination for visitors. Through the excellent work of the Fastershire Broadband initiative mentioned above Leominster is on target to be one of the first fully (FFTP) Full Fibre to The Premise towns in the UK making digital connectivity being a real strength for the town going forward.



It is widely accepted that improving the town centre and making it an attractive destination for both residents, those living in the local catchment of the town and visitors will benefit the local economy and promote future growth within the town.

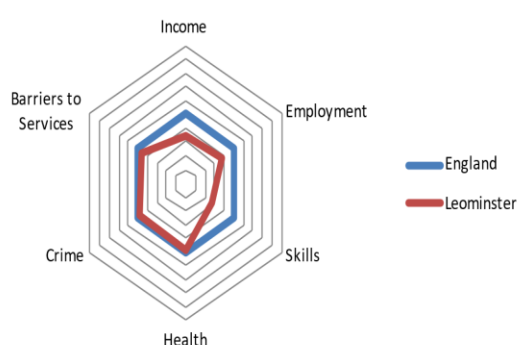
For the purpose of this work, Leominster's town boundaries are those based on the Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA's) for Leominster we have used to inform the data analysis based on the 2019 Indices of Deprivation. The work has also been cognisant of the boundaries set out in the Leominster Neighbourhood Plan and Leominster Town Policies map in the Herefordshire Core Strategy. The LSOA boundaries used for analysis describe the following map set out below:



# English Indices of Deprivation 2019

## Leominster

## Domains of Deprivation



Domains	England Average	Leominster
Income	16422	11143
Employment	16422	12253
Skills	16422	9245
Health	16422	15756
Crime	16422	15610
Barriers to Services	16422	14827

The radar diagram ranks all 32,844 Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in England according to the indices of deprivation. Each LSOA has a population of circa 1,500 people or 650 households.

- The blue line indicates the England average;
- Within the blue line is more deprived;
- Outside the blue line is less deprived.

The radar diagram above is derived from the English Indices of Deprivation 2019. It ranks each neighbourhood in England in terms of their characteristics in relation to the following indicator sets:

- The Income Deprivation Domain measures the proportion of the population experiencing deprivation relating to low income.
- The Employment Deprivation Domain measures the proportion of the working-age population in an area involuntarily excluded from the labour market.
- The Education, Skills and Training Deprivation Domain measures the lack of attainment and skills in the local population.
- The Health Deprivation and Disability Domain measures the risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health. The domain measures morbidity, disability and premature mortality but not aspects of behaviour or environment that may be predictive of future health deprivation.
- The Crime Domain measures the risk of personal and material victimisation at local level.
- The Barriers to Housing and Services Domain measures the physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services. The indicators fall into two sub-domains: 'geographical barriers', which relate to the physical proximity of local services, and 'wider barriers' which includes issues relating to access to housing such as affordability.

## THE VISION FOR LEOMINSTER

This vision is the basis of an integrated and forward-looking development strategy which links business, industry and tourism with community, rural life and the countryside to a sustainable and green future. Its gateway position in the Marches is within 90 minutes travel from Birmingham, Bristol and Cardiff, with a combined population of over 5 million people.

Our key strategic objectives include making Leominster a place that:

### Shares our heritage and welcomes visitors

- a place with a thriving and diverse tourism economy rooted in its unique heritage and nationally-renowned antiques trade
- a place which welcomes visitors so they stay longer, see and spend more
- a gateway for walking, cycling and holidays based on a range of rural activities
- a place with a wide ranging and exciting independent retail offer
- a place where people can enjoy local artisan food and drink
- a place with a distinctive and high quality built and natural environment that is easy to explore
- a place with inclusive offer suitable for visitors of all ages and abilities
- a centre from which to explore the surrounding area

### Commits to sustainable growth

- a place with excellent digital connectivity to attract and support businesses of all types and sizes
- a place that builds on its strong manufacturing tradition and skills base
- a place that encourages and works with inward investment, innovation and new talent
- a place with a strong forward looking skills development offer and career opportunities for all
- a place which engages with and supports our whole community
- a place that makes full use of its assets and has excellent local infrastructure
- a place that is actively addressing climate and ecological issues to support the present and improve the future
- a place that supports microbusinesses to start and flourish

### Builds on its strategic location on the Welsh border and in the Marches

- an accessible place for all with green transport connection links
- a place which is committed to developing active travel options
- natural first port of call for the surrounding hinterland for goods and services
- a place with good local amenities and an attractive public realm



## THE MAIN CHALLENGES FACING THE TOWN

A full review has been undertaken of all extant documents produced in the last five years relating to Leominster's economic and community development (see Appendix 1). This contextual analysis has informed the selection and prioritisation of investment proposals in the Town Investment Plan.

The main challenges facing Leominster:

- More deprived on all domains than the England average - particularly low on skills (3rd decile)
- lower proportion of younger people of a working age than the England average
- Modestly smaller stock of jobs than Herefordshire average
- Unemployment modest but has increased in the context of Covid and is higher than the county average
- 240 jobs lost between 2015-18 (4.8% of the total)
- Significantly higher proportion of low value properties than the national average (whilst this is a challenge for commercial property investment, it is noted that in some circumstances it may also be an attractant)
- Weak visitor economy vs UK average
- Lower wages than the UK average
- Public realm/amenities in poor condition

## THE TOWN'S ASSETS AND STRENGTHS

We have set out below the key assets and strengths of the town

- Heritage Buildings, Heritage Action Zone Status and funding
- Visitor economy potential
- Railway station with good connectivity to Hereford and Shrewsbury Cardiff & Manchester
- Second largest urban population in Herefordshire
- Strategic location on crossroads of A49 and A44 with access to Wales and central location in the Marches
- Well performing schools
- Opportunity to make more of Riverside and open spaces
- Antiques trade
- Strong manufacturing centre with skilled manual labour
- Digital connectivity

## SPATIAL CONTEXT

The Herefordshire Core Strategy contains a chapter on place-shaping. For Leominster, this sets out area policies and proposals, including broad (rather than specific) locations where larger scale or strategic development is proposed. Leominster is described as the main centre in the north of the county that fulfils a diverse range of important roles as a centre for residential, employment, cultural, retail, tourism and recreational uses. The vision for Leominster outlined in the strategy centres on 'meeting housing need (including affordable housing), reducing the need to travel, facilitating employment generation and diversification, improving delivery and access to services and realising the value of the environment as an economic asset.

Within the profile for Leominster, emphasis is placed on density, design, connectivity (sustainable transport modes), minimising energy use and the heritage and archaeological value of earthworks on land south of Barons Cross. The evidence base underpinning the strategy describes how extensive areas of Leominster are at risk of flooding, (in order to address this active flood protection works are currently underway to the north of the town – a considerable investment by the Environment Agency) particularly to the north of the town, and therefore the effects of any new developments must be mitigated through adequate control measures and additional capacity in water treatment infrastructure and surface water management. The Core Strategy is currently being reviewed. It is expected the new version will focus more on protecting and enhancing biodiversity and natural capital and reducing carbon emissions. Herefordshire Council declared a climate and ecological emergency in 2019 and has a target to reduce carbon emission to net zero by 2030, which is well within the lifetime of this plan.

A review of the Core Strategy has now been commenced which will update the evidence base particularly in relation to biodiversity and green infrastructure.

In aligning with the Core Strategy, the Leominster Neighbourhood Development Plan refers to:

- The need for new housing development to take account of the risk of significant additional pressure on the existing local community and services while minimising the impact on the environment and reducing running costs; and it must be the right type and tenure of housing in the right place.
- The principles that should cover the location of a new medical centre as well as how a better planned environment could contribute to the health and wellbeing of everyone living and/or working in Leominster.
- The problem of traffic flow through the town and the congestion and air quality issues at Bargates. This was also picked up in the *Bargates air quality action plan* of 2014 which contained a number of actions around traffic light sequencing, improvements to cycle routes, pedestrian routes and public transport, a southern relief road alongside a behavioural change programme and information/awareness raising. The plan supports the construction of a new link road – even if the urban expansion does not go ahead. The plan looks at how to prioritise journeys on foot and cycle by improving facilities for walkers and cyclists. There is currently no clear prospect for the delivery of the new link road so the Plan requires updating to address the fact that the A44 through town poses numerous challenges re air, noise, vibration and enabling pedestrians/cyclists to feel safe.
- Facilitating and promoting sustainable economic growth – from diversifying traditional sectors to the sensitive development of the tourism sector as well as increasing employment opportunities at all levels and ensuring a ready supply of employment land.
- Retaining the green spaces that people value, improve them, enhance their biodiversity and add new green spaces which connect into travel corridors for people and nature. The plan proposes to do this within a Green Infrastructure Framework that sits alongside the other five themes contained in the document. This links to the Herefordshire Green Infrastructure Study of 2010.
- The town's prosperity was historically based on the wool trade and Leominster's central streets and alleys retain their medieval character. The Neighbourhood Development Plan therefore sets out that any new buildings in the town centre should

contribute to the distinctiveness of the settlement rather than having a ‘could be anywhere’ appearance.

The spatial impact of the proposed MTIP projects will, when aligned with Heritage Action Zone initiatives, make Leominster a more attractive place to live, work, invest and visit examples include, the development of a Mobi Hub (transport interchange) at Leominster Station, the phased development of the Dales Site at Marsh Court and the refurbishment and repurposing of Corn Square which are set out in more detail later in this report.

In the north of Herefordshire – affecting Bromyard and Leominster there is currently a planning moratorium linked to phosphate levels in the River Lugg.

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

From the outset of its commission, Rose Regeneration has worked to establish a dialogue with as many stakeholders in Leominster’s future as possible, in order to establish a solid evidence base, of demand and need. Engagement with Leominster Town Council, local business community, voluntary sector and other key local stakeholders has played a major role in the development of this Plan.

The process of developing the Plan commenced with a town walk and follow-up meeting involving the Herefordshire Council Cabinet Member, the local Herefordshire Councillors, the Mayor of Leominster, Leominster Town Councillors and local businesses. Leominster Town Council, which played a key role in helping to identify all the key stakeholders in the Town. This was followed up by some 50 individual contacts by email, telephone and video call as well as engagement with the public and voluntary organisations in the Team Leominster grouping.

The next significant engagement event was a town Zoom meeting to which all those identified were invited; this meeting was chaired by a town Councillor and included twenty-six local stakeholders. The meeting identified a number of themes for the Town investment Plan to consider and develop. A number of thematic meetings with key stakeholders were then held to consider the key themes in more detail and identify the vision, strategic objectives and project ideas for inclusion in the Plan.

Following the completion of these meetings, there has been a range of consultations and discussions with potential delivery and funding partners. This has included engagement with private landowners, business owners, a number of Herefordshire Council officers, the Leominster Heritage Action Zone team, the Leominster Cultural consortium and others.

Throughout the process, there has been regular dialogue with representatives of Herefordshire Council.

## THEORY OF CHANGE

Theory of Change is essentially a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context. It essentially addresses “market failure”. During the course of our work in Leominster, we have identified three intervention priorities (Business and Economy, Tourism/Visitors, Town/Civic Amenities) from the Leominster Town Vision and have worked back from these to identify all the conditions (outcomes) that must be in place (and how these related to one another causally) for the goals to occur. These are all mapped out in the Outputs and Outcomes framework below.

Project	Intervention Framework	Issues in Leominster	Action	Output	Outcomes	Impact	Transformation Target
Facilitation of Marsh Court the Former Dales site	Business and Economy  Tourism/Visitors  Town/Civic amenities	Low stock of jobs/ Employment opportunities Weak visitor economy  Low Population of younger people of working age  Outdated GP facilities  Income Levels  Poor quality of public realm	Acquire and encourage the development of new employment land  Actively market the town as a great place to bring or start your business	new health facilities new retail space new employment space additional hotel bedrooms new homes for older people	Improved hotel offer to support business activity and tourism  jobs safeguarded and new jobs created Modern Health facilities	Improved Gateway to town from A49  Increased tourism spend in the local economy  Improved Health for local population	Employment opportunities in the town will rise to the county average within 5 years and the national average within 15 years
Leominster Railway Station/Mobi Hub	Tourism/Visitors  Town/Civic Amenities	Weak visitor economy	Invest in connectivity between the industrial estates and the town centre and transport hubs	CO2 reduction through reduction in car journeys	Better functioning connections and communications in Leominster	A more sustainable town	Within 10 years carbon emissions to be reduced by 50%
Leominster Fire Station relocation and redevelopment	Town/Civic Amenities	Improved housing offer	A lack of overall social and economic diversity compared to other settlements	Improved and more efficient public services  new homes provided  m2 additional retail floorspace new jobs	Better designed town centre offering additional affordable housing	A wider range of live/work options for those who seeks to participate in the town	Within 15 years a redistributed economic profile providing scope for young people to have an economic stake in the town and older people to live there independently and successfully
Com Square (part of Heritage Action Zone)	Tourism/Visitors  Town/Civic Amenities	Weak visitor economy	Invest in public realm and in alternative car parking provision	An attractive multi-purpose public space for the Town	A better appointed town centre functioning more effectively for visitors	Increased tourism spend in the local economy	Leominster works effectively as a key visitor and living destination based on a town centre which works better and attracts more commercial investment
Shop/building frontage grant scheme (Part of Hereford Action Zone)	Tourism/Visitors  Town /Civic Amenities	Weak visitor economy	Invest in pump priming grants to drive out private sector investment	Improved Built environment in the Town	More footfall and private investment	More demand to visit and invest in the town	Leominster works effectively as a key visitor and living destination based on a town centre which works better and attracts more commercial investment
Old Priory	Tourism/Visitors	Weak visitor economy	Encourage private investment to renovate	A wider range of visitor accommodat	A more integrated and effective tourist	Improved tourism offer and/or town amenities	Visitor numbers and tourism spend

Project	Intervention Framework	Issues in Leominster	Action	Output	Outcomes	Impact	Transformation Target
			and refurbish existing Hotels and develop new visitor accommodation options. Could include grant from Heritage Action zone and a community Asset Transfer	ion in Leominster	infrastructure		Will rise to regional average within 10 years
Skills Development	Business and Economy	Low skills base	Invest in improved skills facilities for the Town	New job placement and training initiatives	new apprentices people trained	Improved income levels	Skill levels to rise to national average over the next 10 years
Leominster Enterprise Park Extension	Business/Economy	Low stock of jobs/ Employment Opportunities Income Levels	Acquire and encourage the development of new employment land  Actively market the town as a great place to bring or start your business	10 Hectares of new employment land  m2 of new employment space  jobs safeguarded /protected	Long term future of employment needs in the town secured	Improved job opportunities and income levels	Employment opportunities in the town will rise to the county average within 5 years and the national average within 15 years
Leominster Incubation Hub	Business/Economy	Low stock of jobs/ Employment Opportunities Income Levels	Acquire and encourage the development of new employment land  Actively market the town as a great place to bring or start your business	m2 of new employment space  jobs safeguarded /protected	Improved survival rates for new business start ups	Improved job opportunities and income levels	Employment opportunities in the town will rise to the county average within 5 years and the national average within 15 years
Food and Drink Attraction	Business/Economy  Tourism/Visitors	Improved Food and drink Offer	Identify site for local food sector investment proposals	More local sourcing and selling of food	Increased dynamism of local food and drink sector	More dynamic local economy	Visitor numbers and tourism spend Will rise to regional average within 10 years
Worcester Bromyard Leominster Greenway	Tourism/Visitors  Town/Civic amenities	Weak Visitor Economy	Support development of the new visitor path as part of the wider Herefordshire network	New cycling and walking route	More visitors cycling and walking to the town	Increased visitor spend	Visitor numbers and tourism spend Will rise to regional average within 10 years
Visitor Economy/ accommodation	Tourism/Visitors	Weak Visitor Economy	Encourage private investment to renovate and refurbish existing Hotels and develop new	New and improved hotel and visitor accommodation	Improved Accommodation Offer	Increased visitor spend	Visitor numbers and tourism spend Will rise to regional average within 10 years

Project	Intervention Framework	Issues in Leominster	Action	Output	Outcomes	Impact	Transformation Target
			visitor accommodation options.				

## PROJECTS

The following projects emerged through the stakeholder engagement process. These projects ideas were validated through a number of stakeholder meetings and subsequent group and one to one discussions.

The tables prior and below provide a short form summary by way of an overview of projects, those projects that could be considered appropriate for Herefordshire Employment Land and Incubation Space Capital Programme funding and individual descriptions of those projects that are considered strategically significant, with the potential to attract funding outside of the council.

The package of projects identified in this MTIP will need to access a range of funding sources in order to be delivered. Herefordshire Council has earmarked some £20million for Employment Land and Incubation Space development in its capital programme as an investment pot for capital projects in the county’s five market towns.

This funding can be used by the council to invest in projects which can demonstrate an appropriate business case which shows the ability of the projects to generate capital receipts or income which can be used to pay back the initial investment over time. Some of the projects in the Plan may secure funding through this route subject to detailed business cases being developed and considered by the council.

The majority of the projects identified will need to explore alternative funding options which could include: private investment including; Heritage Lottery; charitable trusts; other public sector funding such as the capital programmes of the West Mercia Police Service; the Hereford and Worcester Fire service; the Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group; the Marches LEP; Homes England; One Public Estate (OPE) etc.

In addition to these sources of funding there are a range of Government funding opportunities already in place and more will be announced going forward. Some of the projects in the Plan will require revenue funding as well as capital investment. There may be opportunities to package projects together to bid for funding as well as to bid for funds in phases on the larger projects. Different funders will require different information and governance arrangements which will need to be considered on a bid-by-bid basis. The evidence base and supporting information produced to support this Plan will be a useful information and policy context to help inform bids for funding.

In May 2021 the Town Council and wider stakeholders met to consider the relative priority to allocate to each project. A scoring matrix based on the good practice methodology identified by the Town Hub which supports the implementation of the national Town Fund was used to assess the relative merit of each project. Within the matrix there are 8 themes chosen through local stakeholder engagement.

For Leominster the key criteria agreed were: contribution to net zero; attraction of more visitors/inward investment; increased GVA (a measure of the productivity of businesses); increased business diversity (an increase to the range and variety of businesses operating locally); higher skills; better population balance (supporting a wide demographic spread of age

groups); greater equity (supporting fairer access to all determinants of quality of life); and equality agenda (eliminating any form of discrimination). Each project was scored by the group on a scale of 1-5 where one is lowest to provide a group composite score. These scores then used to rank the project as set out in the summary table at Appendix 2.

## Strategically Significant Projects

The individual projects set out in the templates below have been identified as strategically important to the development of Leominster’s economic development. The project summaries provided explain which intervention framework the projects will address, a brief project description, cost, timescales and outputs. There is also an explanation of the potential or identified demand for the projects as well as suggested funding sources and a possible exit strategy for each project to ensure sustainability without the need for ongoing council revenue support. The overall next steps for the projects are summarised after the project templates.

investment Proposal Form					
Project Name: Leominster Enterprise Park Extension					
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>		
The adopted Herefordshire Core Strategy confirms that Leominster Enterprise Park will continue to serve the employment needs of Leominster, which will include a further extension of up to 10 hectares to the south of the enterprise park.			<i>Indicative Costs</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
Demand Analysis	There is the opportunity to expand Leominster Enterprise Park will to serve the medium to long-term employment needs of Leominster by bringing forward an extension of up to 10 hectares to the south of the existing enterprise park. A range of employment uses and start up units could be accommodated on the site		£5 million	5 Years	10 hectares
Potential funding sources	Possible support (subject to business case) through the Employment Land and Business Space Council capital programme allocation and private sector				
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	Capital receipts and potentially rent from the development				

investment Proposal Form					
Project Name: Leominster Shop/ building frontage grant scheme					
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>		
Investment in the public realm needs to be complemented by investment in the frontages of shops and other town centre buildings to make the town a place to visit and spend time in. A grant scheme is required to encourage property owners to invest in town centre properties.  In Leominster there are already some funds in place through the Heritage Action Zone to fund a scheme of this nature.,			<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
Demand Analysis	This will enable the full potential of the HAZ to be achieved through providing additional matched funding and leverage. Clear demand and interest has arisen through the Town Fund consultation.		£75,000	3 Years	20 properties
Potential funding sources	Historic England/ Heritage Action Zone, and private sector				
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	Private sector investors will take ongoing responsibility for the properties				



investment Proposal Form					
Project Name: Leominster Railway Station/ Mobi Hub					
Intervention Framework	Economy and business	Tourism & the Visitor Economy	Town & Civic amenities		
<p><i>Description:</i> Leominster Railway Station is managed by Transport for Wales under the revised franchise arrangement that started in October 2018 served by routes running between Hereford, Shrewsbury, Cardiff and Manchester with typically 2-3 trains an hour.</p> <p>The station is the second busiest of the four stations within the county but currently has limited car-parking provision and connections with other forms of transport. The proposal is to acquire land to the West or East of the station to develop as a Mobi Hub which would include rail-based park and ride alongside an offer of different and connected transport modes supplemented with enhanced facilities and information features such as the introduction of an electric bus service linking the railway station and other key locations in the town and surrounding area.</p> <p>There is also the opportunity to improve linkages from the Leominster Enterprise Park to the rest of the town including the railway station by introducing a new active travel link (including a cycle way and footpath) between Southern Avenue and the Enterprise Park. This could be as part of a package of transport measures associated with the Mobi Hub project</p> <p>Such a facility will make Leominster a more attractive place for people to choose to live. It will also make Leominster more attractive as a business location enabling businesses to more readily attract skilled staff from further afield and enabling businesses to connect with customers in other parts of the UK in a more environmentally positive way than driving.</p>			Cost	Timescale	Outputs
Demand Analysis	Past studies were undertaken in 2015 to assess rail parking demand and how the station could accommodate rail-based park and ride. The studies concluded that an increase of 100 spaces was warranted with the potential for these to be on land to the west or east of the station.				
Potential funding sources	Grant funding, such as Leveling UP Fund. There is the potential to charge for car parking adjacent to the railway station which could provide a revenue stream.				
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	Dependent on how the project developed.				

Investment Proposal Form					
Project Name: Food and Drink Attraction					
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>		
<p><i>Description:</i> Leominster is home to a number of food and drink manufacturing businesses which could potentially support the development of the town's visitor economy. Good examples are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The visitor experience centre planned to complement the existing farm cider production premises at Newton Court Farm; and</li> <li>• The Swan Brewery currently located in rented premises on the main industrial estate on the edge of the town. The brewery already runs a number of open days which attract good visitor numbers but their current location does not maximise development potential for them or the town particularly when compared to the popularity and success of the Ludlow Brewery in Shropshire.</li> </ul> <p>The Swan Brewery is ready for the next stage in its development but requires a new site of approximately one third of an acre in which to expand its retail and visitor offer including a brewery tap. Ideally this site should be located within a five-minute walk of the railway station and as close to the town centre as possible. This would provide a significant new tourist destination for the town which would complement and improve the tourism offer. The train journey and a visit to the town linked to a brewery visit being an offer that will bring more visitors to the town as a whole.</p> <p>It is recommended that Herefordshire Council and Leominster Town Council work with the brewery and other interested parties to find a suitable site/building which could support this new attraction and potentially other associated businesses.</p>		<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>	
		To be borne by private sector	Within 5 years	Visitor numbers and spend	Jobs
		Demand Analysis	Based on business planning of individual businesses		
		Potential funding sources	Private Sector		
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	Private sector to operate				

Investment Proposal Form							
Project Name: Leominster Fire Station Relocation and Redevelopment							
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>				
<p><i>Description</i> There is an opportunity to relocate the Fire Station from its current location in Broad Street and collocate it with the West Mercia Police Station on the Enterprise Park. This will also allow the existing site to be redeveloped as a mixed retail/housing scheme. It should also improve operational efficiency, make revenue savings and deliver an improved service to the public. Herefordshire council could acquire the existing site for redevelopment linked to their existing land at the Broad street Car park.</p> <p>Making a public feature of the riverside location would make real contribution to attractiveness of arrival in Leominster for visitors using the main car park. A green and blue space would also be a boon for the many locals who regularly walk this route into town along the highly polluted and noisy A44.</p>			<i>Indicative Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>		
			£2million	5 years	Houses New commercial floorspace		
			<i>Demand Analysis</i>	A feasibility study has just been completed by consultants Jacobs for Herefordshire Council			
			<i>Potential funding sources</i>	Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service, One Public Estate			
			<i>Exit (Sustainability) Strategy</i>	To be operated by Police and Fire services			

Investment Proposal Form					
Project Name: Leominster Incubation Hub					
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy business</i>	<i>and</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>	
<i>Description:</i> There is an opportunity to create an incubation hub to support co-working and start-up businesses in the town. Potential locations could include the former Barclays bank building, the Old Priory, or the Marsh Court site. The Barclays Bank building is currently in private ownership and is in a central location but could be converted to premises to support the start-up of local service businesses that need low-cost office space/ hot desks, shared meeting rooms and other support. The Marsh court site offers the opportunity for new build space which could serve manufacturing and other start-up businesses.			<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
			£100,000-£500,000 Depending on final location	One to five years	New jobs  New businesses created
Demand Analysis	Core Strategy and Neighbourhood Plan				
Potential funding sources	Private Sector, Marches LEP, Herefordshire Council,				
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	To be self-financed from rent generated by occupiers				

Investment Proposal Form					
Project Name: Corn Square Regeneration					
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>		
<p><i>Description:</i> Corn Square is the most prominent built public space in the town serving as the town's market square and as a key hub/ focus for the Town centre including the Tourist Information centre and Town Council offices. The square also provides an important number of short-term car parking spaces in a central location which allows people to quickly and conveniently pop into town and quickly visit the shops and other services.</p> <p>The space is in need of investment to improve visitor experience of the town. The Square is designated for an investment of £750k as part of Leominster's Heritage Action Zone programme. The Leominster Cultural Consortium has identified the Square as one of a number key locations with potential to support the Town's cultural offer. A consultation is planned to confirm the nature and timing of this cultural offer which could include chargeable events like open air theatre, music and cinema and a range of themed markets and other activities. Once the planned consultation has been undertaken it should be used to inform the future role of Corn Square as a mixed short term car park and events space.</p> <p>More funding may be required to supplement the Heritage Action zone scheme.</p>		<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>	
		£750k	2 years	Increased tourism and visitor spend	
		Demand Analysis	Heritage Action Zone Evidence base		
		Potential funding sources	Heritage Action Zone, Herefordshire Council (Heritage Action Zone match funding)		
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	Herefordshire Council's Highways maintenance Programme				

Investment Proposal Form					
Project Name: Marsh Court (Former Dales Site)					
Intervention Framework	Economy and business	Tourism & the Visitor Economy	Town & Civic amenities		
Description	Cost	Timescale	Outputs		
<p>Economically transformative development in a key Leominster gateway.</p> <p>The phased development of the Dales Site at Marsh Court would open a key gateway to the town as a multi-purpose facility, potentially including a much-needed GP medical hub, light industrial units, senior living accommodation, a budget hotel and artisan food and drink retail - all of it breathing life into the town itself and driving its economy. This 15-acre site is currently available for redevelopment as the current occupiers continue their relocation to another site on the Enterprise Park. The site is in a key gateway position at the north eastern entrance to the Town. The current owners are considering a mixed-use development on the site which could include a new GP surgery/Health Hub with Pharmacy, Later living focused housing, sustainable housing, Accommodation provision, a business and commercial quarter, Family friendly amenity area, retail and tourism platform, micro grid green energy provision on the adjacent 3.5-acre site. New and improved existing links with the town center and local area.</p> <p>The Marsh Court site is owned in its entirety by Frank H Dale Ltd who have been prominent business owners, operators and employers in Leominster for several generations. The main business currently is a national engineering company. In 2014, the business began a £10 million investment, expansion and relocation programme to a new purpose made facility on Owen Way, having been limited by layout and access in their operation at Marsh Court. The next stage of this programme will release the 15-acre Mill Street (Marsh Court) site for redevelopment that could significantly enhance the A44/A49 Gateway into Leominster, a strategic and busy transport route to the Welsh Marches. This gives it the potential to incorporate a North Hereford "Tourism Platform" with its mixed retail- easy accessibility would enable both the capture of new and passing visitors who can then be signposted and clearly linked to the town centre and local attractions. The vision is to bring a vibrant, accessible and sustainability feel to the town's main entrance.</p> <p>£30-40 million of investment is required over a 1–10-year period.</p> <p>There is a potential funding gap requiring public intervention to bring the site forward for development. There is also the opportunity of public investment in the employment land/business units aspects of the project.</p>	<p>MTIP: £4million for employment land/business units</p> <p>Private/ Public sector: £35 million</p>	2022-2032	<p>Jobs</p> <p>New business start ups</p> <p>Support existing businesses</p>		
Demand Analysis	Further analysis required to established feasibility of multi-use site				
Potential funding sources	Public and private sector investment and loan finance				
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	Dependent on object of funding (i.e. Sustainable Construction Training Facility)				

Investment Proposal Form				
Project Name: Worcester Bromyard Leominster Greenway				
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>	
<p><i>Description:</i> The Worcester Bromyard Leominster Greenway project (<a href="http://wblgreenway.org.uk">wblgreenway.org.uk</a>) is a key potential development in the context of developing Leominster's tourism offer. It aims to create a 16 km walking, cycling and horse-riding track along, or as near as possible to, the course of the Leominster section of the original Worcester Bromyard Leominster railway.</p> <p>The Leominster section of the Greenway's development envisages three phases:</p> <p>Phase 1: creation of a multi-user track for walkers, cyclists, equestrians and people with limited mobility from Leominster Town Centre to Steens Bridge via Stoke Prior (6km). Precise route to be determined but should directly benefit town centre businesses with increased footfall and could link to proposed Leominster Green Infrastructure Corridor<sup>3</sup>. Providing gateway to WBL Greenway, and other trails thereby creating sustainable communities through tourism and reducing isolation<sup>4</sup></p> <p>Phase 2: creation of a similar multi-user track from Steens Bridge to Fencote (6km) creating sustainable communities through tourism and reducing isolation<sup>4</sup></p> <p>Phase 3: creation of a similar multi-user track from Fencote to Rowden (4km)</p> <p>Work on the Worcester to Bromyard Section will be underway in a phased approach at the same time with the final phase to link the towns together.</p>		<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
		<p>Projected costs for the Leominster section of the WBL Greenway are approximately £2.5 million (based on Sustrans estimates of £150k per km),</p>	2021-28	<p>Additional annual spend in town based on 16 km trail = £586k</p> <p>1.6 jobs (direct, indirect and induced) are supported or sustained for every km of route constructed.</p> <p>Bike hire and cycle / walking supplies shop</p>
Demand Analysis	Part of next stage feasibility			
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	Feasibility into longer term business case required			

investment Proposal Form					
Project Name: Old Priory Sale/Asset Transfer					
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>		
<i>Description</i> Leominster's Old Priory is part of a Benedictine monastic complex that dates back to 1123. It is currently owned by Herefordshire Council who, due to annual running costs of nearly £70,000 (on top of a maintenance backlog of £380,000 (excluding work to the roof), have expressed a willingness in the past to transfer asset ownership but have now indicated an intention to market the property for sale. The footprint of the building comprises 3,090 square metres and the building itself is insured for a sum of £2.09 million. It currently has tenants, including the Youth Hostel Association, Herefordshire ECHO, Leominster Meeting Centre and Leominster Food Bank. Its central location in the medieval heart of Leominster and protected position on the south bank of the river Lugg have been the subject of debate with the Leominster town's steering group and the Heritage Action Zone project is considering a number of repurposed uses including: relocation of Leominster museum, destination boutique hotel, cookery school, extended community asset.	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>		
	£2million	2021+	New jobs Increased tourism visitors and spend Heritage building protected		
<i>Demand Analysis</i>	Herefordshire is keen to find a solution due to historic and ongoing running costs. Leominster Town Council is currently considering an asset transfer.				
<i>Potential funding sources</i>	Central government grant funding, Marches LEP.				
<i>Exit (Sustainability) Strategy</i>	Asset transfer to Town Council or Sale to private sector				



Investment Proposal Form			
Project Name: Visitor Economy			
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>
<p><i>Description</i> Herefordshire's visitor economy has suffered from a lack of investment and marketing for many years and Leominster has been no exception. The new town vision identifies the development of tourism as a key strategic objective. The potential launch of the Herefordshire DBID in January 2022 should theoretically address the marketing issue and the repurposing of Corn Square led by the LHAZ would significantly enhance the town's appeal as a visitor attraction. Leominster could also benefit from a county-wide strategy to integrate festivals and events while the development of the Leominster leg of the WBL Greenway would directly address the aspiration to position the town as a gateway for walking and cycling holidays and other rural activities.</p> <p>The main Visitor Economy challenge for the town is a lack of functional quality accommodation. Within a five-mile radius, there are 2 hotels (Royal Oak and Talbot – both of which require significant investment), 1 Youth Hostel, 2 Guest Houses, 9 camp-sites and 63 self-catering cottages. Rose recommends strongly that stakeholders support their refurbishment and any new accommodation initiatives (e.g. development of a budget business hotel at Marsh Court) through the planning process.</p>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
	£2million (development of accommodation and general tourism offer)	2021+	jobs
			new business creation
			inward investment
			Support of existing businesses
<i>Demand Analysis</i>	Significant and well-tested demand for strategic support for Leominster's visitor economy		
<i>Potential funding sources</i>	Central government grant funding. Marches LEP, private sector		
<i>Exit (Sustainability) Strategy</i>	Destination Management Partnership		

Investment Proposal Form				
Project Name: Skills Development				
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>	
<p><i>Description</i> Stakeholders in Leominster's future <i>and national data</i> have identified the town's skills gap as a key challenge to its ongoing economic viability. As part of its community engagement, Rose convened a Skills working group at which the scale of the problem was identified and potential solutions were discussed. It was agreed that hands-on business engagement was critical and the Head of Earl Mortimer School and Sixth Form Centre expressed a desire and willingness to engage with the Hereford Skills Foundry project as soon as there was clarity on its funding award from the Towns Fund.</p> <p>A number of locations are possible for either the Skills Foundry or other training facilities such as a sustainable construction facility which could include the redeveloped the Dales site at Marsh Court or the Leominster Enterprise Park. It will be important to ensure that employers in the town are linked to training providers such as the Herefordshire Group Training Association, the Herefordshire and Ludlow College as well as sector specific training opportunities such as Wolverhampton Universities new Health and social Care training facility in Telford. Initiatives such as a business placement passport to encourage young people in the town to build links with local employers are also important. Skills issues can also be addressed through providing the right kind of space, networking opportunities and support for smaller scale commercial research projects and business/FEI/HEI links to engage with real world technical and business solutions.</p>	<i>Indicative Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>	
	£100,000 (rollout of Skills Foundry facilities)	2021	Upskilling of local workforce	
			Support for existing and new businesses	
			More compelling inward investment proposition	
<i>Demand Analysis</i>	The development of Leominster's economy is constrained by its skills base. Stakeholder meetings with business leaders have confirmed the urgent need for action asap.			
<i>Potential funding sources</i>	Central Government. Maarches LEP. Private sector business community.			
<i>Exit (Sustainability) Strategy</i>	To be taken forward by a local training provider			

## Next Steps

This is one of five Market Town Economic Investment Plans commissioned by Herefordshire Council for each of Herefordshire's market towns.

Herefordshire Council has identified projects that could be considered (subject to business case) for support through their Employment Land and Incubation Space capital programme allocation. As a result in addition to this Market Town Investment Plan, Rose Regeneration has completed Outline Business Cases (OBCs) and Project Mandates for the following projects for the council's consideration.

An OBC has been developed and submitted for: the Marsh Court Project

Project Mandates have been developed and submitted for: the Leominster Incubation Hub and Enterprise park projects

Once the Plans, OBCs and Project Mandates have been considered by Herefordshire Council it is recommended that the council works with the five market town councils to establish an appropriate delivery mechanism to oversee, secure funding for and monitor the delivery of the Market Town Economic Investment Plans. This delivery mechanism should be led and supported by Herefordshire Council and should involve representatives from each Town Council.

Herefordshire Council: <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/vision>

Marches LEP: <https://www.marcheslep.org.uk>

# APPENDIX 1 STRATEGIC CONTEXT SUMMARY

This table summarises an analysis of all extant policies affecting Leominster at a national, regional, county and Leominster-specific level developed over the last five years.

National context	Regional Context	Herefordshire Context	Leominster Context
<p><i>Industrial Strategy</i> – ‘places’ foundation: tackling entrenched regional disparities.</p> <p>Industrial Strategy <i>Productivity Evidence Review</i> – some cities and rural county areas have been falling behind, including Herefordshire. County Councils Network analysis of GVA in 36 county areas found Herefordshire to be experiencing the smallest economic growth 5.3% between 2014 and 2018).</p> <p>A low carbon future in a changing climate – UK obligations under the 2015 Paris Agreement - setting a net zero target for carbon emissions by 2050.</p> <p>HM Treasury/Government department resources - levelling up economic opportunity across all nations and regions of the country by investing in infrastructure, innovation and people.</p> <p>Build Better, Build Greener, Build Faster - reforming the planning system (NPPF, <i>Planning for the Future White Paper</i>) to give more emphasis to quality, design and the environment.</p> <p>COVID-19 recovery measures - protecting and restoring livelihoods, improving living standards and new economic opportunities.</p>	<p><i>Local Industrial Strategy</i> and <i>Strategic Economic Plan</i> – inclusive growth, connectivity, skills, enterprise and innovation, trade and investment. Herefordshire’s sectoral specialisms: food and drink, education, advanced manufacturing and engineering, defence and construction.</p> <p>Growth opportunities for (i) manufacturing and engineering, (ii) food supply chain/agri-tech innovation, and (iii) cyber security and resilience.</p> <p><i>Skills Plan</i> and <i>Skills Sectors Deep Dives</i> – the provision of Higher Education provision and Further Education courses relevant to these growth opportunities in Herefordshire.</p> <p>Cyber Resilience Alliance / <i>Science and Innovation Audit</i> – the largest cluster of cyber security activity outside of London: growth in direct jobs, wider investment in products and processes and acting as a regional testbed.</p> <p><i>Growth Hub</i> and <i>Enterprise Zone</i> with specialisms in defence and security at Skylon Park, Hereford.</p> <p><i>Economic recovery plan</i> – investment in infrastructure and jobs: Hereford city streetscape improvements and NMITE Skylon campus development.</p>	<p>Herefordshire is a cold spot for social mobility – it is in the bottom 20 list of Local Authorities in England in terms of the chances that disadvantaged children will do well at school and get a good job.</p> <p>The importance of creating high-quality, highly skilled jobs against a backdrop of traditional low-skill, low-wage economy. NMITE</p> <p><i>County Plan</i> – improving sustainability, connectivity, wellbeing and becoming carbon neutral by 2030-2031: Talk Community (hubs), community wealth building (increasing the amount of money that stays in the local economy); and Sustainable Food County (a whole system approach to tackling obesity, diet related ill health, food poverty, waste and climate change).</p> <p><i>Hereford Town Investment Plan</i> – intended to deliver urban regeneration, a stronger skills base, and improved connectivity in the city. Under the strapline ‘green and fair’ the TIP recognises Hereford’s connectivity to market towns and countryside (e.g. tourism – attract and disperse approach). Telling stories about place, identifying and implementing a vision, strong partnership working and securing funding/investment are all needed for pandemic Recovery and Transformation.</p> <p>Skylon Park – Enterprise Zone for defence and security, advanced manufacturing, food and drink processing and sustainable technologies. Local Development Order to simplify planning arrangements. Weaving old industrial landscape with future proofing to allow for growth and change. Intended to act as a <i>catalyst for economic growth</i> across Herefordshire.</p> <p><i>Hereford Transport Strategy</i> describes tragic flows, delays and congestion schemes which increase physical activity (e.g. cycling, walking) generate high value-for-money.</p>	<p>Leominster is a principal market town and while it fulfils residential, employment, cultural, retail, tourism and recreational needs for its local community and a wider catchment, it has defined geographical boundaries to deliver place-based transformative change.</p> <p><i>Herefordshire Economic Vision</i> – enabling market towns to maximise their role in building thriving and distinctive service centres.</p> <p><i>Herefordshire Core Strategy</i> – Leominster supporting housing need (including affordable housing), reducing the need to travel, employment generation/diversification, improving access to services, and viewing the environment as an economic asset.</p> <p><i>Leominster in 2031 will be one of the country’s more sustainable towns, vibrant and bustling with a prosperous, unpolluted and healthy environment’</i> – this vision, set out in <i>Leominster Neighbourhood Plan</i> attaches sustainable development criteria to areas of the Core Strategy, ensuring proposals that come forward contribute to a healthier community and protect and enhance the character of the town and surrounding area.</p> <p>The <i>Local Transport Plan 2016-2031</i> – there is a need to carry out a transport study to review the requirements set out in the Core Strategy and Neighbourhood Plan. The need for a station review at Leominster and to develop rail access improvements.</p>

## APPENDIX 2 – PROJECT PRIORITISATION

PROJECTS	Theme	DESCRIPTION	Indicative Costs (,000)	Contribution to Zero Carbon	More Visitors and Inward Investment	Increased GVA	Increased Business Diversity	Higher Skills	Leads to Better Population Balance	Greater Equity	Equality Agenda	Score
Skills Development - Ledbury, Leominster and Bromyard	Skills Investment	To support the town's viability as a thriving balanced economy, the town needs to develop integrated and forward-looking skills development capacity to support its residents and to attract inward investment. The Skills Foundry project, developed as a collaboration between NMITE, HCA and Rural Media as part of Hereford's Stronger Towns Funding bid, aims to include Herefordshire's market towns in a hub and spoke delivery model and will actively engage with Leominster.	£500	3	3	4	4	5	4	5	5	82.5%
Corn Square Regeneration - Leominster	Public Realm	Corn Square is one of the main focal points in the Town Centre. The space is in need of investment to improve visitor experience and cultural offer of the town.	£2,000	4.5	5	5	4	2	4	4	4	81.25%
Marsh Court - Leominster	Employment Space/Housing	This 18-acre site is currently available for redevelopment as the current occupiers relocate to another site in the Town. The site is in a key gateway position at the northern entrance to the Town. The current owners are promoting a mixed-use development on the site which could include a new GP surgery, housing for older generations, a low-cost chain hotel, business units and commercial retail with a green energy provision on the adjacent site.	£4,000	2	3	5	5	5	4	4	3	77.5%
Leominster Enterprise Park Extension	Employment Space	There is the opportunity to expand Leominster Enterprise Park will to serve the medium to long term employment needs of Leominster by bringing forward an extension of up to 10 hectares to the south of the existing enterprise park. A range of employment uses and start up units could be accommodated on the site	£5,000	2	4	5	5	3	4	4	2	72.5%
Leominster Railway Station/ Mobi Hub	Public Realm/Transport	The core concept of the delivery of a Mobi Hub at Leominster Station will require the acquisition of land to establish a rail based 'park and ride' facility, in addition to the introduction of an electric bus service linking the railway station and other key locations in the town and surrounding area.	£3,000	4	4	3	4	2	4	4	3	70%
Tourism Accommodation Offer - Leominster	Tourism	Tourism Accommodation Offer There is a shortage of overnight accommodation to serve the Town both business visitors and tourists are not currently catered for. There is a need to identify sites for a high-quality boutique hotel, a national chain hotel such as Travelodge or Premier Inn, a campsite close to the town and more self-catering options. The refurbishment of the Royal Oak or Talbot Hotels could be options as well as the redevelopment of the Old Priory site. Project description.	£2,000	2	5	4	4	3	3	3	2	65%
Leominster Incubation Hub	Employment Space	There is an opportunity to create an incubation hub to support start-up businesses in the Town. Potential locations could include the former Barclays bank building or the Marsh Court site. The Barclays Bank building is currently in private ownership and is in a central location but could be converted to premises to support the start up of local service businesses that need low cost office space/ hot desks, shared meeting rooms and other support.	£250	1	2	5	5	3	4	3	3	65%
Old Priory - Leominster	Commercial Development	The proposal is to re-purpose Leominster's Old Priory part of a Benedictine monastic complex that dates back to 1123. A number of alternative uses are possible and could include the relocation of Leominster museum, a destination boutique hotel and cooking school or use as an extended community hub.	£2,000	2	5	3	4	3	2	4	2	62.5%
Leominster Fire Station relocation and redevelopment	Housing	There is an opportunity to relocate the Fire Station from its current location in Broad Street and collocate it with the West Mercia Police Station on the Enterprise Park. This will also allow the existing site to be redeveloped as a mixed retail/housing scheme.	£2,000	2	2	3	3	3	4	3	5	62.5%

Worcester, Bromyard, Leominster Greenway	Green Infrastructure	This project looks at linking Worcester, Bromyard, Leominster and possibly Kington by long distance footpath/cycle way and horse-riding track along, or as near as possible to, the course of the original Worcester Bromyard Leominster railway.	£1,000	4	5	4	4	2	2	2	4	52.5%
Shop/Building Frontage Scheme - Leominster	Commercial Development	A public sector grant scheme is proposed to encourage investment in the frontages of shops and other town centre buildings to make the town a place to visit and spend time in. Elsewhere in the country grant schemes have been successfully used to encourage property owners to invest in town centre properties.	£75	2	5	5	4	2	3	2	2	52.5%
Food and Drink Attraction	Commercial Development	Creation of a brewery and visitor centre	£1,000	0	5	4	3	2	3	2	2	52.5%

## APPENDIX 3 - KEY EMPLOYMENT SECTORS

The table below shows how key employment sectors (including change over time) across all 5 market towns in Hereford align:

### Business: Location Quotient & Job Change

2011 super output area - lower layer	A. Agriculture	B. Mining and quarrying	C. Manufacturing	D. Electricity, gas, water supply	E. Construction	G. Wholesale and retail	H. Transportation and storage	I. Accommodation and food service activities	J. Information and communication	K. Financial and insurance	L. Real estate activities	M. Professional, scientific and technical	N. Administrative and support service	O. Public administration and defence	P. Education	Q. Human health and social work	R. Arts, entertainment and recreation	S. Other service	Total	
<b>Leominster</b>																				
Total	0	0	670	0	20	520	1,345	105	185	35	50	35	315	150	60	280	970	160	115	5,015
Change 15-18	0	0	230	0	0	-120	-325	25	-15	5	-50	-65	115	-45	-15	-35	50	35	-30	-240
LQ	0	0.0	1.7	0.0	0.6	2.2	1.7	0.4	0.5	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.7	0.3	0.3	0.6	1.5	1.3	1.1	1.0
<b>Bromyard</b>																				
Total	20	0	825	0	0	180	385	10	190	40	10	20	185	85	10	215	520	25	90	2,810
Change 15-18	-20	0	195	0	0	20	75	-50	60	-10	-20	-40	40	-30	0	25	-90	-10	-15	130
LQ	1.2	0.0	3.7	0.0	0.0	1.4	0.9	0.1	0.9	0.3	0.1	0.4	0.7	0.3	0.1	0.9	1.5	0.4	1.6	1.0
<b>Kington</b>																				
Total	30	0	85	0	0	60	150	35	60	15	0	25	65	80	5	50	200	10	10	880
Change 15-18	0	0	-90	0	0	5	-50	-20	-20	5	0	-5	0	10	0	-50	-50	-10	-5	-280
LQ	5.6	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	1.5	1.1	0.8	0.9	0.4	0.0	1.6	0.8	1.0	0.1	0.6	1.8	0.5	0.6	1.0
<b>Ledbury</b>																				
Total	0	0	665	0	10	55	905	250	315	35	15	45	360	70	50	270	420	180	45	3,690
Change 15-18	-20	0	-335	0	-25	-10	-215	-35	-20	-5	-15	5	-15	-70	-5	100	60	-20	0	-625
LQ	0.0	0.0	2.2	0.0	0.4	0.3	1.6	1.4	1.1	0.2	0.1	0.7	1.1	0.2	0.3	0.8	0.9	2.0	0.6	1.0
<b>Ross on Wye</b>																				
Total	0	0	595	0	30	110	1,190	120	480	130	60	160	320	385	30	400	395	100	375	5,080
LQ	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.9	0.5	1.5	0.5	1.3	0.6	0.3	1.8	0.7	0.8	0.1	0.9	0.9	0.8	3.7	1.0
Change 15-18	0	0	25	0	-10	40	15	-10	15	35	-25	15	80	-165	-10	90	-85	-35	-40	-65





# Ross on Wye Investment Plan 2021



*“The continuing relaxed and gentle attractiveness of Ross in its gateway setting and its unique status as the only Town in the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty has fuelled its growth as a retirement and commuting centre. Against that background the challenge is to ensure that Ross will continue to be a favourite tourist destination but also enable development to ensure that our locally born young people have access to affordable housing, employment for a wide range of skills and a high quality of life within the town”.*

Cllr Jane Roberts Mayor, Ross-on-Wye 2019-20

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Market Town Investment Plans

This Ross-on-Wye Town Investment Plan is one of five Market Town Investment Plans commissioned by Herefordshire Council. Herefordshire's market towns, including Ross, play a critical role in the county's economy, as focal points for: employment; retail; tourism, leisure and culture; business investment and growth; housing; and access to services. The market towns often provide the key interface between the wider rural areas, access to employment and local services, and connectivity to and from Hereford and other neighbouring areas.

The market town investment plans identify a long term vision for the growth of the towns and a programme of potential projects to enable sustainable economic development to deliver the vision. The market town investment plans will also play a key role in the development of a new long term county wide 'big plan'. The big plan will identify how we will address long term economic challenges in creating new opportunities for growth across the county and how we retain/ attract younger generations, creating great places to live, study, work and invest.

## The Vision for Ross-on-Wye

"Our objective is to make Ross-on-Wye an excellent place to live and work, a great destination for visits and holidays, and a place where businesses and social enterprises can start, grow, innovate and thrive."

## The Main Challenges facing the town

Ross-on-Wye is the second largest market town in Herefordshire with a population of just over 10,000. According to the English Indices of Deprivation 2019 Ross is less deprived than England on all measures. However, it has 8% more over 65s than the national average and fewer jobs per head than the Herefordshire average.

Between 2015 and 2018 Ross-on-Wye saw a small reduction of 65 jobs (1.3% of the total). And more recently during the early part of the pandemic, between April and September 2020, experienced an increase in benefit claimants from 300 to 350 (17%).

## The Town's Assets and Strengths

Ross-on-Wye is well connected. It is located on the A40 which runs through Gloucester to Abergavenny and beyond. The town also has good road links to Birmingham and the Midlands via the M50 motorway (the 'Ross-on-Wye spur' from the M5) and to South Wales via the A40/A449 dual carriageway.

Ross-on-Wye is located within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and is next to the River Wye. Its picturesque buildings include the Market House and The Prospect.

Ross Development Trust RDT was incorporated in 2019 to support local residents in a number of ways. This formal community charitable structure provide the basis for the RDT to undertake delivery activities as an accountable body potentially including some of the projects listed in this Investment Plan.

A new Community Housing Trust has been set up with a view to establishing a Community Land Trust for asset transfer of land for housing that would be designated for local residents.

## Issues in Ross-on-Wye

Issues in Ross-on-Wye	Targets
Demand for sustainable employment land and housing	5 years – Ross reaches the county average level of jobs per head 10-15 years – Ross achieves a parity between economically active people and local jobs
Scope for new sustainable mixed use development	30 years – Ross is a sustainable settlement with reduced net outflow of commuters and an enhanced functionality as the core employment base for the south of the county.
Scope for enhanced visitor economy	5 years new tourism infrastructure in place.
Dilapidated leisure infrastructure meriting enhancement	10-15 years 25% increase in visitors from STEAM base (2016/17) – suggesting 400,000 visitors per year
Greater realisation of the potential of river Wye as a visitor asset in Ross-on-Wye	30 years Ross recognized as a key access point to the river Wye and the cycle access points for the County
Enhanced community facilities	5 years enhanced townscape increases the civic appeal of the town and its visitor numbers
Tired Public Realm	
Weak visitor economy	10-15 years a pattern of private sector investment in the urban fabric of Ross on Wye emerges 30 years Ross on Wye has a well established sustainable mix of people and visitors supported by a dynamic civic core of amenities

## Project summary

The MTIP identifies a number of potential projects that will contribute to the delivery of the town's vision. These include:

Development of **employment** opportunities:

- Mixed use development on Model Farm
- Broadmeadow and Tanyard Lane Development

Improvements to support the visitor economy:

- Brampton and Sellack Cycleway
- Riverside Canoe Bunkhouse & pontoons
- Museum Without Walls
- Civic amenities and projects aimed at young people
- Enhanced sports centre and skate park
- Market House and Apron Plaza and High Street pedestrianisation
- Community facilities at the Ryefield Centre
- Shop/building frontage grant scheme

The MTIP shows how each of these projects contribute to the delivery of Ross-on-Wye's Vision. It will provide a platform for successful funding bids as suitable funding opportunities become available.

Herefordshire Council will continue to work with Ross-on-Wye Town Council and other local stakeholders to identify new project and funding opportunities, carry out feasibility and foundation work, and support local organisations to apply for funding.

## BACKGROUND

This Ross-on-Wye Town Investment Plan is one of five Market Town Investment Plans commissioned by Herefordshire Council. Herefordshire’s market towns, including Ross, play a critical role in the county’s economy, as focal points for: employment; retail, tourism, leisure and culture; business investment and growth; housing; and access to services. The market towns often provide the key interface between the wider rural areas, access to employment and local services, and connectivity to and from Hereford and other neighbouring areas.

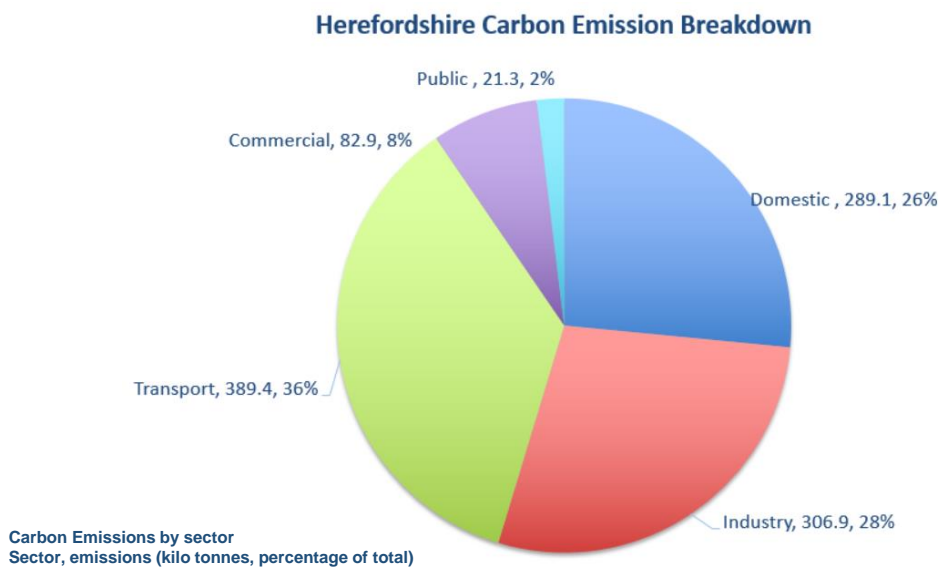
The market town investment plans identify a long term vision for the growth of the towns and a programme of potential projects to enable sustainable economic development to deliver the vision. The market town investment plans will also play a key role in the development of a new long term county wide ‘big plan’. The big plan will identify how we will address long term economic challenges in creating new opportunities for growth across the county and how we retain/ attract younger generations, creating great places to live, study, work and invest.

### Climate and Ecological Emergency

On 8 March 2019 Herefordshire Council declared a Climate Emergency following unanimous support for a climate emergency resolution at full council. This declaration was subsequently updated and strengthened on 11 December 2020 when Herefordshire Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) following support for a climate and ecological emergency resolution at full council.

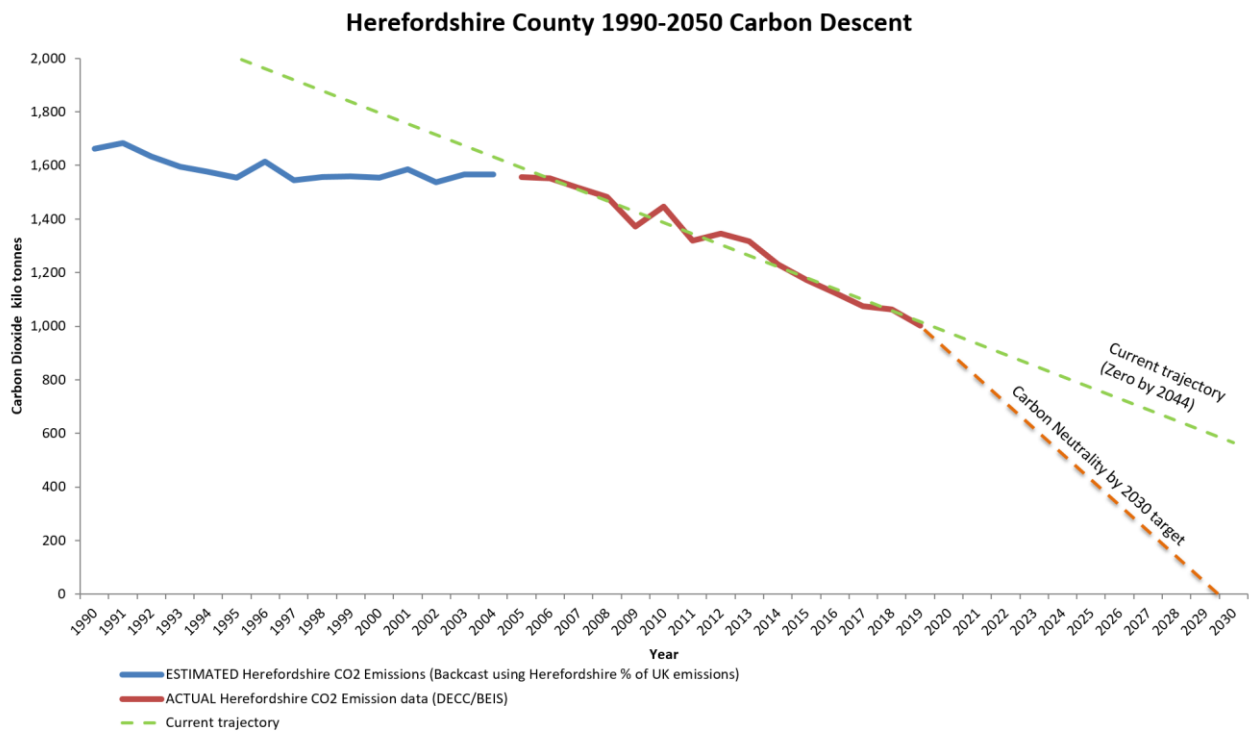
Further to these declarations the council approved the ambitious new target to become zero carbon and nature rich by 2030.

The below chart illustrates Herefordshire’s current carbon emission split and the areas of focus for the Ross-on-Wye MTIP to support the Herefordshire’s journey to net zero.



In order to achieve this target, as illustrated below, a new Herefordshire Climate & Nature Partnership and Board have been established to catalyse and coordinate new action across the County. These actions have been grouped into a series of six different action plans including: Housing & Buildings; Transport; Energy; Farming & Land Use; Waste and Food.

The details of the Herefordshire Climate & Nature Partnership, including the six themed action plans are set out: <https://zerocarbon.herefordshire.gov.uk/>



As a key strategic plan the Ross-on-Wye MTIP is strongly committed to delivering Herefordshire’s net zero and nature rich commitment and will work in partnership with its communities, businesses and the Herefordshire Climate & Nature Board to achieve this through the development and delivery of the plan.

### Community Including the Impact of Covid-19

The damage to the economy and to health from Covid-19 has been felt across Herefordshire. During 2020 and the early part of 2021, the pandemic reached all corners of the county and has had an impact on every community. During 2020, the UK economy contracted by 9.9% (office of National Statistics<sup>1</sup>). It remains to be seen what the long-term impact of the pandemic will be, but within many sectors we are likely to see a shift to working, learning and engaging in commerce remotely on digital platforms.

The projects proposed in this Plan have been developed through engagement with key stakeholders in Ross-on-Wye and will help the town to attract essential investment as the need to promote recovery opens up new funding opportunities.

Attitudes towards working from home have changed substantially since the start of the COVID pandemic and many workers will continue to work from home long after it has ended.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossdomesticproductgdp/articles/coronavirusandtheimpactonoutputintheuconomy/december2020>

There could be positive implications for Herefordshire's market towns in what is being termed 'hybrid working'. The Centre for Towns recently reported that its research indicates "big potential for places to market themselves as online working destinations" as predictions indicate that the longer people are required to work at home, the greater the adoption of home working will be beyond the current situation.

The best performing towns are ones with a healthy mix of age groups and professional types. An increase in home working would have a significant positive impact in rebalancing Herefordshire's market towns demographics and towns should therefore actively promote themselves to attract in and retain a thriving working age population.

Towns will need to work closely with Herefordshire Council to ensure that digital connectivity is adequate to support the needs of home workers. Clearly Herefordshire market towns have a significant 'quality of life' offer, with a good range of local services.

## Economy

Herefordshire faces a number long term economic challenges such as the lowest level of productivity of any county in England<sup>2</sup>, a low wage economy (19% below the national average<sup>3</sup>), a deficit of higher level skills (41.4% of the population has NVQ level 4 national average of 43.1%<sup>4</sup>), an aging population (25% over 65 compared to a 18% nationally), and a significant shortage of labour (2.9% claiming unemployment benefits<sup>5</sup>).

However, the county has a significant number of opportunities, including local strengths in food and drink, tourism, and agriculture, specialisms in fast growing global markets like cyber security, an outstanding quality of life, and new university (New Model Institute in Technology and Engineering). The county is also very well placed to benefit from a post Covid lifestyle trend, as people now look to increasingly work remotely away from populated cities to locations offering a better quality of life.

The market towns have a crucial role to play in addressing the long term economic challenges, and realising the county's many opportunities. They are key local centres for housing, culture, access to public services, tourism, with strong local communities and identities. Establishing great vibrant places to live and meaningful employment opportunities will be key to rebalancing the aging population by retaining/ attracting younger generations to study, live and work in the county for generations to come.

Ross-on-Wye is particularly well placed to realise some of these opportunities, significantly contributing the future economic success of the county as a whole. It is a highly attractive and popular market town, strategically well placed on the road network (A40/ M50), offering a great place to live, visit and work.

As people's approach to work and quality of life requirements change, Ross-on-Wye is well placed to benefit from an increasing transition to a digital economy, with people working from home or in flexible workspaces in attractive, less densely populated locations away from city centres.

The Plan identifies a vision for growth and a programme of investment projects required to deliver the vision and support the economic development of Ross-on-Wye over the next fifteen years. Funding from many different sources will be needed to achieve them. The Plan identifies the timetable for delivery, lead body and potential sources of investment for each of the projects.

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<sup>2</sup> [ONS Regional Differences in Productivity July 2021](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Understanding Herefordshire ONS data 2019](#)

<sup>4</sup> [ONS Population Survey 2020](#)

<sup>5</sup> [ONS claimant count October 2021](#)



## CONTEXT

Ross-on-Wye is identified as one of 23 'opportunity towns' in the Marches LEP Strategic Economic Plan. These towns have real potential to deliver stronger economic growth through investments in a range of activities to address the market failures common across the Marches region.

The Marches LEP Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) provides the context of the functioning economic geography of the Marches area and identifies common barriers and opportunities for localities, and their wider local regional and national partnerships, to play a role in improving economic performance.

All 5 towns and Hereford work as an economic system as shown by transport origin and destination data: 20,000 of the 29,000 people who work and live in Herefordshire in the context of these settlements work in Hereford<sup>6</sup>. The economic development of these towns as a group is the best way of underpinning the overall economic development of the county.

The income measure within the Indices of Deprivation 2019 measures the proportion of the population in a Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) that live in income deprivation [this includes people who are out-of-work and people who are in-work but have low earnings]. There are 10 LSOAs in Herefordshire that are amongst the 25% most deprived nationally in this domain – 1 of these is located in Ross-on-Wye.

### Ross Town Investment Plan – relationship to the Neighbourhood Development Plan

“The Ross-on-Wye Neighbourhood Development Plan sets out to enhance existing planning guidance by making use of local knowledge, and the views of the people who live here, to shape the future of the town.

This Plan seeks to put Ross itself into the driving seat of its own destiny over the next 12 years, to the maximum extent that this is possible”.

These words from the Foreword of the Ross NDP set a clear context within which the people of Ross will appraise developments and projects that will shape the future of their town. There is therefore a close read across between the Ross-on-Wye NDP and the Town Investment Plan.

The Ross MTIP is not a policy document. The purpose of the MTIP is to identify, assess and consider the deliverability of projects and activities that, with the necessary support and relevant funding, can deliver the policy and strategy objectives in both the Ross-on-Wye NDP and wider local regional and national economic policy context.

## THE VISION FOR ROSS-ON-WYE

Our vision is to work together as a community to maintain, sustain and improve the quality of life in our historic market town so that Ross-on-Wye remains a vibrant and inclusive place for residents, businesses and visitors.

### Objectives

Our objective is to make Ross-on-Wye an excellent place to live and work, a great destination for visits and holidays, and a place where businesses and social enterprises can start, grow, innovate and thrive.

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<sup>6</sup> ONS: commuting 2011 census

To achieve this we will:

Preserve, develop and promote our natural assets for the enjoyment of all residents and visitors.

Work collaboratively to support the sustainable development and growth of local businesses, to encourage the development of skills and enterprise, to secure investments in business infrastructure to create rewarding and high value jobs for local people.

Encourage, support and promote inclusive cultural activities for all residents and visitors to benefit the local economy, drive creativity and innovation, improve quality of life and enhance our reputation as a cultural centre.

Work to reduce the impacts of our collective activities including our use of transport and energy, our construction methods, food production and water usage and management.

Invest in the social fabric of our town to create an inclusive leisure and cultural offer. This vision provides the basis for our Town Investment Plan

## THE MAIN CHALLENGES FACING THE TOWN

Ross is the second largest market town in Herefordshire with a population of just over 10,000. According to the English Indices of Deprivation 2019 Ross:

- Is less deprived than the England average on all measures.
- Is the second largest market town in Herefordshire with a population of 11,309; with 8% more over 65s than the national average<sup>7</sup>
- Has fewer jobs per head than the Herefordshire average although relatively higher than all other market towns in the county.
- Experienced an increase in benefit claimants in the early stages of the pandemic (April to September 2020) from 300 to 350 (17%)
- Experienced the loss of 65 jobs (1.3% of the total) between 2015-18.
- Overall highest number of jobs across all 5 towns. Distinctive sectors: manufacturing, wholesale/retail, transport, accommodation and food, real estate, services.
- Has fewer low value and more high value properties than the national average.

Notwithstanding this relative status, however, and in common with the other market towns in the county, the principal challenges for Ross relate to scale and functionality, and a skewed demography in terms of economic workforce.

Relatively low job density, a declining jobs market in the town (pre-covid) with comparatively high levels of out-commuting, combined with a high proportion of over 65s renders the town vulnerable to the persistence of this imbalance between scale, functionality and demographics.

The Ross NDP recognises the need to address these challenges through its principle objectives:

1. To protect and enhance all aspects of the environment.
2. To deliver more housing, in particular to meet local needs.
3. To protect, enhance and diversify the local economy.
4. To ensure an accessible and well-connected town for all.

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<sup>7</sup> [Lower layer Super Output Area population estimates \(National Statistics\) - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

5. To protect, enhance and diversify the town's social and cultural assets.

The Town Investment Plan proposes a number of 'projects' and interventions that are consistent with these objectives and that would act as the means to deliver the short, medium and long term actions required to effect the changes needed to deliver the Town Vision.

The TIP is primarily an economic development and delivery plan. It seeks to provide an economic rationale for projects on the basis of the benefits and impacts that would be derived as a result of investment and implementation.

The TIP therefore focusses on projects that will, for instance, deliver employment land to support business investment in growth and employment, and projects that will support the growth of tourism by providing facilities and an enhanced visitor experience.

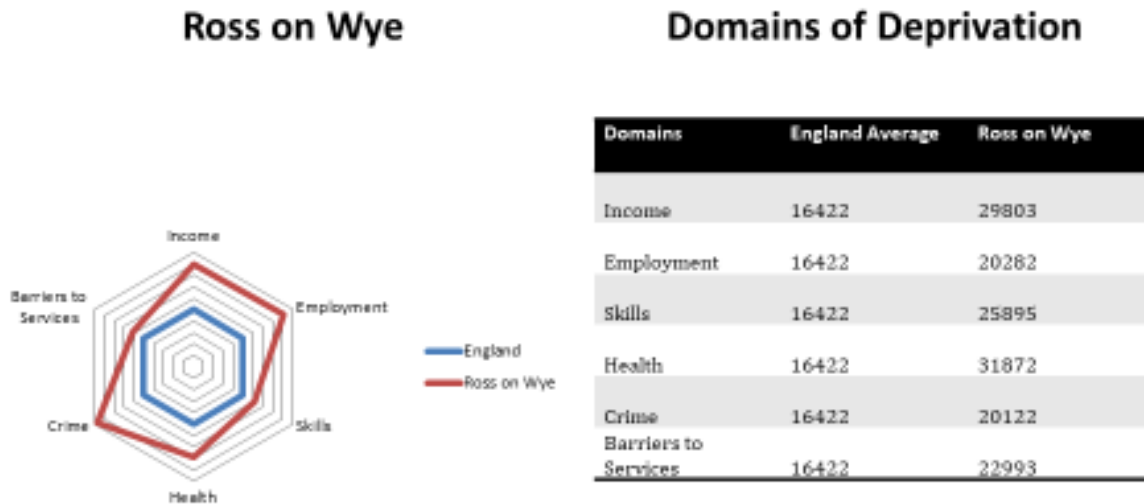
In tandem there are many viable projects and initiatives that are not considered within the TIP, but are contained within other strategic plans, including a number of projects and activities highlighted within the NDP as 'Practical Projects'.

An assessment of employment trends in Ross-on-Wye highlights:

- Fewer jobs per head than the Herefordshire average although relatively higher than all other market towns in the county.
- Increase in benefit claimants (April to September 2020) from 300 to 350 (17%)
- A loss of 65 jobs (1.3% of the total) between 2015-18

We have reviewed the 2019 Indices of deprivation to identify the main challenges facing the town the key findings of this work are summarised below:

## English Indices of Deprivation 2019



The radar diagram ranks all 32,844 Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in England according to the indices of deprivation. Each LSOA has a population of circa 1,500 people or 650 households.

- The blue line indicates the England average;
- Within the blue line is more deprived;
- Outside the blue line is less deprived.

The radar diagram above is derived from the English Indices of Deprivation 2019. It ranks each neighbourhood in England in terms of their characteristics in relation to the following indicator sets:

- The Income Deprivation Domain measures the proportion of the population experiencing deprivation relating to low income.
- The Employment Deprivation Domain measures the proportion of the working-age population in an area involuntarily excluded from the labour market.
- The Education, Skills and Training Deprivation Domain measures the lack of attainment and skills in the local population.
- The Health Deprivation and Disability Domain measures the risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health. The domain measures morbidity, disability and premature mortality but not aspects of behaviour or environment that may be predictive of future health deprivation.
- The Crime Domain measures the risk of personal and material victimisation at local level.

- The Barriers to Housing and Services Domain measures the physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services. The indicators fall into two sub-domains: ‘geographical barriers’, which relate to the physical proximity of local services, and ‘wider barriers’ which includes issues relating to access to housing such as affordability.

### Regional Economic and Industrial Strategy

The Marches Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) and the draft Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) highlight some of the issues facing Herefordshire as a whole. These are principally concerned with:

Theme	Issue
Relationship between <i>Growth Points</i> and their hinterlands	Hereford is seen as central to the economic success of a much wider hinterland.
<i>Skills gap</i>	Herefordshire has the second highest proportion of young people classified as NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) in the West Midlands.
<i>Higher education</i>	Enabling students to study locally and attract new students into the area, i.e. through the establishment of NMITE college.
<i>Demography</i>	Herefordshire has a declining working age population.
<i>Connectivity</i>	The peripheral location of Hereford is highlighted as impacting on business efficiency in the area.

The draft LIS identifies major growth opportunities around:

- ensuring future competitiveness and success in high-tech, energy efficient manufacturing and engineering;
- securing the future food supply chain and achieving modern and environmentally sustainable production, packaging and distribution through agri-tech innovation; and
- developing world-renowned excellence in cyber security and resilience.

The challenges facing Ross are similarly reflected across the wider marches region. The Marches Strategic Economic Plan<sup>8</sup> characterises these challenges in terms of ‘market failures’ as follows:

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/The-Marches-LEP-Strategic-Economic-Plan-2019.pdf>

Market Failure	Impact
A lack of critical mass to drive economic activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reduced opportunities for the types of organic growth that arises from business clustering,</li> <li>• more limited opportunities to attract talented employees and inward investment;</li> <li>• long travel distances for business and employees who need to access jobs and markets by car; and</li> <li>• a general lack of economic momentum in growth sectors.</li> </ul>
Lack of identity and appeal to investors	The Marches region does not appear to be on the overseas investors' radar impacting on the area's ability to attract private sector investment at scale.
Limited university offer or graduate jobs leading to a loss of the younger highly skilled generation	<p>This exacerbates demographic trends, where the economic value generated will be dependent upon a shrinking base with greater demands placed upon it.</p> <p>NMITE will provide additional HE capacity in the area of integrated engineering as it builds its first cohorts of students.</p>

## THE TOWN'S ASSETS AND STRENGTHS

### We have set out below the key assets and strengths of the town

The town is located on the A40 which runs through Gloucester to Abergavenny and beyond. The town also has good road links to Birmingham and the Midlands via the M50 motorway (the 'Ross-on-Wye spur' from the M5) and to South Wales via the A40/A449 dual carriageway.

Ross is located within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the River Wye.

Ross contains picturesque buildings, with buildings such as the Market House and The Prospect.

### The Ross Development Trust

The Ross Development Trust RDT was incorporated in 2019 to support local residents in a number of ways. This formal community charitable structure provide the basis for the RDT to undertake delivery activities as an accountable body including some of the projects listed in this Investment Plan.

### The Ross Community Housing Trust

Similarly a nascent Community Housing Trust has been set up with a view to establishing a Community Land Trust for asset transfer of land for housing that would be designated for local residents.

## SPATIAL CONTEXT

Herefordshire's Core Strategy contains a chapter on Place Shaping. This describes Ross-on-Wye as the market town serving the south of the county, and how it will be supported in 'continuing to fulfil a diverse range of roles as a centre for residential, employment, recreational and cultural services'.

Ross-on-Wye also acts as a service centre for the surrounding rural area and connections to the motorway network also make it an important gateway into the county, and a tourist destination in its own right.

The Strategy sets out how strategic growth on the town's periphery as well as smaller scale growth in the town itself will be supported. It describes the 900 new homes proposed southeast of the town at Hildersley [Model Farm] – including the potential for sustainable transport links to the town centre, and the role of the Neighbourhood Development Plan in providing a range of smaller sites of less than 100 dwellings in and around the town.

The Strategy seeks to ensure both this single strategic site and smaller sites are sensitive to the town, its historical features and the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) surrounding it.

The Strategy further signals the need to reduce travel by private car through sustainable transport modes (e.g. walking, cycling) and by promoting local job opportunities. The urban extension, for example, is located on an area of medium-low landscape value and potential new links such as green corridors will be encouraged. Residential development in and around Ross-on-Wye should ensure that areas prone to flooding from the River Wye are avoided and that any future flood risk is addressed through sustainable urban drainage systems.

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

At the outset of the commission Ross Town Council set up a well-represented steering group of local and county Councillors to act as an initial and on-going interface with Rose Regeneration. A series of meetings and a town 'walk through' helped to establish an emerging list of projects and the basis for further and wider engagement with a number of local stakeholders.

Further engagement meetings with the Town Council in the early stage of the commission also refined understanding of the objectives of the Town investment Plan process and provided the basis for Rose Regeneration to expand engagement into the wider community stakeholders relating to the projects listed.

A Town Stakeholder Zoom meeting was held in late December 2020 to which all those identified were invited; this meeting was chaired by a Town Councillor and included some twenty stakeholders.

The meeting identified a number of themes for the Town Investment Plan to consider and develop. Principal amongst these themes were concerns in relation to the availability of employment land for local businesses, and the need to maintain and develop facilities and offerings in relation to tourism.

A number of thematic meetings with relevant stakeholders were held to consider the key themes in more detail and identify the vision, strategic objectives and project ideas for inclusion in the Plan.

In parallel, Rose Regeneration has consulted extensively with potential delivery and funding partners. This has included engagement with private landowners, a number of Herefordshire Council officers, local businesses, developers and county-wide and regional sector representatives.



## THEORY OF CHANGE

A Theory of Change linked to the projects proposed arising from the strategy is set out below:

Project	Intervention Theme	Issues in Ross	Action	Output	Outcomes	Impact	Transformation Target
Model Farm Ross Enterprise Park	Business and Economy	Demand for sustainable employment land and housing	Model Farm development plus associated more modest impacts from other employment related projects	37 acres of new employment land 24,900 m <sup>2</sup> of premises	817 new jobs £57,000,000 GVA pa (HCA) Employment Density and Additionality Guide)	More sustainable settlement based on live/work opportunities for local people	5 years – Ross reaches the county average level of jobs per head 10-15 years – Ross achieves a parity between economically active people and local jobs 30 years – Ross is a sustainable settlement with reduced net outflow of commuters and an enhanced functionality as the core employment base for the south of the county.
Brampton and Sellack Cycleway - Backney picnic area	Visitor Economy	Scope for enhanced visitor economy	Part of a package to deliver Riverside Canoe Bunkhouse & Pontoons, Museum without walls, increased “liveability” linked to sports centre and skate park.	5 miles of new cycle facility	Healthy living and micro-enterprise outcomes – 2 businesses café and cycle hire	Better utilisation of the natural tourism assets of Ross-on-Wye	5 years new tourism infrastructure in place. 10-15 years 25% increase in visitors from STEAM base (2016/17) – suggesting 400,000 visitors per year. 30 years Ross recognized as a key access point to the river Wye and the cycle access points for the County.
Ryefield Centre	Town/civic amenities	Enhanced community facilities	Development of building as community facility	Creation of a new community meeting space	Enhanced social capital – scope for 2,240 letting sessions (in 2 hour slots)	Healthier and more cohesive community	5 years new tourism infrastructure in place. 10-15 years 25% increase in visitors from STEAM base (2016/17) – suggesting 400,000 visitors per year. 30 years Ross recognized as a key access point to the river Wye and the cycle access points for the County.

Project	Intervention Theme	Issues in Ross	Action	Output	Outcomes	Impact	Transformation Target
Riverside Canoe Bunkhouse & Pontoons	Visitor Economy	Greater realisation of the potential of river Wye as a visitor asset in Ross-on-Wye	Riverside Canoe Bunkhouse & Pontoons, Museum without walls, increased “liveability” linked to sports centre and skate park.	Property acquisition and refurbishment to provide facilities for river users and create linkages to the town centre.	Assumed 10 beds 4 new jobs £125,000 GVA pa assume. £70 impact per tourist – assume 10,000 tourists over 3 years £700,000 (STEAM 2016 updated)	Stronger tourism infrastructure and visitor accommodation offering making help Ross fulfil its tourism potential	5 years new tourism infrastructure in place. 10-15 years 25% increase in visitors from STEAM base (2016/17) – suggesting 400,000 visitors per year. 30 years Ross recognized as a key access point to the river Wye and the cycle access points for the County.
Museum Without Walls	Visitor Economy	Scope for enhanced visitor economy	Part of a package including Riverside Canoe Bunkhouse & Pontoons, Museum without walls, increased “liveability” linked to sports centre and skate park.	New augmented reality trail – providing 9 new attraction stations	£70 impact per tourist – assume 10,000 tourists over 3 years £700,000 (STEAM 2016 updated)	Stronger tourism infrastructure and visitor making help Ross fulfil its tourism potential	5 years new tourism infrastructure in place. 10-15 years 25% increase in visitors from STEAM base (2016/17) – suggesting 400,000 visitors per year. 30 years Ross recognized as a key access point to the river Wye and the cycle access points for the County.
Broadmeadow and Tanyard Lane Development	Business and Economy	Scope for new sustainable mixed use development	Part of a package including Model Farm and Broadmeadow/Tanyard Lane development plus associated more modest impacts from other employment related projects	Mixed use sustainable development covering 18 ha	Based on assumptions linked to development of half of site for economic outcomes - 400 jobs, 28,500,000 GVA p.a (HCA Employment Density & Additionality Guide)	More sustainable settlement based on live/work opportunities for local people	5 years – Ross reaches the county average level of jobs per head 10-15 years – Ross achieves a parity between economically active people and local jobs 30 years – Ross is a sustainable settlement with reduced net outflow of commuters and an enhanced functionality as the core employment base for the south of the county.

Project	Intervention Theme	Issues in Ross	Action	Output	Outcomes	Impact	Transformation Target
Skate park	Town/civic amenities	Dilapidated leisure infrastructure meriting enhancement	Riverside Canoe Bunkhouse & Pontoons, Museum without walls, increased “liveability” linked to sports centre and skate park.	Enhanced community facilities	Healthy living and micro-enterprise outcomes – 2 businesses café and cycle hire	Healthier and more cohesive community	5 years new visitor infrastructure in place. 10-15 years 25% increase in visitors from STEAM base (2016/17) – suggesting 400,000 visitors per year. 30 years Ross recognized as a key access point to the river Wye and the cycle access points for the County.
Sports Centre	Town/civic amenities	Dilapidated leisure infrastructure meriting enhancement	Riverside Canoe Bunkhouse & Pontoons, Museum without walls, increased “liveability” linked to sports centre and skate park.	Enhanced community facilities	Healthy living and micro-enterprise outcomes – 2 businesses café and cycle hire	Healthier and more cohesive community	5 years new tourism infrastructure in place. 10-15 years 25% increase in visitors from STEAM base (2016/17) – suggesting 400,000 visitors per year. 30 years Ross recognized as a key access point to the river Wye and the cycle access points for the County.
Market House and Apron Plaza	Public Realm/Commercial Development	Enhanced community facilities	Part of a package of civic amenity investments which will increase the attractiveness and “liveability” of Ross on Wye	Creation of a new community meeting space	Enhanced social capital –	Healthier and more cohesive community	5 years enhanced townscape increases the civic appeal of the town and its visitor numbers. 10-15 years a pattern of private sector investment in the urban fabric of Ross on Wye emerges. 30 years Ross on Wye has a well established sustainable mix of people and visitors supported by a dynamic civic core of amenities

Project	Intervention Theme	Issues in Ross	Action	Output	Outcomes	Impact	Transformation Target
High St Pedestrianisation	Public Realm	Tired Public Realm	Part of a package of civic amenity investments which will increase the attractiveness and “liveability” of Ross on Wye	Better functionality for the town	£70 impact per tourist – assume 10,000 tourists over 3 years £700,000 (STEAM 2016 updated)	More people with access to a more viable living environment	5 years enhanced townscape increases the civic appeal of the town and its visitor numbers. 10-15 years a pattern of private sector investment in the urban fabric of Ross on Wye emerges. 30 years Ross on Wye has a well established sustainable mix of people and visitors supported by a dynamic civic core of amenities
Shop/building frontage grant scheme	Tourism/Visitors Town /Civic Amenities	Weak visitor economy	Part of a package of civic amenity investments which will increase the attractiveness and “liveability” of Ross on Wye	Improved Built environment in the Town	More footfall and private investment	More demand to visit and invest in the town	5 years enhanced townscape increases the civic appeal of the town and its visitor numbers. 10-15 years a pattern of private sector investment in the urban fabric of Ross on Wye emerges. 30 years Ross on Wye has a well established sustainable mix of people and visitors supported by a dynamic civic core of amenities

## PROJECTS

The following projects and ‘investment themes’ emerged through the stakeholder engagement process. These projects and themes were validated through a wider stakeholder meeting in late December 2020 and subsequent group and one to one discussions in the first quarter of 2021.

The table below provides a short form summary by way of an overview of projects and themes, those projects that could be considered appropriate for Herefordshire Employment Land and Incubation Space capital programme funding and individual descriptions of those projects that are considered strategically significant, with the potential to attract funding outside of the Council. It is supported by a theory of change and Transformation Table, showing our aspirations for impact.

The package of projects identified in this Town Investment Plan will need to access a range of funding sources in order to be delivered.

Herefordshire Council has earmarked some £20million for Employment Land and Incubation Space development in its capital programme as an investment pot for capital projects in the county's five market towns.

This funding can be used by the council to invest in projects which can demonstrate an appropriate business case which show the ability of the projects to generate capital receipts or income which can be used to pay back the initial investment over time. Some of the projects in the Plan may secure funding through this route subject to detailed business cases being developed and considered by the council.

The majority of the projects identified will need to explore alternative funding options which could include private investment including: Heritage Lottery; charitable trusts; other public sector funding such as the capital programmes of the West Mercia Police Service; the Hereford and Worcester Fire service; the Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group; the Marches LEP; Homes England etc. In addition to these sources of funding there are a range of Government funding opportunities already in place and more will be announced going forward. Some of the projects in the Plan will require revenue funding as well as capital investment. There may be opportunities to package projects together to bid for funding as well as to bid for funds in phases on the larger projects. Different funders will require different information and governance arrangements which will need to be considered on a bid by bid basis. The evidence base and supporting information produced to support this Plan will be a useful information and policy context to help inform bids for funding.

The following project ideas are also at a very early stage of development

- Managed workshops & workspace
- Digital Noticeboard
- Purchase of land for recreation
- Town Market

In May 2021 the Town Council and wider stakeholders met to consider the relative priority to allocate to each project. A scoring matrix based on the good practice methodology identified by the Town Hub which supports the implementation of the Town Fund was used to assess the relative merit of each project. Within the matrix there are 8 themes chosen through engagement with local stakeholders.

For Ross-on-Wye the key criteria agreed were: contribution to net zero; attraction of more visitors/inward investment; increased GVA (a measure of the productivity of businesses); increased business diversity (an increase to the range and variety of businesses operating locally); higher skills; better population balance (supporting a wide demographic spread of age groups); greater equity (supporting fairer access to all determinants of quality of life) and equality agenda (eliminating any form of discrimination). Each project was scored by the group on a scale of 1-5 where one is lowest to provide a group composite score. These scores then used to rank the project as set out in the summary table below.

Project	Summary
Ross Enterprise Park	The Ross Enterprise Park site is owned by Herefordshire Council and it has been a longstanding employment land allocation. The gross site area is 15 hectares / 37 acres and has outline planning consent for 29,400 m <sup>2</sup> for B1, B2 and B8 floor space and full consent for access off the A40. It is recognised that this strategically significant site may also provide an opportunity for housing development in the future.
Broadmeadow and Tanyard Lane Development	This is an area just over 18 hectares. It was considered in the 2011 SHLAA (Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments). The proposal supported through options in the NDP is for a mixed use development and is encouraged because of the importance to Ross as a whole of such a large area stretching from the town centre to the A40. Ross Town Council wishes to control the development of the site which is complex and in multiple ownership. As a first step RTC wishes to develop a comprehensive site masterplan in order to: 1. encourage the various landowners to stand firm around their in-principle agreement for equalisation of land values. 2. Prevent piece-meal development. 3. Deliver a mixed-use development that responds to the needs of the town in terms of employment land provision. Provisional budget - £40 million
Riverside Canoe Bunkhouse & Pontoons	Potentially based on existing dilapidated properties in third party ownership - the project involves property acquisition and refurbishment to provide facilities for river users and create linkages to the town centre. The property in question is in a prominent and highly visible location. Its current state of dilapidation impacts negatively on the broader townscape and has no economic function. This we believe is a viable project, but there are significant barriers to the private sector including inter alia the costs of refurbishment. In any event it would be unlikely that a purely private sector model would deliver the wider river based activities and investments that are part of this project. There is a strong case for public sector intervention in addressing market failures, especially if the project delivers the business opportunities and expands river usage to the benefit of other operators. Provisional budget - £700,000
Sports Centre	The building known as Ross Sports Centre (RSC) and the football fields are currently leased from Herefordshire County Council on a 30 year lease by Ross on Wye Sports Club CIC (previously Ross on Wye Sports Centre CIC). Ross on Wye Sports Centre CIC took over the lease from Herefordshire Council in 2012. A needs assessment identified that there is an under-supply of sports pitches in Ross; that improving levels of sport participation and engaging in a healthy lifestyle is a key priority for Herefordshire; that for the centre to operate viably and sustainably it should have a stakeholder club-led structure; that there is a need for facility improvements particularly with regard to improving disabled access, changing accommodation, social facilities that can generate income and the quality of the sports pitches. Provisional budget - £2 million
Ryefield Centre	Asset transfer of Ryefield Centre to a CIC or similar body for community use, possibly with HC leasing some space to provide access to services in Ross. Potential to free up space in Larruperz Centre (next door) to allow conversion of large hall to tiered auditorium, which is a lack in Ross. The proposal offers the potential to improve community spaces and provide a medium sized teared auditorium for Arts events, currently a lack in the town. Provisional budget - £1.5 million



Project	Summary
Brampton & Sellack Cycleway/Cycle network development	<p>This is a joint project proposed with neighbouring Parishes including Brampton Abbots and Sellack Parishes It involves the restoration of a pedestrian/cycle bridge at Backney and utilising the disused Ross to Hereford railway line. This would open up a range of circular walks and access to a picnic site that provides access on to Backney Common.</p> <p>Ross Town Council could make available an area of car parking for cycle hire and other facilities.</p> <p>This project could in time link into the National Cycling Network through the refurbishment of the disused rail line leading into and out of the town and linked to Hereford city centre with a continuation of the old railway route with a subsequent river crossing at Baysham and Pen-allt linking into Holme Lacy. Provisional budget - £650,000</p>
Market House and Plaza Apron	<p>To renovate the 17th Century Market House via one of 2 options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to 'glass in' the ground floor of the Market House,</li> <li>• to seek Herefordshire Council's permission to terrace the Market Apron and create a central focus to the Town Centre.</li> </ul> <p>Provisional budget - £1.5 million</p>
Museum Without Walls	<p>This project would provide an augmented reality cultural trail at sites across Ross-on-Wye with the potential to become a significant tourist attraction. Funding is required to facilitate an additional 9 attractions (3 already created with funding from ACE and Hidden Gems) rendered in 3D and accessible via a dedicated free App. Each exhibit will capture either a lost aspect of the town's cultural past or imagine what the future may hold. The three exhibits currently operating that provide proof of concept are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Lost Fountain (The Prospect)</li> <li>• Underhill (Market House)</li> <li>• River boats from the Wye Tour (Riverside)</li> </ul> <p>Provisional budget - £200,000</p>
High Street pedestrianisation & Enhancing Town Walkway	<p>To investigate the viability of closing the High Street to traffic for specified hours of the day to allow use of the highway by cafes and restaurants as well as for events.</p> <p>Provisional budget - £100,000</p>
Skate park	<p>This project aims to improve the existing Ross skate park to a higher 'national' standard and to provide additional facilities within the existing site to include a 5-aside football/basketball court concrete table tennis, a Football wall with holes to score goals.</p> <p>Provisional budget - £350,000</p>
Shop Front Grant Scheme	<p>Financial support to encourage businesses based in Ross to revitalise their shop front.</p> <p>Provisional budget - £200,000</p>

A detailed project scoring matrix showing the working for the prioritisation process is set out at Appendix 2

### Investment Proposal Form

Project Name: Model Farm – Ross Enterprise Park

<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>		
			<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
<p><i>Description</i> Ross Enterprise Park - The Ross Enterprise Park site is owned by Herefordshire Council and it has been a long standing employment land allocation. The gross site area is 15 hectares / 37 acres and has outline planning consent for 29,400 m<sup>2</sup> for B1, B2 and B8 floor space and full consent for access off the A40. The site is contiguous to land that is currently allocated housing land with extant permissions. This land is in the ownership separately of Herefordshire Council, a private landowner and the MOD with advanced discussions on development and an agreement that is currently in abeyance and not formally constituted. This agreement includes the potential for servicing the Model Farm site as part of a wider housing scheme that requires easements over the Model Farm site for drainage purposes.</p>					
Demand Analysis	<p>Engagement with agents and businesses through the development of the Plan has identified significant local demand for employment land. There is a need for public sector intervention in delivery via both its current 2 separate landholdings and co-ordinating the interests of the parties involved.</p>		£20M (est)	5 years	<p>The gross site area is 15 hectares / 37 acres and has outline planning consent for 29,400 m<sup>2</sup> for B1, B2 and B8 floor space and full consent for access off the A40. The site is contiguous to land that is currently allocated housing land with extant permissions.</p>
Potential funding sources	<p>Model Farm development could be brought forward on a phased basis by Herefordshire Council including the potential for housing which could attract support of Homes England. Planning risks for the employment plan are largely mitigated through extant consents.</p>				
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	<p>The development will generate capital receipts and rent for the Council</p>				



### Investment Proposal Form

Project Name: Ross Sports Centre

<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>		
<p><i>Description</i> The building known as Ross Sports Centre (RSC) and the football fields are currently leased from Herefordshire County Council on a 30 year lease by Ross on Wye Sports Club CIC (previously Ross on Wye Sports Centre CIC). Ross on Wye Sports Centre CIC took over the lease from Herefordshire Council in 2012. A needs assessment identified that there is an under-supply of sports pitches in Ross; that improving levels of sport participation and engaging in a healthy lifestyle is a key priority for Herefordshire; that for the Centre to operate viably and sustainably it should have a stakeholder club-led structure; that there is a need for facility improvements particularly with regard to improving disabled access, changing accommodation, social facilities that can generate income and the quality of the sports pitches.</p> <p>The economic value of sport is well evidenced at local community level by, inter alia, Sport England. Value is generated through a variety of outcomes including health and wellbeing benefits, and the economic value of volunteering activities which are significant in respect of local sport participation.</p>			<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
			Demand Analysis	Strong evidence of need and demand and potential for growth of activities via the CIC operating the centre and activities.	
Potential funding sources	Possible grant funding for improved sports facilities/ improved public health.				
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	Existing CIC structure offers a potential vehicle to deliver project and manage operations and revenues.				

### Investment Proposal Form

Project Name: Ross Skate Park					
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>		
<p><i>Description</i> This project aims to improve the existing Ross skate park to a higher 'national' standard and to provide additional facilities within the existing site to include a 5-aside football/basketball court concrete table tennis, a Football wall with holes to score goals. This project is aimed at providing a venue for young people in the town, providing facilities of a high standard to encourage wider participation as well as providing, in the case of the skate park, a competition and training venue. It would also provide a focus for youth related services to engage with young people to identify issues and provide support and interventions.</p> <p>The economic value of sport related activities is well evidenced at local community level by, inter alia, Sport England. Value is generated through a variety of outcomes including health and wellbeing benefits, specifically the positive benefits that would accrue to young people and the wider community benefits through the development of civic responsibility and social skills. The Park would provide a facility for youth outreach services to support an often difficult to reach cohort.</p>			<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
Demand Analysis	This project is a long standing aspiration for the town for which there is strong support.				
Potential funding sources	There is scope to link this to the Ross Sports Centre initiative and to connect the people promoting the project to the Extreme Sports Town initiative in Hereford. A range of funding sources have been successfully used in other towns in the UK including Developer Contributions, Town council funding, local playing fields associations, a range of community association operated by retailers including the Co-op and ASDA, the National Lottery Community Fund and other local private sector service providers e.g. the Veolia Environmental fund. A comprehensive design and plan would need to be produced for the purposes of fund raising through an appropriate body such as a development trust or linked to the Sports Centre CIC.		£350K (est)	6 months	High quality national standard skate and recreation park
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	Revenue and national/local sponsorship opportunities could provide the basis for on-going management and maintenance along with competition related activities providing revenue, advertising and promotion income.				

### Investment Proposal Form

Project Name: Broadmeadow & Tanyard Lane Development

<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>		
			<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
<p><i>Description</i> This is an area just over 18 hectares. It was considered in the 2011 SHLAA:  Ross Town Council wishes to control the development of the site which is complex and in multiple ownership. As a first step RTC wishes to develop a comprehensive site masterplan in order to: 1. encourage the various landowners to stand firm around their in-principle agreement for equalisation of land values. 2. Prevent piece-meal development. 3. Deliver a mixed-use development that responds to the needs of the town in terms of employment land provision.</p>					
Demand Analysis	<p>The proposal is supported through options in the NDP is for a mixed use development and is encouraged because of the importance to Ross as a whole of such a large area stretching from the town centre to the A40.</p>		Est £40 Million	Within 10 years	Mix of housing, retail and commercial space
Potential funding sources	<p>Parts of the site could be considered conventionally viable, but other areas (notably the core of Broadmeadows) would not be viable for housing. Mixed use to include:  C3a: Housing including affordable homes  B1a: Offices  B1a and B1c: R&amp;D and light industry  Public Open Spaces and squares.</p>				
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	N/A				

### Investment Proposal Form

Project Name: Riverside Canoe Bunkhouse & Pontoons

<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>		
<p>A riverside facility to increase river based activities and tourism in the town is considered to be an investment of strategic importance to Ross. There is the potential to deliver this project based on a current opportunity to acquire a dilapidated property in third party ownership - the project would involve property acquisition by the Town Council and refurbishment to provide facilities for river users and create linkages to the town centre. The property in question is in a prominent and highly visible location. Its current state of dilapidation impacts negatively on the broader townscape and has no economic function. This we believe is a viable project, but there are significant barriers to the private sector including inter alia the costs of refurbishment. In any event it would be unlikely that a purely private sector model would deliver the wider river based activities and investments that are part of this project. There is a strong case for public sector intervention in addressing market failures, especially if the project delivers the business opportunities and expands river usage to the benefit of other operators.</p>			<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
			<p><b>Demand Analysis</b></p> <p>There is scope to link this initiative to the development of the River Wye Infrastructure in the Hereford Town Plan. It would also link to a similar scheme operated by a local Parish Council that generates revenues via this model. The river is an under-utilised and currently under-exploited tourist asset with the potential to deliver facilities and revenues from opening up and delivering economic and tourist related activities which could create new business and employment opportunities.</p>	<p>£700k (est)</p>	<p>18 months</p>
<p><b>Potential funding sources</b></p> <p>Revenues generated could service debt finance subject to a business plan and sourcing of loan provider such as the Marches Investment Fund.</p>					
<p><b>Exit (Sustainability) Strategy</b></p> <p>The development would enable revenue generation via fees and income from sales with the option for third party operator as Community Interest Company.</p>					

### Investment Proposal Form

Project Name: Museum Without Walls

<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>		
<p>This project would provide an augmented reality cultural trail at sites across Ross on Wye with the potential to become a significant tourist attraction. Funding is required to facilitate an additional 9 attractions (3 already created with funding from ACE and Hidden Gems) rendered in 3D and accessible via a dedicated free App. Each exhibit will capture either a lost aspect of the town's cultural past or imagine what the future may hold. The three exhibits currently operating that provide proof of concept are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Lost Fountain (The Prospect)</li> <li>• Underhill (Market House)</li> <li>• River boats from the Wye Tour (Riverside)</li> </ul>			<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
			Demand Analysis	<p>Initial elements of this project have been delivered via grant funding and provide the proof of concept. Launch of these elements in May 2021 will further prove viability in the technical execution of the project. Tourism is a key economic driver for the town and requires investment in both physical and virtual infrastructure to meet market demand and expectation and to increase both the volume and value of visits to the town (higher per visitor spend, longer visitor stays).</p>	
Potential funding sources	<p>A range of funding options exist through national funding streams</p>				
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	<p>The project would seek to be self-funding through subscription services, advertising and sponsorship, operated and Managed by Create Ross.</p>				

### Investment Proposal Form

Project Name: Brampton and Sellack Cycleway - Backney picnic area

<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>		
			<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
<p>Description: This is a joint project proposed with neighbouring Parishes including Brampton Abbots and Sellack Parishes It involves the restoration of a pedestrian/cycle bridge at Backney and utilising the disused Ross to Hereford railway line. This would open up a range of circular walks and access to a picnic site that provides access on to Backney Common. Ross Town Council could make available an area of car parking for cycle hire and other facilities. This project could in time link in to the National Cycling Network through the refurbishment of the disused rail line leading into and out of the town and linked to Hereford city centre with a continuation of the old railway route with a subsequent river crossing at Baysham and Pen-alt linking into Holme Lacy</p>					
Demand Analysis	Herefordshire Council have estimated that the potential usage of this route could exceed 46,000 journeys a year.				
Potential funding sources	This project could be funded through the Lottery and other relevant charitable donors. The link to health and wellbeing and the recent Social prescribing CLOVER project in Ross also opens other avenues for funding. As part of the wider Herefordshire Tourism strategy this project would form an important component and should work closely with visitor economy partners.		£864,200, (if a timber bridge is employed)	18 Months	3km new walking/cycling route. Open up local beauty spot for visitors. Improved Health outcomes through Health Prescribing by local GPs.
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	Ownership of BBPS transferred from Herefordshire Council to Sellack Parish Council about two years ago. This project could become self-sustaining through charging for services including car-parking and equipment hire where opportunities for small business development could be encouraged.				

### Investment Proposal Form

Project Name: Ross-on-Wye: Ryefield Centre Asset transfer – opening up opportunity for community, performance space and conferences through combined space with the adjacent Larrupertz Centre.

<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>		
			<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
<p>Description: This project would involve the asset transfer of Ryefield Centre by Herefordshire Council to a local CIC or similar body for community use, possibly with HC leasing some space to provide access to services in Ross. The project creates the potential to free up space in Larrupertz Centre (next door) to allow conversion of a large hall to a tiered auditorium for multi-use as a theatre/performing arts space, conference venue and other related activities which Ross currently lacks. Cost relates to the repurposing of the Larrupertz Centre, refurbishment of internal spaces in both buildings and renovation of the frontages.</p>					
Demand Analysis	<p>Community survey in summer 2020 (95 responses) showed strong support for the proposal and suggestions on potential uses. Services for vulnerable people, youth/children and community group support were the top priorities.</p>				<p>New theatre, auditorium and conference space. New spaces for community groups at the Larrupertz and Ryefield.</p>
Potential funding sources	<p>Asset transfer of the Ryefield Centre would provide the basis for a project proposal to inter alia the Arts Council for a significant element of the cost of works. Other funding sources, including lottery and local 'community chest' type grants, section 106 contributions with the potential for a community fund raising programme would could support up to 30% of costs by way of match.</p>		£1.5 million (est)	Asset transfer to be completed by 12/22	<p>Maintenance of face to face HC services in Ross</p>
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	<p>The CIC model has worked well at the neighbouring Larrupertz where, pre-Covid, the main problem was lack of space to meet demand. The current management structure is considered fit for purpose to assume responsibility for the additional asset and the management of works as proposed.</p>				

### Investment Proposal Form

Project Name: Pedestrianisation of the High Street including a new crossing at Wilton Road/Wye Street (within the Ross Movement Study – projects 55 & 56) – linked to the Market Hall and Plaza project as an enhanced route linking the high street and the river

Intervention Framework	Economy and business	Tourism & the Visitor Economy	Town & Civic amenities		
			Cost	Timescale	Outputs
<p><i>Description:</i> This project is directly linked to the Market Hall and Plaza project in its aspiration to effect a significant improvement to the high street and enhance the walking route through important parts of the town and connect to the river. These are discreet projects in themselves, but should be considered as a ‘package’ of investments delivering a number of enhancement and benefits to the town and its tourism and retail offering. The pedestrianisation of the high street and the new crossing at Wilton Road are projects contained in the Ross Movement Study (Draft yet to be adopted). The consultation with Ward members in the Movement Study found: <i>“Consideration of a preferred package that encompasses the following is seen as the priority for future delivery:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• Pedestrianisation of the High Street running from the Market House to Edde Cross Street (scheme 55)</i></li> <li><i>• Extension of the pavement running under the Town walls in Wilton Road to Royal Parade</i></li> <li><i>• New pedestrian crossing in Wilton Road from Town Wall to near top of Wye Street (No. 56)</i></li> <li><i>• Improved traffic management measures in Copse Cross St/south section of High St”.</i></li> </ul> <p>In a post-Covid world, outdoor seating will be increasingly important to the hospitality industry but few businesses in the High street have any. Pedestrianisation would also help link the town centre with the Prospect gardens and will support developing the Market House as a destination.</p>			Est. <£1Million	Within 12 Months from full approval by HC Highways	The area of high street between broad street and church street or possibly St. Marys Street would become available as temporary retail space.
Demand Analysis	There are clearly concerns amongst the High Street retailers of the potential impact of closing the High Street to vehicles. The evidence from schemes of this nature across the country is that this can and often does result in an increase in foot fall and spend at those times.				
Potential funding sources	The Ross Movement study identifies Funding sources for identified schemes as the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Herefordshire Council’s Public Realm Annual Plan</li> <li>• S106 – Developer funding</li> <li>• Grant – third party funding sources such as DfT,               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homes England,</li> <li>• Local Enterprise Partnerships, or similar bidding opportunities as they arise</li> </ul> </li> </ul>				



Investment Proposal Form				
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	The operation of the scheme would be managed and maintained by RTC with no recourse to funds from HC except those within Highways funding scope.			

### Investment Proposal Form

Project Name: Ross Shop/ building frontage grant scheme

<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>		
			<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
<p><i>Description:</i> Investment in the public realm needs to be complemented by investment in the frontages of shops and other town centre buildings to make the town a place to visit and spend time in. A grant scheme is required to encourage property owners to invest in town centre properties. It is suggested that any grant from the scheme would require a contribution from the property owner.</p>					
Demand Analysis	Chamber of Trade and stakeholder feedback		£200,000	1 – 5 years	At least 30 properties improved
Potential funding sources	Private Sector, Government Grants, Heritage Lottery,				
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	The ongoing maintenance responsibilities will stay with the current property owners.				

## Market House & Market Apron Revitalisation

Investment Proposal Form			
Project Name: Market House & Market Apron Revitalisation – part of wider pedestrianisation scheme project			
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>
<p><i>Description:</i> This is a potentially transformative project for Ross High Street and the wider town when considered in the context of the pedestrianisation of the High Street and investments in the routes linking the town and the river. This combined package of investments would deliver significant benefits in terms of the community and tourism offer, and support a stronger, more diverse and resilient High Street retail offering. RTC is already committing funds and seeking grants to renovate the 17th Century Market House, and has commissioned an Architect to prepare the tender documentation set. Two options are being considered, one is to 'glass in' the ground floor of the Market House, and the second is to seek Herefordshire County Council's permission to terrace the Market Apron and create a central focus to the Town Centre. E.g. on non-market days extending the popular 'tables under the market house' service. It will also create opportunities to hire out the ground floor of the Market House.</p>		<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>
		£1M - £1.5M and the RTC could contribute £200k.	Planning & tendering during 2021, and completion by Sept 2022.
<i>Demand Analysis</i>	Last summer the 5/6 tables under the Market house were very popular, particularly on sunny days. They restarted in April 2021 and are proving popular again.		It will attract greater footfall within the Town Centre, supporting 6+ independent coffee/ tea rooms. Two direct jobs created Indoor Floor space: TBD (not measured) Outdoor Floor space: TBD (not measured)
<i>Potential funding sources</i>	Ross Town Council would seek to contribute £200k. other sources of funding include Historic England and National Lottery with		
<i>Exit (Sustainability) Strategy</i>	RTC would maintain the terraced Market Apron		

## Next Steps

This is one of five Market Town Economic Investment Plans commissioned by Herefordshire Council for each of Herefordshire's market towns.

Herefordshire Council has identified projects which could be funded by them through the Employment Land and Business Space capital programme allocation. As a result in addition to this Market Town Investment Plan, Rose Regeneration has completed Outline Business Cases (OBCs) and Project Mandates for the following projects for the council's consideration.

OBC's have been developed and submitted for:

- Ross Enterprise Park

Project Mandates have been developed and submitted for:

- Riverside Canoe Bunkhouse and pontoons
- Broadmeadow and Tanyard Lane development

Once the Plans, OBCs and Project Mandates have been considered by Herefordshire Council it is recommended that the council works with the five Market Town Councils to establish an appropriate delivery mechanism to oversee, secure funding for and monitor the delivery of the Market Town Economic Investment Plans.

This delivery mechanism should be led and supported by Herefordshire Council and should involve representatives from each Town Council.

## APPENDIX 1 – STRATEGIC CONTEXT SUMMARY

National context	Regional Context	Herefordshire Context	Ross-on-Wye Context
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Industrial Strategy</i> – ‘places’ foundation: tackling entrenched regional disparities.</li> <li>• Industrial Strategy <i>Productivity Evidence Review</i> – some cities and rural county areas have been falling behind, including Herefordshire. County Councils Network <i>analysis of GVA</i> in 36 county areas found Herefordshire to be experiencing the smallest economic growth 5.3% between 2014 and 2018).</li> <li>• A low carbon future in a changing climate – UK obligations under the 2015 Paris Agreement - setting a net zero target for carbon emissions by 2050.</li> <li>• <i>HM Treasury/Government</i> department resources - levelling up economic opportunity across all nations and regions of the country by investing in infrastructure, innovation and people.</li> <li>• Build Better, Build Greener, Build Faster - reforming the planning system (<i>NPPF, Planning for the Future White Paper</i>) to give more emphasis to quality, design and the environment.</li> <li>• COVID-19 recovery measures - protecting and restoring livelihoods, improving living</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Local Industrial Strategy</i> and <i>Strategic Economic Plan</i> – inclusive growth, connectivity, skills, enterprise and innovation, trade and investment. Herefordshire’s sectoral specialisms: food and drink, education, advanced manufacturing and engineering, defence and construction. Ross-on-Wye as an ‘opportunity town’ – linked to urban centres and intended to strengthen the Marches as a single economic entity.</li> <li>○ <i>Skills Plan</i> and <i>Skills Sectors Deep Dives</i> – the provision of Higher Education provision and Further Education courses relevant to these growth opportunities in Herefordshire.</li> <li>○ Cyber Resilience Alliance / <i>Science and Innovation Audit</i> – the largest cluster of cyber security activity outside of London: growth in direct jobs, wider investment in products and processes and acting as a regional testbed.</li> <li>○ <i>Growth Hub</i> and <i>Enterprise Zone</i> with specialisms in defence and security at Skylon Park, Hereford.</li> <li>○ <i>Niche tourism offer</i> with potential to increase</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Herefordshire is a cold spot for social mobility – it is in the bottom 20 list of Local Authorities in England in terms of the chances that disadvantaged children will do well at school and get a good job.</li> <li>▪ The importance of creating high-quality, highly skilled jobs against a backdrop of traditional low-skill, low-wage economy.</li> <li>▪ <i>County Plan</i> – improving sustainability, connectivity, wellbeing and becoming carbon neutral by 2030-2031: Talk Community (hubs), community wealth building (increasing the amount of money that stays in the local economy); and Sustainable Food County (a whole system approach to tackling obesity, diet related ill health, food poverty, waste and climate change).</li> <li>▪ <i>Hereford Town Investment Plan</i> – intended to deliver urban regeneration, a stronger skills base, and improved connectivity in the city. Under the strapline ‘green and fair’ the PLAN recognises Hereford’s</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i>Herefordshire Economic Vision</i> – enabling market towns to maximise their role in building thriving and distinctive service centres.</li> <li>➤ The <i>Neighbourhood Development Plan</i> includes a Vision of Ross-on-Wye in 2031 which is <i>...even more attractive for me and my family as a place to live in, and also for people to visit there are now many more visitors than there used to be. All the extra houses, which are nicely designed to reflect the distinctive character of Ross have not swamped the town. In face they – or rather their occupants – seem to have added to the vitality of the town, certainly to its various shops (no longer empty), cafes, places to meet and general feel (so many old buildings now spruced up).</i> The Plan focuses on environment, housing, working and shopping, getting around and leisure and wellbeing; and contains 42 practical projects.</li> <li>➤ The <i>Core Strategy</i> describes Ross-on-Wye as the market town serving the south of the county, fulfilling a diverse range of roles as a centre for residential, employment, recreational and cultural services. It acts as a service centre for the surrounding rural area and with connections to the motorway network also makes it an important gateway into the county,</li> </ul>

<p>standards and new economic opportunities.</p>	<p>awareness and visibility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Economic recovery plan</i> – investment in infrastructure and jobs: Hereford city streetscape improvements and NMITE Skylon campus development.</li> </ul>	<p>connectivity to market towns and countryside (e.g. tourism – attract and disperse approach).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Telling stories about place, identifying and implementing a vision, strong partnership working and securing funding/investment are all needed for pandemic Recovery and Transformation.</li> <li>▪ <i>Hereford Transport Strategy</i> describes traffic flows, delays and congestion schemes which increase physical activity (e.g. cycling, walking) generate high value-for-money.</li> </ul>	<p>and a tourist destination in its own right. It contains a target for Ross-on-Wye to develop 900 houses and 10 hectares of employment land.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ These targets will be met through the Model Farm development (an urban extension) and smaller sites set out in the Neighbourhood Development Plan.</li> <li>➤ <i>Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2020-2025</i> refers to how the town has a distinctive spire and skyline, Devonian Old Red Sandstone buildings and cliffs. <i>National Character Area Profile 104</i>: the town has transport routes such as the A40 (south of Ross-on-Wye) and M50. Much of the town is in a Conservation Area regarded as ‘at risk’.</li> <li>➤ In the NDP, any new developments should enhance the overall character and sustainability of the town through a consideration of character and design, landscape, green infrastructure, local green spaces, retaining/encouraging employment, and retaining/encouraging new community facilities.</li> <li>➤ Harnessing growth and development opportunities not only requires sensitivity towards built and natural environments, but also lead to accessibility improvements within the town.</li> </ul>
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## APPENDIX 2 – PROJECT PRIORITISATION

Project	Theme	Description	Indicative Cost (.000)	Contribution to Zero Carbon	More Visitors and Inward Investment	Increased GVA	Increased Business Diversity	Higher Skills	Leads to Better Population Balance	Greater Equity	Score
Ross Enterprise Park (10 acres)	Employment Space/Housing	The Ross Enterprise Park site is owned by Herefordshire Council and it has been a long standing employment land allocation. The gross site area is 15 hectares / 37 acres and has outline planning consent for 29,400 m <sup>2</sup> for B1, B2 and B8 floor space and full consent for access off the A40. The site is contiguous to land that is currently allocated housing land with extant permissions. This land is in the ownership separately of Herefordshire Council, a private landowner and the MOD with advanced discussions on development and an agreement that is currently in abeyance and not formally constituted. This agreement includes the potential for servicing the Model Farm site as part of a wider housing scheme that requires easements over the Model Farm site for drainage purposes.	£2,000	5	5	5	4	4	5	3	88.75%
Broadmeadow and Tanyard Lane Development-Ross	Employment Space/Housing	This is an area just over 18 hectares. It was considered in the 2011 SHLAA: The proposal supported through options in the NDP is for a mixed use development and is encouraged because of the importance to Ross as a whole of such a large area stretching from the town centre to the A40. Ross Town Council wishes to control the development of the site which is complex and in multiple ownership. As a first step RTC wishes to develop a comprehensive site masterplan in order to: 1. encourage the various landowners to stand firm around their in-principle agreement for equalisation of land values. 2. Prevent piece-meal development. 3. Deliver a mixed-use development that responds to the	£40,000	4	4	4	3	5	4	5	85.00%

Project	Theme	Description	Indicative Cost (,000)	Contribution to Zero Carbon	More Visitors and Inward Investment	Increased GVA	Increased Business Diversity	Higher Skills	Leads to Better Population Balance	Greater Equity	Score
		needs of the town in terms of employment land provision.									
Riverside Canoe Bunkhouse & Pontoons - Ross	Tourism/Commercial Development	Potentially based on existing dilapidated properties in third party ownership - the project involves property acquisition and refurbishment to provide facilities for river users and create linkages to the town centre. The property in question is in a prominent and highly visible location. Its current state of dilapidation impacts negatively on the broader townscape and has no economic function. This we believe is a viable project, but there are significant barriers to the private sector including inter alia the costs of refurbishment. In any event it would be unlikely that a purely private sector model would deliver the wider river based activities and investments that are part of this project. There is a strong case for public sector intervention in addressing market failures, especially if the project delivers the business opportunities and expands river usage to the benefit of other operators.	£700	5	3	4	2	2	5	4	72.50%



Project	Theme	Description	Indicative Cost (,000)	Contribution to Zero Carbon	More Visitors and Inward Investment	Increased GVA	Increased Business Diversity	Higher Skills	Leads to Better Population Balance	Greater Equity	Score
Sports Centre - Ross	Community Space	The building known as Ross Sports Centre (RSC) and the football fields are currently leased from Herefordshire County Council on a 30 year lease by Ross on Wye Sports Club CIC (previously Ross on Wye Sports Centre CIC). Ross on Wye Sports Centre CIC took over the lease from Herefordshire Council in 2012. A needs assessment identified that there is an under-supply of sports pitches in Ross; that improving levels of sport participation and engaging in a healthy lifestyle is a key priority for Herefordshire; that for the Centre to operate viably and sustainably it should have a stakeholder club-led structure; that there is a need for facility improvements particularly with regard to improving disabled access, changing accommodation, social facilities that can generate income and the quality of the sports pitches	£2,000	3	2	3	2.5	3	5	5	66.25%
Ryefield Centre - Ross	Community Space	Asset transfer of Ryefield Centre to a CIC or similar body for community use, possibly with HC leasing some space to provide access to services in Ross. Potential to free up space in Larruperz Centre (next door) to allow conversion of large hall to tiered auditorium, which is a lack in Ross. The proposal offers the potential to improve community spaces and provide a medium sized tiered auditorium for Arts events, currently a lack in the town.	£1,500	4	3	3.5	3	2	4	3	63.75%

Project	Theme	Description	Indicative Cost (,000)	Contribution to Zero Carbon	More Visitors and Inward Investment	Increased GVA	Increased Business Diversity	Higher Skills	Leads to Better Population Balance	Greater Equity	Score
Brampton & Sellack Cycleway/Cycle network development - Ross on Wye	Green Infrastructure	This is a joint project proposed with neighbouring Parishes including Brampton Abbots and Sellack Parishes It involves the restoration of a pedestrian/cycle bridge at Backney and utilising the disused Ross to Hereford railway line. This would open up a range of circular walks and access to a picnic site that provides access on to Backney Common. Ross Town Council could make available an area of car parking for cycle hire and other facilities. This project could in time link in to the National Cycling Network through the refurbishment of the disused rail line leading into and out of the town and linked to Hereford city centre with a continuation of the old railway route with a subsequent river crossing at Baysham and Pen-alt linking into Holme Lacy	£650	5	3	2	2	3	4	4	62.50%
Market House and Apron Plaza	Public Realm/Commercial Development	Creation of a café and renovation of 17th Century Market House and land terracing	£1,500	5	4	4	2	2	2	2	62.50%
Museum Without Walls - Ross	Tourism	This project would provide an augmented reality cultural trail at sites across Ross on Wye with the potential to become a significant tourist attraction. Funding is required to facilitate an additional 9 attractions (3 already created with funding from ACE and Hidden Gems) rendered in 3D and accessible via a dedicated free App. Each exhibit will capture either a lost aspect of the town's cultural past or imagine what the future may hold. The three exhibits currently operating that provide proof of concept are: • The Lost Fountain (The Prospect) • Underhill (Market House) • River boats from the Wye Tour (Riverside)	£200	5	3	3	2	2	2	2	60.00%
High St Pedestrianisation	Public Realm	Tourism and Visitor Economy	£100	4	3	3	2	2	3	3	60.00%

Project	Theme	Description	Indicative Cost (,000)	Contribution to Zero Carbon	More Visitors and Inward Investment	Increased GVA	Increased Business Diversity	Higher Skills	Leads to Better Population Balance	Greater Equity	Score
Skate Park - Ross	Community Space	This project aims to improve the existing Ross skate park to a higher 'national' standard and to provide additional facilities within the existing site to include a 5-aside football/basketball court concrete table tennis, a Football wall with holes to score goals.	£350	3	2	2	2	4	4	4	55.00%
Shop Front Grant Scheme - Ross	Commercial Development	Financial support to encourage businesses based in Ross to revitalise their shop front.	£200	3	2	3	0	2	2	3	42.50%



# Ledbury Investment Plan 2021



June 2021

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*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.*

### **Ledbury Town Investment Plan Statement 2021**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Market Town Investment Plans

This Ledbury Town Investment Plan is one of five Market Town Investment Plans (MTIPs) commissioned by Herefordshire Council. Herefordshire's market towns, including Ledbury, play a critical role in the county's economy, as focal points for employment; for retail, tourism, leisure and culture; for business investment and growth; for housing; and for access to services. The market towns often provide the key interface between the wider rural areas, access to employment and local services, and connectivity to and from Hereford and other neighbouring areas.

The MTIPs identify a long term vision for the growth of the towns and a programme of potential projects to enable sustainable economic development to deliver the vision. The MTIPs will also play a key role in the development a new long term county wide 'big plan'. The big plan will identify how we will address long term economic challenges in creating new opportunities for growth across the county and how we retain/ attract younger generations, creating great places to live, study, work and invest.

## The Vision for Ledbury

"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."

## The Main Challenges facing the town

Ledbury has a population of 10,054 with a high proportion of over 65s (29% compared to the national average of 20%<sup>1</sup>). The town is less deprived than the England average on all measures apart from 'Barriers to Services' which measures the physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services.

Ledbury has a larger proportion of higher value properties than the national average. New housing development has not yet been accompanied by any additional employment land and other infrastructure necessary to promote a sustainable community. Currently the Town Council is reviewing its Neighbourhood Development Plan which aims to address the imbalance in development requirements.

Ledbury has a smaller stock of jobs per head than the national average and saw an increase in benefit claimants between April and September 2020, the early part of the pandemic, from 185 to 220, a rise of 19%. Between 2015 and 2018 Ledbury saw a reduction of 625 jobs (14.5% of the total).

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<sup>1</sup> ONS – Population Estimates for Lower Layer Super Output Areas in England and Wales by Broad Age Groups and Sex - National Statistics



## The Town's Assets and Strengths

Ledbury acts as a key service centre to the surrounding rural area, east Herefordshire and neighbouring Gloucestershire and Worcestershire. Ledbury railway station has regular services to Hereford, Malvern, Worcester, Birmingham and London. Ledbury has a strong voluntary sector with over 120 local groups. It has a number of visitor attractions and hosts a number of events throughout the year.

The town centre is covered by a Conservation Area, with many important built, historic and heritage assets, some of which are listed. The town sits on the fringes of the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 highlights the town fringing its boundary and as one of its special features.

Ledbury has a thriving light industrial base, with companies such as Amcor, Galebreaker, Ornuo, Helping Hand, ABE, Heineken and Bevisol; and is well served by growers and producers supplying major supermarkets.

## Issues in Ledbury

Issues in Ledbury	Targets
Employment land demand Enhancement of skills base and development of economic potential Limited options for skills development in Ledbury Scope for the development of innovation and micro-businesses	Employment opportunities in the town will rise to the county average within 5 years and the national average within 15 years
Enhance local recreational needs to meet current and projected need and demand Enhance operational functionality of the town No significant student presence in Ledbury	A more sustainable and fully functioning town where young people have the opportunity of employment and a stake in governance and older people are enabled to live full, independent lives for longer
Scope to enhance the civic architecture and townscape and increase the Town Market and other attractions including festivals Scope to enhance the civic architecture and townscape Weak visitor economy	Ledbury becomes a more livable place with a more effective high street within the next 5 years
Scope to enhance the civic architecture and townscape	Visitor numbers and tourism spend will rise to regional average within ten years.

## Project summary

The MTIP identifies a number of potential projects that will contribute to the delivery of the town's vision. These include:

Development of employment opportunities:

- Viaduct site – 3 Ha employment allocation - business units
- Employment Land at Little Marcle Road

Improvements to develop a more sustainable and fully functioning town:

- Rail parking and access
- Landscaping at Master House/St Katherines Car Park leading to the High Street
- Shop Front Grant Scheme

Civic amenities and projects aimed at young people

- Conversion of Town Council offices to Tourist destination
- Relocation of Playing Fields
- Viaduct site – Student accommodation

The MTIP shows how each of these projects contribute to the delivery of Ledbury's Vision. It will provide a platform for successful funding bids as suitable funding opportunities become available.

Herefordshire Council will continue to work with Ledbury Town Council and other local stakeholders to identify new project and funding opportunities, carry out feasibility and foundation work, and support local organisations to apply for funding.

## BACKGROUND

This Ledbury Town Investment Plan is one of five Market Town Investment Plans commissioned by Herefordshire Council. Herefordshire’s market towns, including Ledbury, play a critical role in the county’s economy, as focal points for employment; retail, tourism, leisure and culture; business investment and growth; housing; and access to services. The market towns often provide the key interface between the wider rural areas, access to employment and local services, and connectivity to and from Hereford and other neighbouring areas.

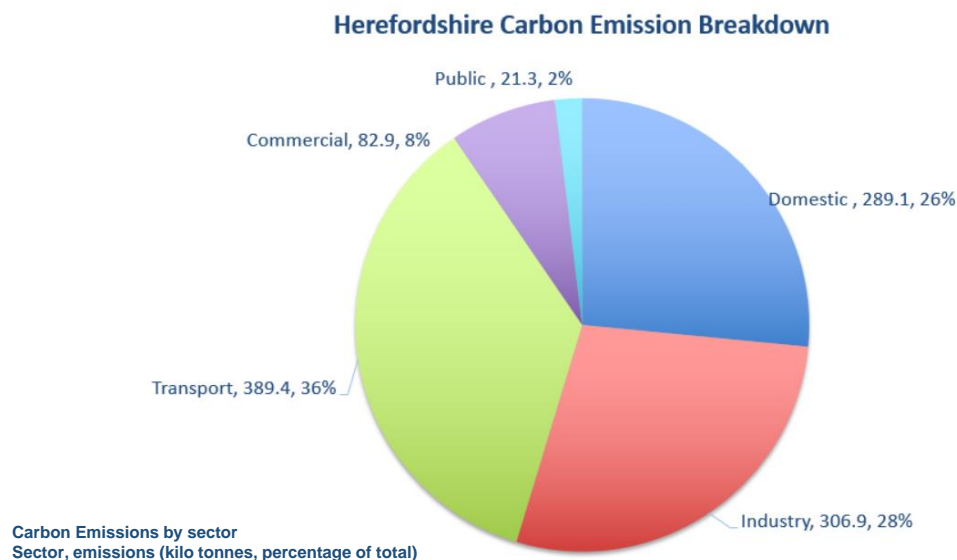
The MTIPs identify a long term vision for the growth of the towns and a programme of potential projects to enable sustainable economic development to deliver the vision. The market town investment plans will also play a key role in the development a new long term county wide ‘big plan’. The big plan will identify how we will address long term economic challenges in creating new opportunities for growth across the county, how we retain/ attract younger generations, in creating great places to live, study, work and invest.

### Climate and Ecological Emergency

On 8 March 2019 Herefordshire Council declared a Climate Emergency following unanimous support for a climate emergency resolution at full council. This declaration was subsequently updated and strengthened on 11 December 2020 when Herefordshire Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) following support for a climate and ecological emergency resolution at full council.

Further to these declarations the council approved the ambitious new target to become zero carbon and nature rich by 2030.

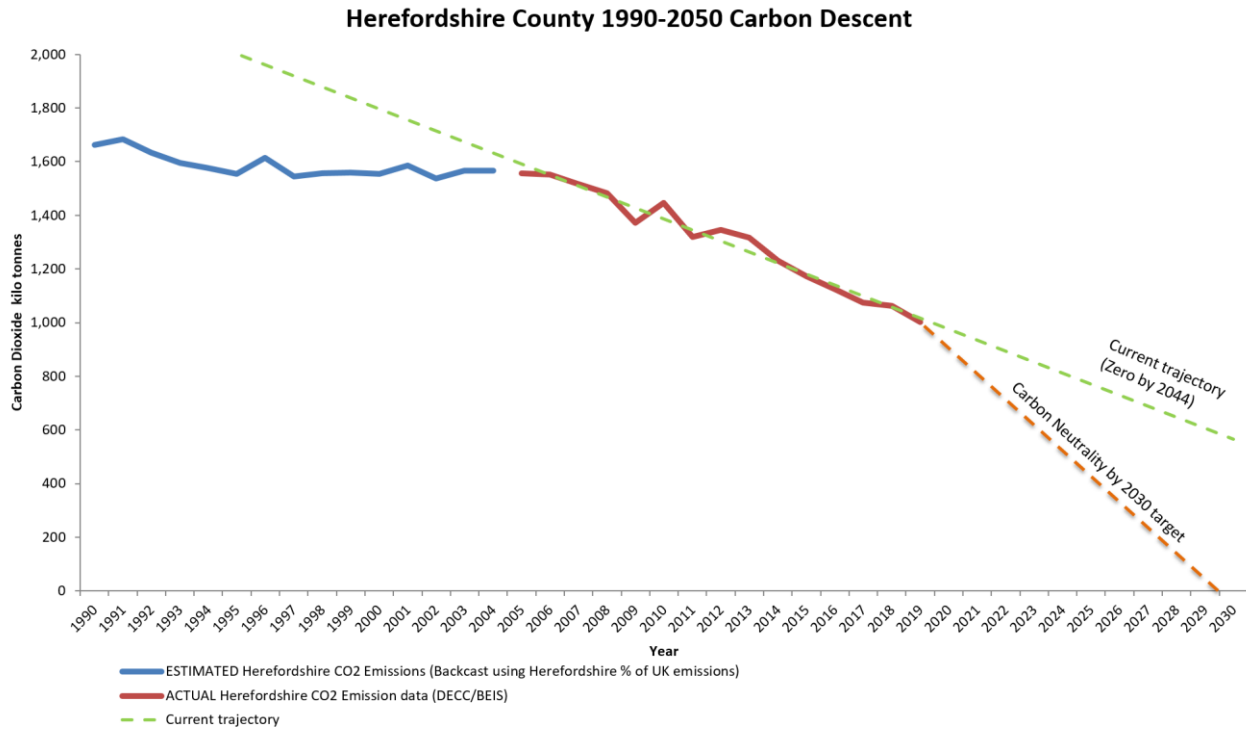
The below chart illustrates Herefordshire’s current carbon emission split and the areas of focus for the Ledbury MTIP to support the Herefordshire’s journey to net zero.



In order to achieve this target, as illustrated below, a new Herefordshire Climate & Nature Partnership and Board have been established to catalyse and coordinate new action across the

County. These actions have been grouped into a series of six different action plans including: Housing & Buildings; Transport; Energy; Farming & Land Use; Waste and Food.

The details of the Herefordshire Climate & Nature Partnership, including the six themed action plans are set out: <https://zerocarbon.herefordshire.gov.uk/>



As a key strategic plan the Ledbury MTIP is strongly committed to delivering Herefordshire’s net zero and nature rich commitment and will work in partnership with its communities, businesses and the Herefordshire Climate & Nature Board to achieve this through the development and delivery of the plan.

### Community Including the Impact of Covid-19

The damage to the economy and to health from Covid-19 has been felt across Herefordshire. During 2020 and the early part of 2021, the pandemic reached all corners of the county and has had an impact on every community. During 2020, the UK economy contracted by 9.9%. It remains to be seen what the long-term impact of the pandemic will be, but within many sectors we are likely to see a shift to working, learning and engaging in commerce remotely on digital platforms.

The projects proposed in this Plan have been developed through engagement with key stakeholders in Ledbury and will help the town to attract essential investment as the need to promote recovery opens up new funding opportunities.

Attitudes towards working from home have changed substantially since the start of the COVID pandemic and many workers will continue to work from home long after it has ended.

There could be positive implications for Herefordshire’s Market Towns in what is being termed ‘hybrid working’. The Centre for Towns recently reported that its research indicates “big potential for places to market themselves as online working destinations” as predictions indicate that the longer people are required to work at home, the greater the adoption of home working will be beyond the current situation.

The best performing towns are ones with a healthy mix of age groups and professional types. An increase in home working would have a significant positive impact in rebalancing Herefordshire's market towns demographics and towns should therefore actively promote themselves to attract in and retain a thriving working age population.

Towns will need to work closely with Herefordshire Council to ensure that digital connectivity is adequate to support the needs of home workers. Clearly Herefordshire market towns have a significant 'quality of life' offer, with a good range of local services.

## Economy

Herefordshire faces a number long term economic challenges such as the lowest level of productivity of any county in England<sup>2</sup>, a low wage economy (19% below the national average<sup>3</sup>), a deficit of higher level skills (41.4% of the population has NVQ level 4 national average of 43.1%<sup>4</sup>), an aging population (25% over 65 compared to a 18% nationally), and a significant shortage of labour (2.9% claiming unemployment benefits<sup>5</sup>).

However, the county has a significant number of opportunities, including local strengths in food and drink, tourism, and agriculture, specialisms in fast growing global markets like cyber security, an outstanding quality of life, and new university (New Model Institute in Technology and Engineering). The county is also very well placed to benefit from a post Covid lifestyle trend, as people now look to increasingly work remotely away from populated cities to locations offering a better quality of life.

The market towns have a crucial role to play in addressing the long term economic challenges, and realising the county's many opportunities. Key local centres for housing, culture, access to public services, tourism, with strong local communities and identities. Establishing great vibrant places to live and meaningful employment opportunities will be key to stemming the aging population, in retaining/ attracting younger generations to study, live and work in the county for generations to come.

Ledbury is particularly well placed to realise some of these opportunities, significantly contributing the future economic success of the county as a whole. A highly attractive and popular market town, strategically well placed on the road network (close to the M50), offering a great place to live, visit and work.

As people's approach to work and quality of life requirements change, Ledbury is well placed to benefit from an increasing transition to a digital economy, with people working from home or flexible workspaces in attractive, less densely populated locations away from city centres.

The Plan identifies a vision for growth and a programme of investment projects required to deliver the vision and support the economic development of Ledbury over the next fifteen years. Funding from many different sources will be needed to achieve them. The Plan identifies the timetable for delivery, lead body and potential sources of investment for each of the projects.

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<sup>2</sup> [ONS Regional Differences in Productivity July 2021](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Understanding Herefordshire ONS data 2019](#)

<sup>4</sup> [ONS Population Survey 2020](#)

<sup>5</sup> [ONS claimant count October 2021](#)

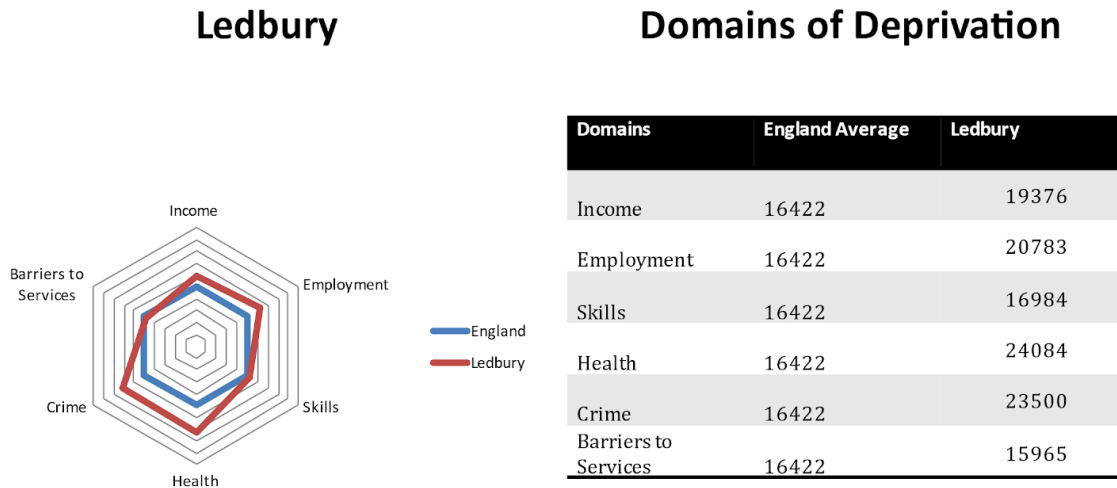
## THE MAIN CHALLENGES FACING THE TOWN

A full review of all extant documents produced in the last five years relating to Ledbury’s economic and community development is attached at Appendix 1. This contextual analysis has informed the selection and prioritisation of investment proposals in the Town Investment Plan.

A review of the 2019 Indices of deprivation identifies the main challenges facing the town summarised as follows:

- Ledbury is less deprived than England on all measures apart from Barriers to Services
- Ledbury has a similar population to other market towns apart from Kington. Population just over 10,000. 9% more over 65s than the national average.
- There is a smaller stock of jobs per head than the national average.
- Ledbury has seen an Increase in benefit claimants by 19%
- Ledbury experienced a loss of 625 jobs between 2015-18.
- Distinctive sectors for Ledbury include: manufacturing, wholesale/retail, transport, accommodation and food, professional services, arts and entertainment.
- Ledbury has a higher proportion of higher value properties than the national average.

## English Indices of Deprivation 2019



The radar diagram ranks all 32,844 Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in England according to the indices of deprivation. Each LSOA has a population of circa 1,500 people or 650 households.

- The blue line indicates the England average;
- Within the blue line is more deprived;
- Outside the blue line is less deprived.

The radar diagram above is derived from the English Indices of Deprivation 2019. It ranks each neighbourhood in England in terms of their characteristics in relation to the following indicator sets:

- The Income Deprivation Domain measures the proportion of the population experiencing deprivation relating to low income.
- The Employment Deprivation Domain measures the proportion of the working-age population in an area involuntarily excluded from the labour market.
- The Education, Skills and Training Deprivation Domain measures the lack of attainment and skills in the local population.
- The Health Deprivation and Disability Domain measures the risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health. The domain measures morbidity, disability and premature mortality but not aspects of behaviour or environment that may be predictive of future health deprivation.
- The Crime Domain measures the risk of personal and material victimisation at local level.
- The Barriers to Housing and Services Domain measures the physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services. The indicators fall into two sub-domains: 'geographical barriers', which relate to the physical proximity of local services, and 'wider barriers' which includes issues relating to access to housing such as affordability.

Pressure for new houses has resulted in extensions to the town in a number of directions. These are predominantly to its north, beyond the viaduct, and to the south, crossing over Ledbury bypass.

As yet this growth has not been accompanied by any additional employment land and other infrastructure which is considered necessary to promote a sustainable community. Currently the Town Council is reviewing its Neighbourhood Development Plan which aims to address the imbalance in development requirements.

## THE VISION FOR LEDBURY

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.

### Objectives

This 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

## THE TOWNS ASSETS AND STRENGTHS

We have set out below the key assets and strengths of the town

- Ledbury acts as a key service centre to the surrounding rural area, East Herefordshire and neighbouring Gloucestershire and Worcestershire.
- The town centre is covered by a Conservation Area, with many important built, historic and heritage assets, some of which are listed.
- Ledbury has a thriving light industrial base, with companies such as Amcor, Galebreaker, Ornuu, Helping Hand, ABE, Heineken and Bevisol; and is well served by growers and producers supplying major supermarkets.
- Ledbury is the gateway to Herefordshire and the Welsh Marches and sits on the fringes of the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Ledbury itself has a number of visitor attractions and hosts a number of events throughout the year.
- Ledbury has a railway station with regular services to Hereford, Malvern, Worcester, Birmingham and London – with improvements to access and car parking required.
- Ledbury also has a town trail (part of a former railway branch line), canal and riverside walk, and forms part of the Herefordshire Trail and Geo Park Way.
- The Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan 2019-2024 highlights the market town of Ledbury as fringing its boundary and as one of its special features.
- Ledbury has a strong voluntary sector with over 120 local groups.



The Ledbury policy context summary:

1. Ledbury is a thriving market town and acts as a key service centre to the surrounding rural area, East Herefordshire and neighbouring Gloucestershire and Worcestershire.
2. The town centre is covered by a Conservation Area, with many important built, historic and heritage assets, some of which are listed.
3. The town is scheduled to accommodate growth – mainly within an urban extension to the North. The Local Plan and LNDP seek to balance new developments with the environmental and historic constraints of the town – extending sustainable transport routes (including rail, bus, cycle and pedestrian access), affordability (housing, jobs), and through the provision of new community infrastructure. This also includes the creation of new, accessible green space, outdoor play and sports facilities.
4. Ledbury has a thriving light industrial base, with companies such as Amcor, Galebreaker, Ornuu, Helping Hand, ABE, Heineken and Bevisol; and is well served by growers and producers supplying major supermarkets. Proposals seek to provide employment land to the West – upgrade existing business sites and develop brownfield sites.
5. Ledbury is the gateway to Herefordshire and the Welsh Marches and sits on the fringes of the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Ledbury itself has a number of visitor attractions and hosts a number of events throughout the year. There are opportunities to increase local hotel and visitor accommodation provision, enhance visitor infrastructure and undertake cross-boundary promotion with other areas to turn days into stays.
6. Infrastructure (transport, broadband connectivity, community facilities) is needed to support this growth – including reducing dependency on the private car. Ledbury has a railway station with regular services to Hereford, Malvern, Worcester, Birmingham and London – with some improvements to access and car parking required.

## SPATIAL CONTEXT

Herefordshire's Core Strategy contains a chapter on Place Shaping. For Ledbury this sets out area policies and proposals to support the town to fulfil its role as a 'thriving service centre to its surrounding rural area in the east of the county'.

The focus is on meeting housing needs (including affordable housing), reducing the need to travel by private car, facilitating the provision of new jobs to stem out-commuting, improving the delivery of, and access to, services, and realising the value of the local environment by promoting sustainable tourism and high quality housing.

- Developing Ledbury as a forward thinking, self-reliant and sustainable lifestyle community to reflect increasing climate change challenges. For example, through self-build zero carbon based housing developments, growing its own food, generating renewable energy and recycling waste and water.

- To ensure that new housing in Ledbury meets the needs of residents and is developed in a sustainable manner. To meet the target set out in the Core Strategy Herefordshire Council allocated 625 dwellings on the north of the town on what is known as the viaduct site. Windfall provision and approved planning applications have brought forward approximately 200 dwellings and the approval of 321 dwellings following an appeal means the total will exceed the target. The Ledbury NDP seeks to address what is a traditional low income area but with high cost housing due its suitability for commuting to the Midlands and beyond.
- Delivering a mix of sustainable employment sites to cater for future growth – the priority here is on high-quality, long-term employment, business start-ups and creative industries.
- Ledbury has a number of visitor attractions within the town and nearby and hosts a number of events throughout the year. The Ledbury NDP encourages proposals that increase local hotel and visitor accommodation provision in the urban area, and outside of the urban area the re-use of existing buildings into self-catering tourism units. It references the need for a new hotel which would provide employment opportunities, but also the need to provide better visitor infrastructure.
- Promoting a choice of retail, leisure and community activities in ways that enhance the appearance and historic character of the town. Ledbury has a range of independent shops, food outlets, services and pubs as well as a number of specialist shops which attract visitors from further afield and have also created online businesses.
- Offering a good standard of facilities, services and open spaces. This includes supporting health facilities to expand, new or improved community facilities for young people, facilities for people with mobility impairment, and supporting the establishment of a tri-service emergency centre.
- Reducing vehicular dependency through promoting the use of cycling, walking, and public transport including the use of train services for work, business and leisure needs. This includes improvements to the town trail and improvements to the accessibility and facilities at the railway station.
- The Management Plan highlights the need for cross-boundary promotion with Malvern and Ledbury as part of attempts to build quality experiences that turn days into stays.

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Following the stakeholder Zoom meeting in December there was a further meeting with the Town Council lead stakeholder to discuss the outcomes and the next steps. The minutes of the stakeholder meeting were circulated to all those attending.

Engagement with stakeholders reflects the short-list of projects agreed with the Town Council which are: land next to the Heineken Site as potential employment land; rail access with car parking and small business units on land to the east of the rail station; landscaping of part of St Katherine's car park next to the Master's House; relocation of the Town Council to enable the historic building to be re-purposed for tourism and revenue generating activities.

Several one to one engagement meetings have been held with Heineken, with 2 meetings including council officers, and a further meeting including the NDP development team.

2 stakeholder Zoom meetings were held with members of the Ledbury Sports/Football clubs in respect of a potential new site adjacent to the potential employment site at Little Marcle Road (Heineken) as part of the NDP development with which the MTIP work is closely aligned.

We have held a significant number of phone calls and virtual meetings with project leads and a range of service areas within Herefordshire Council to discuss the potential for transfer of funds and responsibilities for the landscaping of St Katherine's car park as well as for the potential for the Town Council to take space at the Masters House.

Further stakeholder engagement with the landowner, Herefordshire Sustainable Transport Group and Herefordshire Council officers in respect of car parking at the rail station has taken place between January and the end of March and is on-going.

## THEORY OF CHANGE

A Theory of Change linked to the projects proposed arising from the strategy is set out below

Project	Intervention Framework	Issues in Ledbury	Action	Output	Outcomes	Impact	Transformation Target
Employment Land at Little Marcle Road	Business/Economy	Employment land demand	Acquire and encourage the development of new employment land	New serviced employment land	Increased stock of land to meet local employment demand	More sustainable settlement on a live/work basis	Employment opportunities in the town will rise to the county average within 5 years and the national average within 15 years
Relocation of Playing fields	Town/Civic Amenities	Enhance local recreational needs to meet current and projected need and demand	Acquire new playing field site	Better recreational and leisure environment	Increased residential desirability. Increased sport participation and volunteering	More attractive settlement to people wishing to live/work in Ledbury	A more sustainable and fully functioning town where young people have the opportunity of employment and a stake in governance and older people are enabled to live full, independent lives for longer
Rail parking and access	Town/Civic Amenities Business/Economy	Enhance operational functionality of the town	Develop key railway station infrastructure	Better and more accessible rail and parking options	Better communications and commercial infrastructure	More accessible and sustainable location for employment/leisure	A more sustainable and fully functioning town where young people have the opportunity of employment and a stake in governance and older people are enabled to live full, independent lives for longer

Project	Intervention Framework	Issues in Ledbury	Action	Output	Outcomes	Impact	Transformation Target
Landscaping at Masters House/St Katherines	Town/Civic Amenities	Scope to enhance the civic architecture and townscape and increase the Town Market and other attractions including festivals	Invest in the development of this element of public realm	More attractive public environment, better use of civic buildings and public space	Better performing physical estate in Ledbury, support for local producers through expanded market and a contribution to the wider county wide tourism offer.	More effective use of public assets, increased visitor numbers through expanded Market and other activities – festivals etc.	Ledbury becomes a more livable place with a more effective high street within the next 5 years
Skills Development	Business/Economy	Enhancement of skills base and development of economic potential	Create a skills hub linked to key training providers with a focus in Hereford	A more skilled pool of workforce choices for employers and potential inward investors	A more productive and skilled town	Ledbury is more able to sustain its development as an economic entity	Employment opportunities in the town will rise to the county average within 5 years and the national average within 15 years
Canal restoration link to skills – training facility	Business/Economy	Limited options for skills development in Ledbury	Create a skills hub linked to key training providers with a focus in Hereford	Enhanced canal facilities more local people trained	A more productive and skilled town	Ledbury is more able to sustain its development as an economic entity	Employment opportunities in the town will rise to the county average within 5 years and the national average within 15 years
Conversion of Town Council offices to Tourist destination	Tourism/Visitors	Scope to enhance the civic architecture and townscape	Conversion of key strategic tourism asset	More attractive public environment, better use of civic buildings	Better performing physical estate in Ledbury	More effective use of public assets	Visitor numbers and tourism spend will rise to regional average within ten years.
Viaduct site – Student accommodation	Business/Economy	No significant student presence in Ledbury	Holistic investment in the civic, and employment infrastructure	Creation of student accommodation in town centre	Attraction of skilled and learning based	A town with a richer mix of people of all skills and potential	A more sustainable and fully functioning town where young people have the

Project	Intervention Framework	Issues in Ledbury	Action	Output	Outcomes	Impact	Transformation Target
			make Ledbury a more balanced place in terms of its demography. Making Ledbury attractive for economically active incomers.		residents to Ledbury		opportunity of employment and a stake in governance and older people are enabled to live full, independent lives for longer – discernable change in 5 years
Viaduct site – 3ha employment allocation – Incubator/start-up units link to NMite	Business/Economy	Scope for the development of innovation and micro-businesses	Create a skills hub linked to key training providers with a focus in Hereford	Development of incubation services for micro-enterprise in Ledbury	Creation of a new cadre of micro-enterprises	Ledbury benefits from access to HE know how and dynamism	Employment opportunities in the town will rise to the county average within 5 years and the national average within 15 years
Shop/building frontage grant scheme	Tourism/Visitors Town /Civic Amenities	Weak visitor economy	Development of a scheme to bring forward private sector investment in key High Street properties	Improved Built environment in the Town	More footfall and private investment	More demand to visit and invest in the town	Ledbury becomes a more livable place with a more effective high street within the next 5 years

## SUGGESTED PROJECTS

The following projects and ‘investment themes’ emerged through the stakeholder engagement process. These projects and themes were validated through a wider stakeholder meeting in late December 2020 and subsequent group and one to one discussions in the first quarter of 2021.

The tables below provide a short form summary by way of an overview of projects and themes, those projects that could be considered appropriate for Herefordshire Employment Land and Incubation Space Capital Programme funding (amongst other sources), and individual descriptions of those projects that are considered strategically significant, with the potential to attract funding outside of the Council. It is supported by a theory of change, showing aspirations for impact.

The package of projects identified in this Town Investment Plan will need to access a range of funding sources in order to be delivered.

The majority of the projects identified will need to explore alternative funding options which could include: private investment including Section 106 funding; Heritage Lottery; charitable trusts; other public sector funding such as the capital programmes of the West Mercia Police Service; the Hereford and Worcester Fire service; the Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group; the Marches LEP; Homes England etc.

In addition to these sources of funding there are a range of Government funding opportunities already in place and more will be announced going forward. Some of the projects in the Plan will require revenue funding as well as capital investment. There may be opportunities to package projects together to bid for funding as well as to bid for funds in phases on the larger projects. Different funders will require different information and governance arrangements which will need to be considered on a bid by bid basis. The evidence base and supporting information produced to support this Plan will be a useful information and policy context to help inform bids for funding.

In May 2021 the Town Council and wider stakeholders met to consider the relative priority to allocate to each project. A scoring matrix based on the good practice methodology identified by the Town Hub which supports the national implementation of the Town Fund was used to assess the relative merit of each project. Within the matrix there are 8 themes identified through and validated by engagement with local stakeholders.

For Ledbury the key criteria agreed were: contribution to net zero; attraction of more visitors/inward investment; increased GVA (a measure of the productivity of businesses); increased business diversity (an increase to the range and variety of businesses operating locally); higher skills; better population balance (supporting a wide demographic spread of age groups); greater equity (supporting fairer access to all determinants of quality of life) and equality agenda (eliminating any form of discrimination). Each project was scored by the group on a scale of 1-5 where one is lowest to provide a group composite score. These scores then used to rank the project as set out in the summary table at Appendix 2.

Project	Summary
Viaduct site – 3ha employment allocation - business units	Potential for high tech business units to provide incubator space that NMITE and spin-out businesses would be looking for.
Employment Land at Little Marcle Road	<p>The opportunity to open up 6.7 acres of existing brownfield land for employment use. The site is currently part of the Heineken works that has been identified as surplus to operational requirements. Heineken has expressed interest in disposal of this area of land as it seeks to consolidate and increase the efficiency of its Ledbury site.</p> <p>This project could include options for site acquisition to accelerate delivery and influence eventual end-use of the site including green energy options.</p> <p>To note also that Heineken is offering 19 acres of greenfield land adjacent to its Ledbury site to the market for commercial development. This land is identified in the Ledbury NDP as employment land.</p> <p>Provisional Cost - £6,800,000</p>
Rail parking and access	<p>This project addresses the need for additional car parking at Ledbury Station as well as opening up pedestrian access (including disabled access) to the East bound platform. The car parking element has clear revenue potential. The potential to include small business units and a local farm shop equally present revenue options for the scheme.</p> <p>Provisional Cost £2.5 million</p>
Landscaping at Master House/St Katherines Car Park leading to the High Street	<p>Existing plans to landscape the area to the front of the building including part of the adjoining St Katherine's car park have not been realised notwithstanding the availability of funding for that purpose. Transfer of the asset to the Town Council would enable more 'creative' and flexible procurement to deliver the landscaping 'project' within the existing budget allocation. The finished public space could be transferred as an asset to the council to enhance the council's space for holding markets and events in the heart of the town. Provisional Cost - £120,000</p>
Shop Front Grant Scheme	<p>Financial support to encourage businesses based in Ledbury to revitalise their shop front.</p> <p>Provisional Cost - £200,000</p>
Conversion of Town Council offices to Tourist destination	<p>This would involve relocation of the Town Council to the Masters House to allow repurposing of the existing building for holiday let and wider tourism/local facilities to generate revenue and add to the Towns Heritage Tourism offering. Provisional Cost - £500,000</p>
Relocation of Playing Fields	<p>Relocation of the playing fields including an up-grade of pitch type and facilities to support strong community involvement in sports – requires circa 5ha identified potentially on land adjacent to little Marcle employment site. Provisional Cost - £1,500,000</p>



Project	Summary
Viaduct site – Student accommodation	The development site opens up the possibility for the location of some student accommodation on the development with close access to the station.

The two projects below were not included in the main list of projects as whilst they are deemed of value there are concerns that they have some long term delivery challenges. They are also outlined in yellow to represent the challenges associated with them in the project prioritization table at Appendix 2

Canal restoration link to skills – training facility	Canal Trust and HCT led skills programme to include NMITE and a local skills/training access point for reskilling/through-life learning.
Skills Development	To support Ledbury’s viability as a thriving balanced economy, the town needs to develop integrated and forward-looking skills development capacity to support its residents and to attract inward investment. The Skills Foundry project, developed as a collaboration between NMITE, HCA and Rural Media as part of Hereford’s Stronger Towns Funding bid, aims to include Herefordshire’s market towns in a hub and spoke delivery model and will actively engage with Ledbury.

Investment Proposal Form					
Project Name: Employment Land at Little Marcle Road (2.7 hectares brownfield site)					
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>		
<p>Description - There is an imbalance between housing and employment with some 40% of the working population commuting out of the town. The Ledbury NDP identifies an area of circa 7.6 hectares owned by and contiguous to the Heineken facility as employment land.</p> <p>Through the Investment Plan project Heineken have been engaged and show willingness to dispose of this 7.6 hectares site to the market to bring forward commercial developments.</p> <p>This investment plan identifies an opportunity to open up 2.7 hectares (6.7 acres) of existing brownfield land for employment use. The site is currently part of the Heineken works that has been identified as surplus to their operational requirements. Heineken has expressed interest in disposal of this area of land as it seeks to consolidate and increase the efficiency of its Ledbury site. This investment plan considers this site to be less attractive to the market to bring forward given potential extraordinary costs associated with site remediation, and therefore provides a strong rationale for public sector intervention.</p> <p>In total both sites could deliver up to 12 hectares of employment land over the NDP period, equivalent to the total requirement identified for Ledbury.</p>			<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
			£6,800,000	5 Years	<p>The opportunity to open up 2.7 hectares (6.7 acres) of existing brownfield land for employment use. The site is currently part of the Heineken works that has been identified as surplus to operational requirements. Heineken has expressed interest in disposal of this area of land as it seeks to consolidate and increase the efficiency of its Ledbury site.</p> <p>This project could include options for site acquisition and enabling works by Herefordshire Council to accelerate delivery and influence eventual end-use of the site including green energy options.</p>
<i>Demand Analysis</i>	The site is being promoted by the landowner and the project is broadly supported by the Town Council with strong local community backing.				
<i>Potential funding sources</i>	<p>Heineken (The landowner) has recently expressed an interest in disposal of the land and is demonstrating a willingness to engage in the Investment plan process as a 'community stakeholder' given its wider economic and corporate footprint in Herefordshire.</p> <p>We are currently facilitating discussion of options between Heineken and Herefordshire Council on options that could include site acquisition by the Council and enabling works to accelerate delivery and influence</p>				

Investment Proposal Form				
	eventual end-use of the site including green energy options.			
<i>Exit (Sustainability) Strategy</i>	This project will raise capital receipts which over a phased time period will repay the investment proposed.			

Investment Proposal Form					
Project Name: Rail parking and access					
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>		
<p>Description: This project addresses the need for additional car parking at Ledbury Station as well as opening up pedestrian access (including disabled access) to the East bound platform. Current parking facilities and pedestrian access are severely constrained, creating disruptive on-street parking and significantly restricting access to public transport. These constraints act as a major drag on delivering the wider economic and social connectivity benefits and advantages of this significant transport asset. Connectivity and access are central elements of the town's development aspirations to improve facilities for business creation and growth. The project may deliver a small number of business incubator units on the site identified, with the potential for a bus turning point that would significantly improve transport into and out of town. This latter is considered to be an important service to support the volume of additional housing within the town.</p>		<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>	
		£ TBC	Dependent on core strategy review	Enhance operational functionality of the town. Better and more accessible rail and parking options. Better communications and commercial infrastructure. More accessible and sustainable location for employment/leisure.	
		<i>Demand Analysis</i>	The site is being promoted by the landowner and the project is broadly supported by the Town Council with strong local community backing. Core Strategy to be reviewed. Transport for Wales approval. Neighbourhood Development Plan.		
		<i>Potential funding sources</i>	The car parking element has clear revenue potential. The potential to include small business units and a local farm shop equally present revenue options for the scheme that could form the basis for debt financing and other sources of commercial finance.		
<i>Exit (Sustainability) Strategy</i>	Further discussions with the rail operator and the development of a worked up scheme are required as a next step.				

Investment Proposal Form				
Project Name: Landscaping at Master House/St Katherines Car Park leading to the High Street				
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>	
<i>Description (up to 100 words)</i>			<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>
<p>This area of the Town centre is of significant historic and cultural interest as well as a gateway into the high street and surrounding areas. The recently refurbished Masters House is an impressive historic building owned by Herefordshire Council but with an extant agreement for an asset transfer to the Town Council. Existing plans to landscape the area to the front of the building including part of the adjoining St Katherine's car park have not been realised notwithstanding the availability of substantial funding for that purpose. and responsibility from Herefordshire Council to the Town Council would enable more 'creative' and flexible procurement by the Town Council to deliver the landscaping 'project' within the existing budget allocation with then the potential to make the case for the finished public space to be transferred as an asset to the council to enhance the council's space for holding markets and events in the heart of the town.</p>				
Demand Analysis	This is a long-standing delivery aspiration by the Town Council. It has significant local support for the visual improvements delivered and the potential to extend the town market.	£100,000	6 months to 12 months	Scope to enhance the civic architecture and townscape. More attractive public environment, better use of civic buildings. Better performing physical estate in Ledbury. More effective use of public assets
Potential funding sources	Existing section 106 monies available to be transferred for delivery – a design has been completed and would require some modifications to allow tendering for a scheme to deliver within budget.			
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	Delivery and on-going maintenance undertaken by Town Council following asset transfer of the Land. Project Management capabilities would be 'bought in' by the Town Council from Herefordshire Council.			

Investment Proposal Form					
Project Name: Relocation and up-grading of sports pitches					
Intervention Framework	Economy and business	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>		
<p><i>Description:</i> Relocation of the playing fields including an up-grade of pitch type and facilities to support strong community involvement in sports – requires circa 5ha identified potentially on land adjacent to little Marcle employment site.</p> <p>A December 2020 report from the DCMS on the Economic Value of Sport puts sport at a 5.7% contribution to the DCMS total. Sport contributed £17.0bn in 2019, accounting for 0.9% of UK GVA. The GVA of Sport has increased by 2.9% between 2018 and 2019 and by 20.4% between 2010 and 2019, in real terms. Local sport creates significant direct value and substantial additional GVA through the range of volunteering activities that it encourages.</p>			Cost	Timescale	Outputs
Demand Analysis	<p>Pressure from additional housing adds to the shortfall of land for playing fields. The NDP highlights the land shortage relative to population size. Existing Full Pitcher site was granted planning permission for 100 houses and requires the relocation of the football club. The Town has a very active football community at all ages and stages with significant participation and volunteer contributions all of which is set to increase in line with new housing. Current estimates from the local Ledbury Football Club that 20% of the Town are involved in the club and related activities.</p>		£1.5M	12 to 18 months	All weather pitches providing year round facilities to support and increase participation.
Potential funding sources	<p>Recent consultation with Herefordshire Council identified S106 funding that is available for sport and recreation. The Football club is also exploring funding via relevant sporting bodies.</p>				
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	<p>The project needs clearer definition in terms of land requirement – and the nature of land acquisition whether via purchase, land swap, or other ‘planning gain’ type approach with local landowners. Discussion in the context of the potential for employment land at Little Marcle Road with scope for adjacent land for the sports fields is on-going and requires further in-put and co-ordination via Herefordshire Council and Ledbury Town Council.</p>				

Investment Proposal Form			
Project Name: Conversion of Town Council offices to Tourist destination			
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>
<p><i>Description:</i> This would involve relocation of the Town Council to the Masters House to allow repurposing of the existing building for holiday let and wider tourism/local facilities to generate revenue and add to the Towns Heritage Tourism offering.</p> <p>The relocation of the Town Council could be effected through space provision within the Masters House leased from Herefordshire Council.</p>		<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>
<i>Demand Analysis</i>	Similar repurposing of historic buildings for revenue generating activities is commonplace across the UK and provides the basis for self-funding. There is a shortage of holiday accommodation in Ledbury and this would add to the general offer and also encourage longer stays. Additional uses for inter alia conferences and weddings would broaden the commercial offer.	£500k	18 months
<i>Potential funding sources</i>	As a heritage asset the project would be eligible for related funding including the Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic England. A full business plan would demonstrate the potential for borrowing/debt finance against which the Town Council could consider borrowing options if appropriate.		
<i>Exit (Sustainability) Strategy</i>	The project would become financially self-sustaining with any surpluses generated available for additional developments if required. £1 of Public sector investment in heritage-led regeneration generates £1.60 in additional economic activity over 10 years – a 60% ROI.		
			<i>Outputs</i>
			Enhanced public realm. High profile visitor attraction to encourage longer stays and encourage additional footfall into the town.

Investment Proposal Form			
Project Name: Ledbury Viaduct Site – Student Accommodation			
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>
		<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>
		<i>Outputs</i>	
<p><i>Description:</i> Bloor Homes plans to build 625 homes and 2.9 hectares of B1 employment space in Ledbury, as a mixed-use site next to Ledbury Viaduct and Orchard Business Park. This project ‘concept’ would link the town to the newly established NMITE at Hereford by providing student accommodation on that site over time as the University is established and demand for student accommodation increases, that would encourage enterprise amongst graduates as well as providing business demand for the higher skills acquired by graduates at the University.</p> <p>Project options could include the acquisition of land and development of accommodation by Herefordshire Council to support this wider aspiration in the event that it was established that the market was unable to deliver such facilities.</p>			
Demand Analysis	Additional feasibility work is required to determine project demand and viability and appropriateness for Council Capital funding.	£TBC	12-18 months
Potential funding sources	Delivery options would need to be developed to determine the potential for private sector or public sector investment, or a combination, including the NMITE funding at the appropriate stage.		
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	Consideration would need to be given to the nature of any Council Capital Investment for either long-term revenue generation from rental income, or a shorter term ‘loan’ basis for repayment post development.		
			Influx of younger undergraduates to the town with the opportunity over time to ‘incubate’ enterprising start-up businesses and attract inward investment in small high tech business start-up that requires skilled engineers.



### Investment Proposal Form

Project Name: Ledbury Viaduct Site – 2.9 ha employment land allocation potential for business units

<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>		
<p><i>Description:</i> Bloor Homes plans to build 625 homes and will plan to build 2.9 hectares of B1 employment space in Ledbury, on a site next to Ledbury Viaduct and Orchard Business Park. This project 'concept' would support the development and early delivery of a range of business units for lease to support new business start up and expansion to meet the requirements for additional employment space in the Town. Ledbury is currently under supplied with the type and range of business premises to enable local business start-ups and expansion according to the views expressed at the planning meetings for this initiative, from the local area which acts as a significant drag to its economic performance and exacerbates the Town's currently skewed demographic by not providing employment opportunities for the economically active. Project options could include the acquisition of land and development of business units by Herefordshire Council to support this strategic requirement for the town. Whilst the developer has included this site within its planning application there remains a risk to delivery that could be mitigated through intervention by the Council to accelerate delivery.</p>			<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
			Demand Analysis	Additional feasibility work is required to determine project demand and viability and appropriateness for Council Employment Land and Business Space Capital Programme funding.	
Potential funding sources	Delivery options would need to be developed to determine the potential for private sector or public sector investment, or a combination, including developer participation or contribution.				
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	Consideration would need to be given to the nature of any Council Employment Land and Business Space Capital Programme Investment for either long-term revenue generation from rental income, or a shorter term 'loan' basis for repayment post development.				

## Next Steps

This is one of five Market Town Economic Investment Plans commissioned by Herefordshire Council for each of Herefordshire's market towns.

Herefordshire Council has identified a number of projects which could be funded by them. As a result in addition to this Market Town Investment Plan, Rose Regeneration has completed Outline Business Cases (OBCs) and Project Mandates for the following projects for the Council's consideration.

OBCs have been developed and submitted for:

- Employment Land at Little Marcle Road – 2.7 hectare brownfield site at Heineken
- Rail Parking at Land adjacent to Ledbury Rail Station

Project Mandates have been developed and submitted for:

- Viaduct Site – 3 Ha employment land
- Viaduct site – Student Accommodation
- Ledbury Town Council Offices conversion for Tourism Use

Once the Plans, OBCs and Project Mandates have been considered by Herefordshire Council it is recommended that the Council works with the five market town councils to establish an appropriate delivery mechanism to oversee, secure funding for and monitor the delivery of the Market Town Economic Investment Plans. This delivery mechanism should be led and supported by Herefordshire Council and should involve representatives from each Town Council.

## APPENDIX 1 – STRATEGIC CONTEXT SUMMARY

National context	Regional Context	Herefordshire Context	Ledbury Context
<p>Industrial Strategy – ‘places’ foundation: tackling entrenched regional disparities.</p> <p>Industrial Strategy Productivity Evidence Review – some cities and rural county areas have been falling behind, including Herefordshire. County Councils Network analysis of GVA in 36 county areas found Herefordshire to be experiencing the smallest economic growth 5.3% between 2014 and 2018).</p> <p>A low carbon future in a changing climate – UK obligations under the 2015 Paris Agreement - setting a net zero target for carbon emissions by 2050.</p> <p>HM Treasury/Government department resources - levelling up economic opportunity across all nations and regions of the country by investing in infrastructure, innovation and people.</p> <p>Build Better, Build Greener, Build Faster - reforming the planning system (NPPF, Planning for the Future White Paper) to give more emphasis to quality, design and the environment.</p> <p>COVID-19 recovery measures - protecting and restoring livelihoods, improving living standards and new economic opportunities.</p>	<p>Local Industrial Strategy and Strategic Economic Plan – inclusive growth, connectivity, skills, enterprise and innovation, trade and investment. Herefordshire’s sectoral specialisms: food and drink, education, advanced manufacturing and engineering, defence and construction. Growth opportunities for (i) manufacturing and engineering, (ii) food supply chain/agri-tech innovation, and (iii) cyber security and resilience.</p> <p>Skills Plan and Skills Sectors Deep Dives – the provision of Higher Education provision and Further Education courses relevant to these growth opportunities in Herefordshire.</p> <p>Cyber Resilience Alliance / Science and Innovation Audit – the largest cluster of cyber security activity outside of London: growth in direct jobs, wider investment in products and processes and acting as a regional testbed.</p> <p>Growth Hub and Enterprise Zone with specialisms in defence and security at Skylon Park, Hereford. Niche tourism offer with potential to increase awareness and visibility.</p> <p>Economic recovery plan – investment in infrastructure and jobs: Hereford city streetscape improvements and NMITE Skylon campus development.</p>	<p>Herefordshire is a cold spot for social mobility – it is in the bottom 20 list of Local Authorities in England in terms of the chances that disadvantaged children will do well at school and get a good job.</p> <p>The importance of creating high-quality, highly skilled jobs against a backdrop of traditional low-skill, low-wage economy.</p> <p>County Plan – improving sustainability, connectivity, wellbeing and becoming carbon neutral by 2030-2031: Talk Community (hubs), community wealth building (increasing the amount of money that stays in the local economy); and Sustainable Food County (a whole system approach to tackling obesity, diet related ill health, food poverty, waste and climate change).</p> <p>Hereford Town Investment Plan – intended to deliver urban regeneration, a stronger skills base, and improved connectivity in the city. Under the strapline ‘green and fair’ the TIP recognises Hereford’s connectivity to market towns and countryside (e.g. tourism – attract and disperse approach).</p> <p>Telling stories about place, identifying and implementing a vision, strong partnership working and securing funding/investment are all needed for pandemic Recovery and Transformation.</p> <p>Hereford Transport Strategy describes traffic flows, delays and congestion schemes which increase physical activity (e.g. cycling, walking) generate high value-for-money.</p>	<p>Ledbury is a principal market town, providing a service centre for the town, surrounding rural hinterland, East Herefordshire and neighbouring Gloucestershire and Worcestershire.</p> <p>Herefordshire Economic Vision – enabling market towns to maximise their role in building thriving and distinctive service centres.</p> <p>Herefordshire Core Strategy – Ledbury supporting housing need (including affordable housing), reducing the need to travel by private car, employment generation to stem out-commuting, improving access to services, and viewing the environment as an economic asset through sustainable tourism.</p> <p>The vision for the town in the Neighbourhood Development Plan is structured around the following themes: preserve and develop prosperity, preserve and develop wellbeing, preserve quality and character, widen the employment base, develop educational facilities, develop sport and recreation, preserve the environment, and nurture the town centre = Ledbury as a forward thinking, self-reliant and sustainable lifestyle community.</p> <p>The market town is expected to accommodate growth – with new housing developments (x800 dwellings, mainly via an urban extension), employment land (15 hectares) and accompanying educational, health, transport, sports and community facilities.</p> <p>Ledbury is the gateway to Herefordshire and the Welsh Marches and sits on the fringes of the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty = increasing local hotel and visitor accommodation, enhancing visitor infrastructure and cross-boundary promotion to turn days into stays.</p>

## APPENDIX 2 – PROJECT PRIORITISATION

PROJECTS	THEME	DESCRIPTION	Indicative Cost (,000)	Contribution to Zero Carbon	More Visitors and Inward Investment	Increased GVA	Increased Business Diversity	Higher Skills	Leads to Better Population Balance	Greater Equity	Equality Agenda	Score
Viaduct site – 3ha employment allocation - business units - Ledbury	Skills Investment	Potential for high tech business units to provide incubator space that NMITE and spin-out businesses would be looking for.	£1,000	5	4	5	5	4	5	5	4	93%
Employment Land at Little Marcle Road - Ledbury	Employment Space	The opportunity to open up 19 acres for employment use. The site is currently greenfield, identified in the draft NDP for employment use. The landowner has recently expressed interest in disposal of the land. This project could include options for site acquisition and enabling works by Herefordshire Council to accelerate delivery and influence eventual end-use of the site including green energy options.	£6,800	5	4	5	5	3	5	5	4	90%
Rail parking and access - Ledbury	Transport	This project addresses the need for additional car parking at Ledbury Station as well as opening up pedestrian access (including disabled access) to the East bound platform. The car parking element has clear revenue potential. The potential to include small business units and a local farm shop equally present revenue options for the scheme.	£2,500	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	5	88%
Landscaping at Master House/St Katherines Car Park leading to the High Street - Ledbury	Public Realm	Existing plans to landscape the area to the front of the building including part of the adjoining St Katherine's car park have not been realised notwithstanding the availability of funding for that purpose. Transfer of funding to the Town Council would enable more 'creative' and flexible procurement to deliver the landscaping 'project' within the existing budget allocation. The	£120	5	4	4	4	2	4	4	5	80%

PROJECTS	THEME	DESCRIPTION	Indicative Cost (,000)	Contribution to Zero Carbon	More Visitors and Inward Investment	Increased GVA	Increased Business Diversity	Higher Skills	Leads to Better Population Balance	Greater Equity	Equality Agenda	Score
		finished public space to be transferred as an asset to the council to enhance the council's space for holding markets and events in the heart of the town.										
Shop Front Grant Scheme - Ledbury	Commercial Development	Financial support to encourage businesses based in Ledbury to revitalise their shop front.	£200	5	4	4	4	2	3	4	5	78%
Conversion of Town Council offices to Tourist destination - Ledbury	Tourism	This would involve relocation of the Town Council to the Masters House to allow repurposing of the existing building for holiday let and wider tourism/local facilities to generate revenue and add to the Towns Heritage Tourism offering	£500	2	5	3	4	1	3	4	4	65%
Relocation of Playing fields - Ledbury	Community Space	Relocation of the playing fields including an up-grade of pitch type and facilities to support strong community involvement in sports – requires circa 5ha identified potentially on land adjacent to little Marcle employment site	£1,500	4	4	2	2	2	3	4	5	65%
Viaduct Student Accommodation	Housing	Potential for student accommodation with accessibility via Ledbury rail station to learning centres in Hereford	£3,500	4	3	0	4	0	4	5	4	60%
Skills Development - Ledbury, Leominster and Bromyard	Skills Investment	To support the town's viability as a thriving balanced economy, the town needs to develop integrated and forward-looking skills development capacity to support its residents and to attract inward investment. The Skills Foundry project, developed as a collaboration between NMITE, HCA and Rural Media as part of Hereford's Stronger Towns Funding bid, aims to include Herefordshire's market towns in a hub and spoke delivery model and will actively engage with Ledbury.	£500	5	4	4	4	5	4	5	5	90%

PROJECTS	THEME	DESCRIPTION	Indicative Cost (,000)	Contribution to Zero Carbon	More Visitors and Inward Investment	Increased GVA	Increased Business Diversity	Higher Skills	Leads to Better Population Balance	Greater Equity	Equality Agenda	Score
Canal restoration link to skills – training facility - Ledbury	Skills Investment	Canal Trust and HCT led skills programme to include NMITE and a local skills/training access point for reskilling/through-life learning.	£1,000	5	4	3	3	5	3	5	5	83%



# Bromyard Investment Plan 2021



JUNE 2021

*We're 90 minutes from Birmingham, Bristol and Cardiff but a world away from the rat-race. Bromyard has something for everyone and we're open for business. Bromyard will build on its proud market town heritage to attract people to live, to work, to invest, to visit and to play. Our vision is rooted in our location in some of Britain's most beautiful countryside and in our ambitions to connect to the advanced industries and services in engineering, green technology, agri food, digital and circular economies which are emerging on our doorstep and to lead the way in artisan food and drink tourism. We will collaborate with our friends and neighbours to develop the lifelong skills of future generations, to create an ever-more vibrant and attractive visitor economy and to realise our full potential as a sustainable, cohesive and dynamic community*

Bromyard Town Investment Plan Statement 2021



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Market Town Investment Plans

This Bromyard Town Investment Plan is one of five Market Town Investment Plans (MTIPs) commissioned by Herefordshire Council. Herefordshire's market towns, including Bromyard, play a critical role in the county's economy, as focal points for employment; for retail, tourism, leisure and culture; for business investment and growth; for housing; and for access to services. The market towns often provide the key interface between the wider rural areas, access to employment and local services, and connectivity to and from Hereford and other neighbouring areas.

The MTIPs identify a long term vision for the growth of the towns and a programme of potential projects to enable sustainable economic development to deliver the vision. The MTIPs will also play a key role in the development a new long term county wide 'big plan'. The big plan will identify how we will address long term economic challenges in creating new opportunities for growth across the county and how we retain/ attract younger generations, creating great places to live, study, work and invest.

## The Vision for Bromyard

Key strategic objectives include making Bromyard:

- a place that encourages inward investment and new talent, with an excellent skills development offer, providing diverse career opportunities for our school and college leavers
- a place which is recognised regionally, nationally and globally for its artisan food and drink culture and experiential tourism offer, operates as a gateway for walking and cycling and has a national profile in terms of its festivals and events
- a place with a diverse and exciting retail offer a place which engages with and supports all parts of our community
- a more accessible place by improving our green transport connection links and active travel options

## The Main Challenges facing the town

Bromyard is one of the smallest market towns in the county with a population of 9,050 (2019 Mid-Year Population Estimates ONS), 4,700 in the town itself.

Bromyard is more deprived on most domains in the Indices of Deprivation than the England average with particular challenges around the skills profile of the town. Bromyard has 5% more over 65s than the England average of 20%. It has a modestly smaller stock of jobs per capita than the Herefordshire average and experienced an increase in Job Seekers' Allowance (JSA) claimants during the first half (April-October 2020) of the lockdown period, from 220 to 265, an increase of 20%.

## The Town's Assets and Strengths

Bromyard is well placed with transport and connectivity to South Wales, Birmingham and the Midlands. It has a strong festival and events calendar and the potential to act as a base for walking and cycling to develop its economic potential.

Bromyard has history and heritage buildings from the medieval, Georgian, Victorian, inter-war, post war and post millennium periods which are host to a high number of independent retailers. The town is a traditional small rural service centre supporting a wider dispersed population.

## Issues in Bromyard

Issues in Bromyard	Targets
Shortage of employment opportunities	Employment opportunities will rise to the county average within 5 years and the national average within 15
Low property values/weak independent retail/weak visitor economy	Visitor arrivals and expenditure will rise to the national average within 5 years
Weak visitor economy	
Lower than average skills and limited local training infrastructure	Local skills gap will close within 10 years to support new businesses and inward investment

## Project summary

The MTIP identifies a number of potential projects that will contribute to the delivery of the town's vision. These include:

Development of employment opportunities:

- EcoHub – development of new employment land

Improvements to support the visitor economy:

- Bromyard Eastern Enhancement – a range of proposals including a permanent festival site; community facilities; public realm improvements; and shop front grants scheme
- Greenway – phased development of a multi-user track from Bromyard to Rowden

Civic amenities, skills development and projects aimed at young people

- Health and Wellbeing Hub in the centre of Bromyard
- Skills Development – development of the Skills Foundry, a collaboration between NMITE, HCA and Rural Media as part of Hereford's Stronger Towns Funding bid, to include Bromyard in a hub and spoke delivery model

The MTIP shows how each of these projects contribute to the delivery of Bromyard's Vision. It will provide a platform for successful funding bids as suitable funding opportunities become available.

Herefordshire Council will continue to work with Bromyard and Winslow Town Council and other local stakeholders to identify new project and funding opportunities, carry out feasibility and foundation work, and support local organisations to apply for funding.

## BACKGROUND

This Bromyard Town Investment Plan is one of five Market Town Investment Plans commissioned by Herefordshire Council. Herefordshire’s market towns, including Bromyard, play a critical role in the county’s economy, as focal points for employment; retail, tourism, leisure and culture; business investment and growth; housing; and access to services. The market towns often provide the key interface between the wider rural areas, access to employment and local services, and connectivity to and from Hereford and other neighbouring areas.

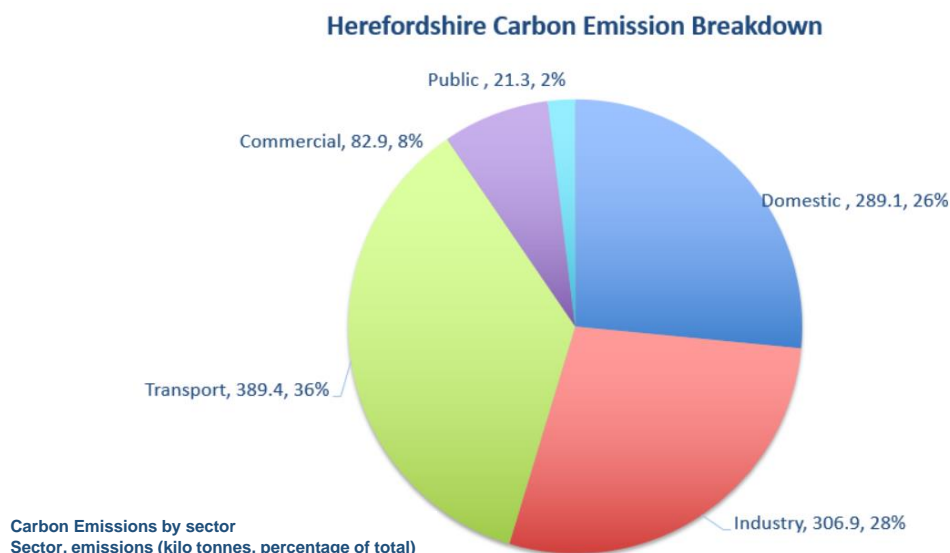
The MTIPs identify a long term vision for the growth of the towns and a programme of potential projects to enable sustainable economic development to deliver the vision. The market town investment plans will also play a key role in the development a new long term county wide ‘big plan’. The big plan will identify how we will address long term economic challenges in creating new opportunities for growth across the county and how we retain/ attract younger generations, creating great places to live, study, work and invest.

### Climate and Ecological Emergency

On 8 March 2019 Herefordshire Council declared a Climate Emergency following unanimous support for a climate emergency resolution at full council. This declaration was subsequently updated and strengthened on 11 December 2020 when Herefordshire Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) following support for a climate and ecological emergency resolution at full council.

Further to these declarations the council approved the ambitious new target to become zero carbon and nature rich by 2030.

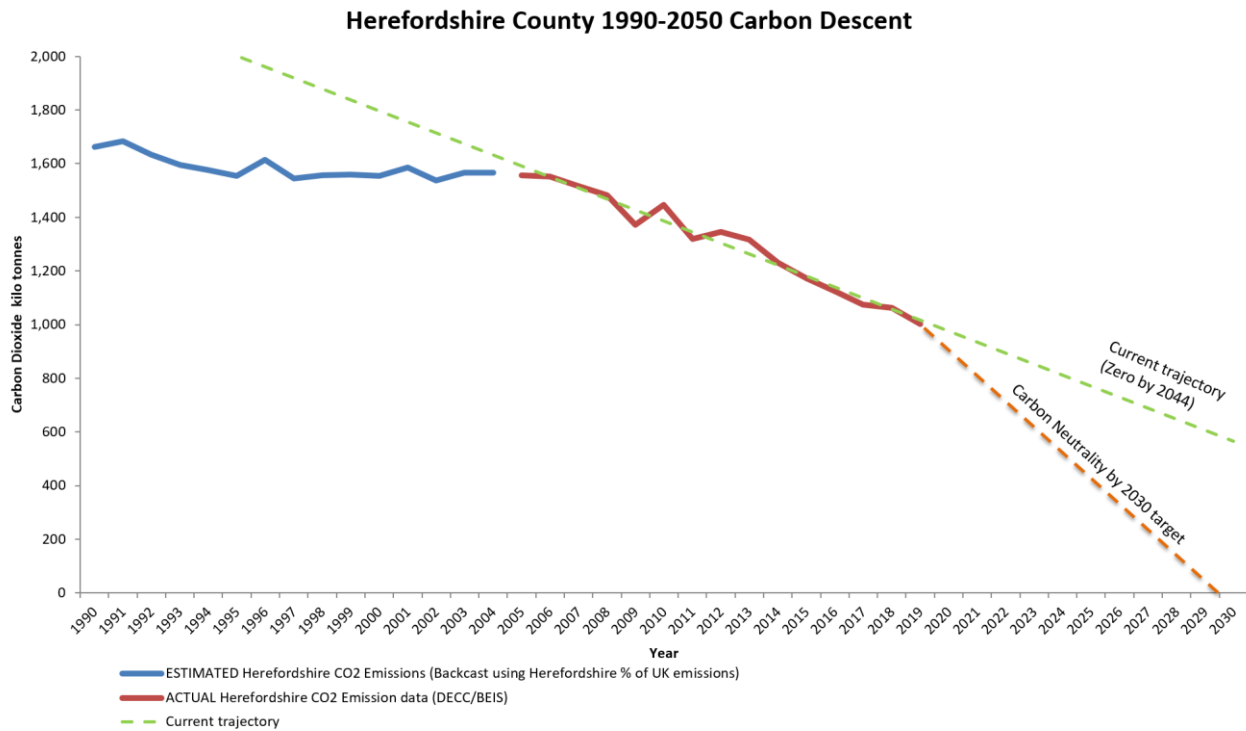
The below chart illustrates Herefordshire’s current carbon emission split and the areas of focus for the Bromyard MTIP to support the Herefordshire’s journey to net zero.



In order to achieve this target, as illustrated below, a new Herefordshire Climate & Nature Partnership and Board have been established to catalyse and coordinate new action across the

County. These actions have been grouped into a series of six different action plans including: Housing & Buildings; Transport; Energy; Farming & Land Use; Waste and Food.

The details of the Herefordshire Climate & Nature Partnership, including the six themed action plans are set out: <https://zerocarbon.herefordshire.gov.uk/>



As a key strategic plan the Bromyard MTIP is strongly committed to delivering Herefordshire’s net zero and nature rich commitment and will work in partnership with its communities, businesses and the Herefordshire Climate & Nature Board to achieve this through the development and delivery of the plan.

## Economy

Herefordshire faces a number long term economic challenges such as the lowest level of productivity of any county in England<sup>1</sup>, a low wage economy (19% below the national average<sup>2</sup>), a deficit of higher level skills (41.4% of the population has NVQ level 4 national average of 43.1%<sup>3</sup>), an aging population (25% over 65 compared to a 18% nationally), and a significant shortage of labour (2.9% claiming unemployment benefits<sup>4</sup>).

However, the county has a significant number of opportunities, including local strengths in food and drink, tourism, and agriculture, specialisms in fast growing global markets like cyber security, an outstanding quality of life, and new university (New Model Institute in Technology and Engineering). The county is also very well placed to benefit from a post Covid lifestyle trend, as people now look to increasingly work remotely away from populated cities to locations offering a better quality of life.

<sup>1</sup> [ONS Regional Differences in Productivity July 2021](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Understanding Herefordshire ONS data 2019](#)

<sup>3</sup> [ONS Population Survey 2020](#)

<sup>4</sup> [ONS claimant count October 2021](#)

The market towns have a crucial role to play in addressing the long term economic challenges, and realising the county's many opportunities. They are key local centres for housing, culture, access to public services, tourism, with strong local communities and identities. Establishing great vibrant places to live and meaningful employment opportunities will be key to rebalancing the aging population by retaining/ attracting younger generations to study, live and work in the county for generations to come.

Bromyard is particularly well placed to realise some of these opportunities, significantly contributing the future economic success of the county as a whole. A highly attractive and popular market town, strategically well placed in terms of relationship to Hereford and Worcester, offering a great place to live, visit and work.

As people's approach to work and quality of life requirements change, Bromyard is well placed to benefit from an increasing transition to a digital economy, with people working from home or flexible workspaces in attractive, less densely populated locations away from city centres.

The Plan identifies a vision for growth and a programme of investment projects required to deliver the vision and support the economic development of Bromyard over the next fifteen years. Funding from many different sources will be needed to achieve them. The Plan identifies the timetable for delivery, lead body and potential sources of investment for each of the projects.

## Community Including the Impact of Covid-19

The damage to the economy and to health from Covid-19 has been felt across Herefordshire. During 2020 and the early part of 2021, the pandemic reached all corners of the county and has had an impact on every community. During 2020, the UK economy contracted by 9.9%. (source: Office for National Statistics<sup>5</sup>) It remains to be seen what the long-term impact of the pandemic will be, but within many sectors we are likely to see a shift to working, learning and engaging in commerce remotely on digital platforms.

The projects proposed in this Plan have been developed through engagement with key stakeholders in Bromyard and will help the town to attract essential investment as the need to promote recovery opens up new funding opportunities.

Attitudes towards working from home have changed substantially since the start of the COVID pandemic and many workers will continue to work from home long after it has ended.

There could be positive implications for Herefordshire's market towns in what is being termed 'hybrid working'. The Centre for Towns recently reported that its research indicates "big potential for places to market themselves as online working destinations" as predictions indicate that the longer people are required to work at home, the greater the adoption of home working will be beyond the current situation.

The best performing towns are ones with a healthy mix of age groups and professions. An increase in home working would have a significant positive impact in rebalancing Herefordshire's market towns demographics and towns should therefore actively promote themselves to attract in and retain a thriving working age population.

Towns will need to work closely with Herefordshire Council to ensure that digital connectivity is adequate to support the needs of home workers. Clearly, Herefordshire market towns have a significant 'quality of life' offer, with a good range of local services.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossdomesticproductgdp/articles/coronavirusandtheimpactonoutputintheukeconomy/december2020>

## CONTEXT

Bromyard is a typical English market town, with a population of approximately 4,500 within the town itself (2011 census). It is located in the valley of the river Frome, approximately fifteen miles to the north-east of Hereford and is the centre for a number of parishes in the north-east of the county of Herefordshire, as well as several villages in neighbouring Worcestershire.

It is surrounded by and supports a spectacular rural hinterland and is often referred to as the 'Town of Festivals'; its festivals and events calendar is an example of what could be developed across the county and includes: an annual Speed Festival and Foodie Tour; a Town Crier Festival which involves representatives from across the UK; a highly successful rock music festival, Nozstock; a Folk Festival which includes music, crafts and workshops; and a Christmas tree festival.

The town has great potential to build on its existing visitor offer. It is mentioned in the Domesday Book and contains beautiful black and white half-timbered buildings, Georgian and Victorian facades, a Norman church, a toll house, a heritage centre, arts and crafts galleries, and a mix of local retail outlets.

In recent years, Bromyard has effectively become a dormitory town with many residents commuting to Worcester or Hereford for employment. The need for local employment opportunities, particularly in the manufacturing sector, was a consistent theme in discussions with stakeholders.

The town is bisected by the A44 which provides an important cross regional route for long distance freight, commercial and tourist traffic. Unlike many towns in Herefordshire, it has few problems with accessibility, although public transport provision is weak.

Bromyard town centre is home to a variety of independent retail businesses and has the potential capacity to host a regular weekly market in the market square. Bromyard is a primary location for food shopping for residents but, with targeted investment, its historic environment and niche retail offer could be developed to attract regional and national visitors.

The town centre has suffered from a lack of strategic investment for many years and it is widely accepted that improving the town's public realm and making it a more attractive destination for both residents and visitors will benefit the local economy and promote future growth within the town.

For the purpose of Rose Regeneration's work, Bromyard's town boundaries are those based on the Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA's) that we have used to inform the data analysis based on the 2019 Index of deprivation. The work has also been cognisant of the boundaries set out in the Herefordshire Core Strategy (2015).

## THE VISION FOR BROMYARD

Rose Regeneration has worked closely with stakeholders in Bromyard's future to develop an updated vision and key strategic objectives for the town within the next fifteen years:

We're 90 minutes from Birmingham, Bristol and Cardiff but a world away from the rat-race. Bromyard has something for everyone and we're open for business. Bromyard will build on its proud market town heritage to attract people to live, to work, to invest, to visit and to play.

Our vision is rooted in our location in some of Britain's most beautiful countryside and in our ambitions to connect to the advanced industries and services in engineering, green technology, agri food, digital and circular economies which are emerging on our doorstep and to lead the way in artisan food and drink tourism. We will collaborate with our friends and neighbours to develop the lifelong skills of future



generations, to create an ever-more vibrant and attractive visitor economy and to realise our full potential as a sustainable, cohesive and dynamic community.

Key strategic objectives include making Bromyard:

- a place that encourages inward investment and new talent, with an excellent skills development offer, providing diverse career opportunities for our school and college leavers
- a place which is recognised regionally, nationally and globally for its artisan food and drink culture and experiential tourism offer, operates as a gateway for walking and cycling and has a national profile in terms of its festivals and events
- a place with a diverse and exciting retail offer a place which engages with and supports all parts of our community
- a more accessible place by improving our green transport connection links and active travel options

This vision provides the basis for our Town Investment Plan.

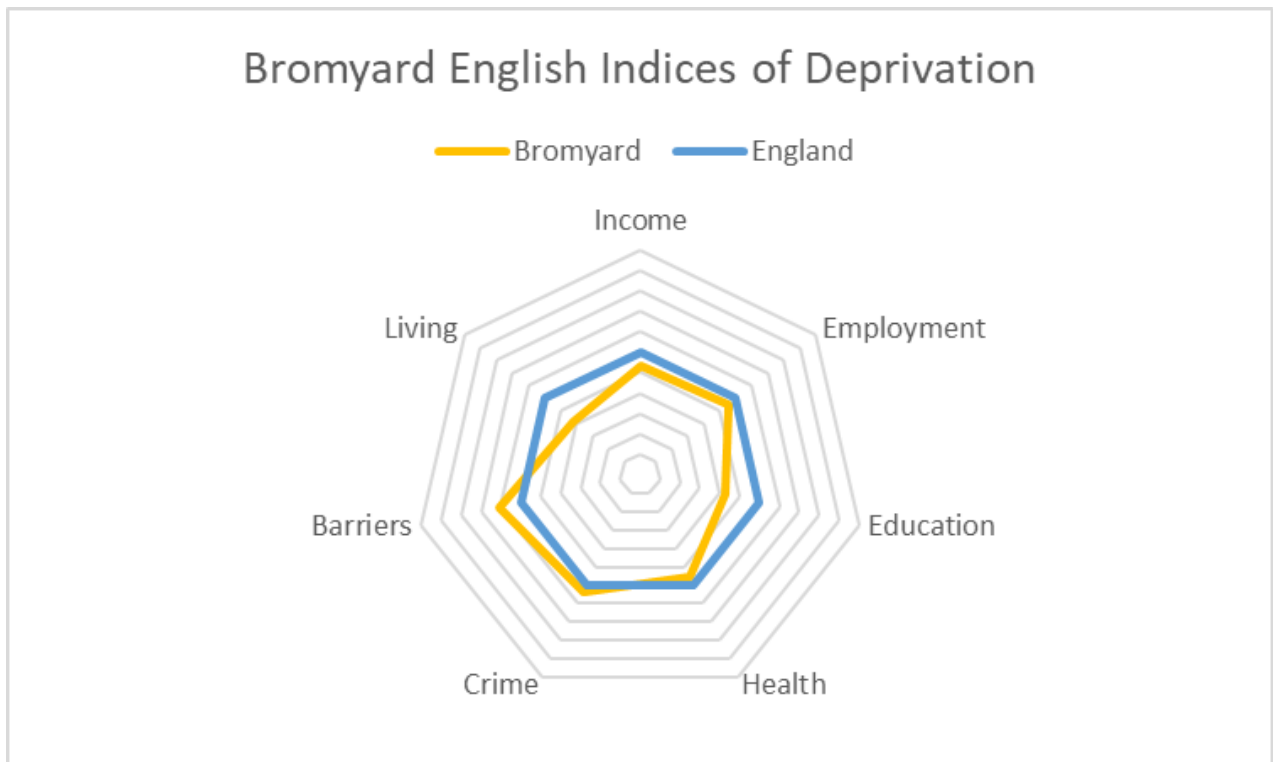
## THE MAIN CHALLENGES FACING THE TOWN

Bromyard is one of the smallest settlements in the county with a population in the town itself of 4,700 (2011 census) and surrounding hinterland of 9,050 (2019 Mid-Year Population Estimates ONS)

According to our economic analysis Bromyard:

- is more deprived on most domains in the English Indices of Deprivation than the England average with particular challenges around the skills profile of the town – the diagram below shows how Bromyard fares in relation to each domain against the national average;
- 25% of Bromyard's population is over 65 years old, 5% more than the England average of 20%;
- has a modestly smaller stock of jobs than the Herefordshire average;
- has a limited stock of jobs in knowledge intensive businesses;
- has experienced an increase in JSA claimants from 220 to 265 (a 20% increase) during the first half of the lockdown period (April-October 2020);
- has a higher proportion of jobs in agriculture, manufacturing and health than the national average;
- has a significantly higher proportion of low value properties than the national average.





The radar diagram ranks all 32,844 Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in England according to the indices of deprivation. Each LSOA has a population of circa 1,500 people or 650 households.

- The blue line indicates the England average;
- Within the blue line is more deprived;
- Outside the blue line is less deprived.

The radar diagram above is derived from the English Indices of Deprivation 2019. It ranks each neighbourhood in England in terms of their characteristics in relation to the following indicator sets:

- The Income Deprivation Domain measures the proportion of the population experiencing deprivation relating to low income.
- The Employment Deprivation Domain measures the proportion of the working-age population in an area involuntarily excluded from the labour market.
- The Education, Skills and Training Deprivation Domain measures the lack of attainment and skills in the local population.
- The Health Deprivation and Disability Domain measures the risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health. The domain measures morbidity, disability and premature mortality but not aspects of behaviour or environment that may be predictive of future health deprivation.
- The Crime Domain measures the risk of personal and material victimisation at local level.
- The Barriers to Housing and Services Domain measures the physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services. The indicators fall into two sub-domains: 'geographical barriers', which relate to the physical proximity of local services, and 'wider barriers' which includes issues relating to access to housing such as affordability.

## THE TOWN'S ASSETS AND STRENGTHS

This plan highlights some of the town's key assets including:

- Transport and connectivity to South Wales, Birmingham and the Midlands – Bromyard is perhaps best placed of all the towns in Herefordshire in relation to its geographic connections. There is also a challenge in this context, however, in that it has real potential to become a desirable commuter settlement rather than a place with a significant “live-work” character. Our proposals involve looking to make it more sustainable by developing new employment and enterprise opportunities.
- History and heritage buildings from the medieval, Georgian, Victorian, inter-war, post war and post millennium periods which are host to a high number of independent retailers both within the envelope of the town itself and its wider hinterland. This represents the particular history and development of the town outside of the focus of large multiples, mainly as a consequence of its small scale and relative isolation. As with many small locations, its retail and wider service catchment is threatened by a lack of financial capacity amongst many of its businesses. Our plans involve support for established and new indigenous entrepreneurs to grow its innate potential. The current character and townscape of the town makes a major contribution to its desirability and our proposed focus on its town centre as a location for investment is a key theme within this plan.
- Wye Valley AONB and Special Area of Conservation – Bromyard, whilst small, has a large visitor and domestic hinterland. This is enhanced by its setting as a traditional small rural service centre supporting a wider dispersed population – our proposals seek to build on the external recognition of its wider environment and the significance in the context of its setting.
- Tourism and the Visitor economy – taking a wider perspective, in addition to its established credentials as a festival base, our plans around enhancing the walking and cycling credentials of the town will complement its economic potential. The town benefits from the desire of individuals and businesses to unlock its economic potential.

## SPATIAL CONTEXT

Herefordshire Council's 2015 Core Strategy will be revised in the next eighteen months but the document contains a chapter on Place Shaping. This includes a vision for Bromyard focused on the town continuing to fulfil:

“a diverse range of important roles as a focus for residential, employment, recreational and cultural uses. The town will continue to act as a service centre for the surrounding rural area. The strategy promotes the continued economic development of the town and the vision is centred on meeting housing need (including affordable housing), reducing the need to travel, facilitating employment generation and diversification and improving delivery and access to services”. (Section 4.1)

The Core Strategy takes a spatial approach in signalling how Bromyard can accommodate a strategic urban extension for residential development in the northwest area of the town. This includes a minimum of 500 new homes together with five hectares of new employment land. A minimum of 250 new homes were proposed within the Hardwick Bank area, North West of the town.

The Core Strategy recommends coordinating housing and employment developments to achieve greater economies of scale and ensure land uses are compatible (e.g. allowing small employment/mixed use opportunities within residential developments to reduce the need to travel).

The spatial impact of potential projects below will make Bromyard a more attractive place to live, work, invest and visit:

- Investment in the High Street and public realm will enhance Bromyard's appeal for both residents and visitors, opening up the market square, improving the functionality and appearance of empty retail units, promoting the town's indigenous artisan food and drink heritage and rationalising car parking provision.
- The development of a permanent festival site will underpin the success of a key county visitor attraction.
- The development of new employment land on the Linton Trading Estate will facilitate employment generation and place Bromyard at the heart county's ambitions to support the growth of green technology capacity.

Looking more widely at employment land, there appears to be a failure of the market to provide new employment land in the market towns. In the 10 years since 2011, there has been no significant (sites > 1 Ha) development of employment land in any of the market towns. This compares to a requirement identified in the Core Strategy for the period 2011 to 2031 of 40 Ha. There is some evidence that the lack of availability of employment land has led to investment being delayed or being made outside of the county.

In the north of Herefordshire – affecting Bromyard and Leominster there is currently a planning moratorium linked to phosphate levels in the River Lugg.

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Following an initial introductory meeting in October 2020, Rose Regeneration worked with the Mayor, Town Clerk and other stakeholders to establish a steering group representing different interests, businesses and communities in Bromyard. A full list of steering group members is included in Appendix 3.

Early members of the steering group met Councillor Chowns during her visit to Bromyard in November and the full steering group has met subsequently in the ensuing period, identifying a long-list of more than 20 individual project proposals.

Group meetings have been complemented by one-on-one conversations with project sponsors and regular contact has been maintained with the Mayor, Councillor Chowns and MP for North Herefordshire to seek their views and advice on emerging project ideas.

Project ideas have been refined and developed through this process, supplemented by contact with business owners and potential funders, including a range of service areas within Herefordshire Council. In early March, the steering group reviewed a long list of project proposals and a short list of six projects was identified for inclusion in the Investment Plan. A meeting on 1st April agreed to the formation of a Community Interest Company (CIC) to ensure that these projects could seek funding not only from Herefordshire Council's capital funding programme but also from other public and private sources over the next ten to fifteen years.

## THEORY OF CHANGE

A Theory of Change linked to the projects proposed arising from the strategy is set out below:

Project	Intervention Framework	Issues in Bromyard	Action	Outputs	Outcomes	Impact	Transformation
EcoHub	Business and Economy	Shortage of employment opportunities	Acquire and encourage the development of new employment land	Up to 8 hectares of employment space	HCA job density 50 jobs/ha – extrapolated – 400 jobs	More sustainable community Rising local per capita GVA	Employment opportunities will rise to the county average within 5 years and the national average within 15
Bromyard Eastern Enhancement	Town/civic amenities Visitor economy Business and Economy	Low property values/weak independent retail/weak visitor economy	Revivify key elements of the tourism offer and stimulate new uses for key buildings	A 10% increase in average shopping spend in Bromyard according to our calculations would deliver £117,000 spend increase per week to local businesses. 10,000 more visitor spend in the area per year £70 per tourist - £700,000 per annum.	Stronger visitor economy and more inward migration. Promotion of local independent artisan food and drink and other businesses.	More sustainable/cohesive community Rising local per capita GVA.	Visitor arrivals and expenditure will rise to the national average within 5 years
				10,000 more visitors spend in the area per year £70 per tourist - £700,00 per year £79,000 - 9 jobs			

Project	Intervention Framework	Issues in Bromyard	Action	Outputs	Outcomes	Impact	Transformation
Greenway	Visitor economy	Weak visitor economy	Revivify key elements of the tourism offer and stimulate new uses for key buildings	New cycling and walking space with Bromyard as a hub – 1000 tourists per year at £70 per tourist - £70,000 per annum	Stronger visitor economy	Healthier and more cohesive community	Visitor arrivals and expenditure will rise to the national average within 5 years
Health and Wellbeing Hub – (further discussion with Halo planned)	Town/civic amenities	Weak visitor economy	Revivify key elements of the tourism offer and stimulate new uses for key buildings	200m2 new health space 3 jobs, £325,000 £100,000 turnover per year	Increase footfall and repurposing of a key feature of the town centre	Healthier and more cohesive community	Visitor arrivals and expenditure will rise to the national average within 5 years
Skills Development	Skills	Lower than average skills and limited local training infrastructure	Link to other skills initiatives which are active in Herefordshire including the Hereford Towns Fund	Based on the overall targets and capacity for the Skills Foundry project 50 learners per year – for a minimum of 5 years	Better match between skills and employer needs in the local area	More vibrant local economy with better live/work opportunities	Local skills gap will close within 10 years to support new businesses and inward investment

## SUGGESTED PROJECTS

Projects and ‘investment themes’ emerged through the stakeholder engagement process. These projects and themes were validated through a wider stakeholder meeting in late December 2020 and subsequent group and one to one discussions in the first quarter of 2021.

The table above provides a short form summary by way of an overview of projects and themes, those projects that could be considered appropriate for Herefordshire Capital funding (amongst other sources) and individual descriptions of those projects that are considered strategically significant, with the potential to attract funding outside of Herefordshire Council Capital fund. It incorporates a Theory of Change, showing our aspirations for impact.

The package of projects identified in this Town Investment Plan will need to access a range of funding sources in order to be delivered.

In May 2021 the Town Council and wider stakeholders met to consider the relative priority to allocate to each project. A scoring matrix based on the good practice methodology identified by the Town Fund was used to assess the relative merit of each project. Within the matrix there are 8 themes chosen through a reflection by the consultancy team leading the research and validated as part of the prioritisation process in each town.

For Bromyard the key criteria were agreed following a discussion with the Steering Group from the town:

- contribution to net zero, attraction of more visitors/inward investment;
- Increased GVA (a measure of the productivity of businesses);
- increased business diversity (an increase to the range and variety of businesses operating locally);
- higher skills;
- better population balance (supporting a wide demographic spread of age groups);
- greater equity (supporting fairer access to all determinants of quality of life);
- equality agenda (eliminating any form of discrimination).

Each project was scored by the group on a scale of 1-5 (where one is lowest) to provide a group composite score. These scores were then used to rank the project. As set out in appendix 2.

## FUNDING

In addition to possible funding from the Council’s Employment Land and Incubation Space capital programme allocation budget (see introduction above) the majority of the projects identified will need to explore funding options which could include: private investment, including Section 106 funding; other council resources such as the Highways Capital Programme; Heritage Lottery; charitable trusts; other public sector funding such as the capital programmes of the West Mercia Police Service; the Hereford and Worcester Fire service; the Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group; the Marches LEP; Homes England etc.

In addition to these sources of funding there are a range of Government funding opportunities already in place and more will be announced going forward. Some of the projects in the Plan will require revenue funding as well as capital investment. There may be opportunities to package projects together to bid for funding as well as to bid for funds in phases on the larger projects. Different funders will require different information and governance arrangements which will need to be considered on a bid by bid basis. The evidence base and supporting information produced to support this Plan will be a useful information and policy context to help inform bids for funding.

## Projects

The individual projects, set out in the templates below, have been identified as strategically important to the development of Bromyard's economy. The project summaries explain which intervention framework the projects will address, a brief project description, cost, timescales and outputs. There is also an explanation of the potential or identified demand for the projects as well as suggested funding sources and a possible exit strategy for each project to ensure sustainability.

Bromyard Eastern Enhancement Project							
<p>The eastern side of Bromyard, has great potential for the development as a transformative and integrated attraction of both existing and new residents and incoming visitors.</p> <p>Key elements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Acquisition of 16.5 ha farmland to create a permanent festival site, new festival site access and link road between A44 and Tenbury Rd (removing HGV traffic through town).</li> <li>2) Community building and lake on festival site.</li> <li>3) Reconfiguration of parking provision.</li> <li>4) Market square improvements to encourage a sustainable street culture and evening economy, supporting a market, festivals, and arts projects and including a performance space.</li> <li>5) Improvement and full utilisation of empty independent retail units (shop front grants included)</li> <li>6) Public realm improvement – enhancement of environmental quality, by delivering new street furniture, signage, planters etc, in keeping with the town’s heritage</li> </ol>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;"><i>Indicative Cost and Matched Funding</i></td> <td style="width: 25%;"><i>How Long to Deliver?</i></td> <td style="width: 50%;"><i>Outputs (eg jobs created, floorspace created/reused, businesses supported, skills developed)</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">£6.2M</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Up to 6 years</td> <td> <p>Improved community cohesion</p> <p>Attract more residents, businesses and visitors</p> <p>Public realm significantly enhanced</p> <p>100 new jobs</p> <p>100% increase in visitor numbers and visitor spend</p> <p>Local SME support</p> <p>Reduced traffic congestion</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<i>Indicative Cost and Matched Funding</i>	<i>How Long to Deliver?</i>	<i>Outputs (eg jobs created, floorspace created/reused, businesses supported, skills developed)</i>	£6.2M	Up to 6 years	<p>Improved community cohesion</p> <p>Attract more residents, businesses and visitors</p> <p>Public realm significantly enhanced</p> <p>100 new jobs</p> <p>100% increase in visitor numbers and visitor spend</p> <p>Local SME support</p> <p>Reduced traffic congestion</p>
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<i>Economy and business</i>	Yes						
<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	Yes						
<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>	Yes						
<i>Demand Analysis</i>	This is seen as a core priority by the group involved in the development of this plan based on their lived experience in Bromyard						
<i>Funding Sources</i>	Private sector, public grant funding						



Bromyard Eco-hub							
<p>Herefordshire has an opportunity to develop a competitive presence in the emerging green technology sector.</p> <p>Acquisition and development of saleable/leasable employment land on/adjacent to Linton Trading Estate (direct access to A44 equidistant between Worcester and Hereford and to M5) to create manufacturing capacity focussing on green technology.</p> <p>Founder owner/tenant being the Bromyard Electric Motor Vehicle Company, currently in the process of securing private sector funding to produce an electric waste-collection vehicle for Pedicargo in Hereford. Attractive sale/lease terms to attract new and established businesses with modern buildings and appropriate services.</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>Cost and Matched Funding</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>How Long to Deliver?</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>Outputs (eg jobs created, floorspace created/reused, businesses supported, skills developed)</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>£2.0-£3.0 million Herefordshire Council £20-25 million private/public sector</p> </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>2021-2023  2023-2031</p> </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>8 hectares of employment space</p> <p>HCA job density 50 jobs/ha – extrapolated – 400 jobs</p> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<i>Cost and Matched Funding</i>	<i>How Long to Deliver?</i>	<i>Outputs (eg jobs created, floorspace created/reused, businesses supported, skills developed)</i>	<p>£2.0-£3.0 million Herefordshire Council £20-25 million private/public sector</p>	<p>2021-2023  2023-2031</p>	<p>8 hectares of employment space</p> <p>HCA job density 50 jobs/ha – extrapolated – 400 jobs</p>
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<i>Economy and business</i>	Yes						
<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	No						
<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>	No						
<i>Demand Analysis</i>	Bromyard currently has no capacity to incubate and support local businesses due to a decline in the availability of employment land						
<i>Funding Sources</i>	Herefordshire Council; Private sector, public grant funding						

Health and Wellbeing Centre (Bromyard High Street)			
	<i>Cost and Matched Funding</i>	<i>How Long to Deliver? From When to When?</i>	<i>Outputs (eg jobs created, floorspace created/reused, businesses supported, skills developed)</i>
<p>Bromyard is well served by beauty boutiques. There would be a demand from residents from in and outside Bromyard for more friendly, up to date exercise options (particularly focused on modern trends like yoga pilates spinning etc).</p> <p>This demand would increase if the proposals were put in place to encourage opportunities for school and college leavers to stay live and work in Bromyard and would enhance the attractiveness of the town for a younger generation.</p> <p>It is envisaged that the project would involve identifying the space, investing a little in fitting out and then looking for independent businesses wanting to take on the running of the studios.</p>	£100-£150k	2021-23	<p>200m2 new health space 42 j3 obs, £325100,000 turnover per year</p>
<i>Economy and business</i>	Yes		
<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	Yes		
<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>	Yes		
Demand Analysis	This is based on discussions with the development group in Bromyard and their local intelligence		
Funding Sources	Private sector		



Skills Development - Ledbury, Leominster and Bromyard			
<p>To support the town's viability as a thriving balanced economy, the town needs to develop integrated and forward-looking skills development capacity to support its residents and to attract inward investment.</p> <p>The project, developed as a collaboration between NMITE, HCA and Rural Media as part of Hereford's Stronger Towns Funding bid, aims to include Herefordshire's market towns in a hub and spoke delivery model and will actively engage with Bromyard</p>	<p><i>Cost and Matched Funding</i></p> <p>500,000</p>	<p><i>How Long to Deliver?</i></p> <p>2021-2023</p>	<p><i>Outputs (eg jobs created, floorspace created/reused, businesses supported, skills developed)</i></p> <p>Based on the overall targets and capacity for the Skills Foundry project 50 learners per year – for a minimum of 5 years</p>
<i>Economy and business</i>	Yes		
<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	No		
<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>	No		
Demand Analysis	Extensive steering group demand to be tested through second stage town engagement.		
Funding Sources	Private sector, DfE, UK Shared Prosperity Fund		

## Next Steps

This is one of five Market Town Economic Investment Plans commissioned by Herefordshire Council for each of Herefordshire's market towns.

Herefordshire Council has identified a number of projects which could be funded by them. As a result in addition to this Market Town Investment Plan, Rose Regeneration has completed Outline Business Cases (OBCs) and Project Mandates for the following projects for the Council's consideration.

- An OBC has been developed and submitted for the Bromyard Eco-Hub

Once the Plans, OBCs and Project Mandates have been considered by Herefordshire Council it is recommended that the council works with the five market town councils to establish an appropriate delivery mechanism to oversee, secure funding for, and monitor the delivery of the MTIPs. This delivery mechanism should be led and supported by Herefordshire Council and should involve representatives from each Town Council.

## APPENDIX 1 – STRATEGIC CONTEXT SUMMARY

National context	Regional Context	Herefordshire Context	Bromyard Context
<p>Industrial Strategy – ‘places’ foundation: tackling entrenched regional disparities.</p> <p>Industrial Strategy Productivity Evidence Review – some cities and rural county areas have been falling behind, including Herefordshire. County Councils Network analysis of GVA in 36 county areas found Herefordshire to be experiencing the smallest economic growth 5.3% between 2014 and 2018).</p> <p>A low carbon future in a changing climate – UK obligations under the 2015 Paris Agreement - setting a net zero target for carbon emissions by 2050.</p> <p>HM Treasury/Government department resources - levelling up economic opportunity across all nations and regions of the country by investing in infrastructure, innovation and people.</p> <p>Build Better, Build Greener, Build Faster - reforming the planning system (NPPF, Planning for the Future White Paper) to give more emphasis to quality, design and the environment.</p> <p>COVID-19 recovery measures - protecting and restoring livelihoods, improving living standards and new economic opportunities.</p>	<p>Local Industrial Strategy and Strategic Economic Plan – inclusive growth, connectivity, skills, enterprise and innovation, trade and investment. Herefordshire’s sectoral specialisms: food and drink, education, advanced manufacturing and engineering, defence and construction. Growth opportunities for (i) manufacturing and engineering, (ii) food supply chain/agri-tech innovation, and (iii) cyber security and resilience.</p> <p>Skills Plan and Skills Sectors Deep Dives – the provision of Higher Education provision and Further Education courses relevant to these growth opportunities in Herefordshire.</p> <p>Cyber Resilience Alliance / Science and Innovation Audit – the largest cluster of cyber security activity outside of London: growth in direct jobs, wider investment in products and processes and acting as a regional testbed.</p> <p>Growth Hub and Enterprise Zone with specialisms in defence and security at Skylon Park, Hereford.</p> <p>Economic recovery plan – investment in infrastructure and jobs: Hereford city streetscape improvements and NMITE Skylon campus development.</p>	<p>Herefordshire is a cold spot for social mobility – it is in the bottom 20 list of Local Authorities in England in terms of the chances that disadvantaged children will do well at school and get a good job.</p> <p>The importance of creating high-quality, highly skilled jobs against a backdrop of traditional low-skill, low-wage economy.</p> <p>County Plan – improving sustainability, connectivity, wellbeing and becoming carbon neutral by 2030-2031: Talk Community (hubs), community wealth building (increasing the amount of money that stays in the local economy); and Sustainable Food County (a whole system approach to tackling obesity, diet related ill health, food poverty, waste and climate change).</p> <p>Hereford Town Investment Plan – intended to deliver urban regeneration, a stronger skills base, and improved connectivity in the city. Under the strapline ‘green and fair’ the TIP recognises Hereford’s connectivity to market towns and countryside (e.g. tourism – attract and disperse approach). Telling stories about place, identifying and implementing a vision, strong partnership working and securing funding/investment are all needed for pandemic Recovery and Transformation.</p> <p>Skylon Park – Enterprise Zone for defence and security, advanced manufacturing, food and drink processing and sustainable technologies. Local Development Order to simplify planning arrangements. Weaving old industrial landscape with future proofing to allow for growth and change. Intended to act as a catalyst for economic growth across Herefordshire.</p> <p>Hereford Transport Strategy describes traffic flows, delays and congestion. It promotes schemes which increase physical activity (e.g. cycling, walking) and generate high value-for-money.</p>	<p>Herefordshire’s Economic Vision – enabling market towns to maximise their role in building thriving, distinctive, service centres that support their communities and rural hinterlands is a countywide ambition.</p> <p>Place-shaping for Bromyard is focused upon is centred on meeting housing need (including affordable housing), reducing the need to travel, facilitating employment generation and diversification and improving delivery and access to services’.</p> <p>Bromyard has Georgian and Victorian facades, a Norman church, toll house, heritage centre, arts and crafts galleries, and a mix of local retail outlets.</p> <p>Bromyard is often described as the ‘Town of Festivals’ – with events including a speed festival, town crier festival, scarecrow festival, a gala, art walk weekend and folk festival.</p> <p>In response to COVID-19, the Town Council and Community Foundation provided funding to Citizens Advice Herefordshire and The Hope Family Centre to provide a new Citizens Advice service for Bromyard residents. This provides potential to support people helping them to address the issues related to their employment challenges.</p>

## APPENDIX 2 - PROJECT PRIORITISATION

This process was undertaken on a facilitated basis by the TIP Steering Group

Title	Category of Intervention	Description	Indicative Cost (,000)	Contribution to Zero Carbon	More Visitors and Inward Investment	Increased GVA	Increased Business Diversity	Higher Skills	Leads to Better Population Balance	Greater Equity	Equality Agenda	Score
EcoHub Bromyard -	Employment Space	Light industrial units facilitating development of distinctive Green Technology hub	£2,000	5	2	5	5	4	4	4	3	80%
Bromyard Eastern Enhancement Project	Public Realm	Shop-front grants; market square repurposing; community food and drink enterprise; weekend market	£6,200	3	5	5	5	3	3	4	3	78%
Skills Development - Ledbury, Leominster and Bromyard	Skills Investment	To support the town's viability as a thriving balanced economy, the town needs to develop integrated and forward-looking skills development capacity to support its residents and to attract inward investment. The Skills Foundry project, developed as a collaboration between NMITE, HCA and Rural Media as part of Hereford's Stronger Towns Funding bid, aims to include Herefordshire's market towns in a hub and spoke delivery model and will actively engage with Bromyard	£500	0	0	4	4	5	4	5	5	68%
Greenway Bromyard -	Green Infrastructure	Gateway to Worcester-Bromyard-Leominster greenway	£700	3	5	4	4	1	3	3	3	65%
Health and Wellbeing Bromyard -	Commercial Development	High Street facility supporting/attracting local residents	£250	2	3	3	4	2	4	4	3	63%

## APPENDIX 3 MEMBERS OF BROMYARD TIP STEERING GROUP

Suzette Brunsdon- chair of Bromyard Town Council and Mayor of Bromyard

Annabel Moore- Company director and retired Solicitor

Jayne Bradley Ghosh- Director at Kitchen Food School and Business Manager at K4 architects

Charlie Martin - Director at Beautifully Bromyard Tourist Information

Jeremy Holden- Owner, Holden Vintage and Classic Ltd

John Clayton - Technical and Business Development Director

Susanna Forbes - Owner of Little Pomona Orchard & Cider

Roger Wilkins - retired Chartered Surveyor

Stuart Dawson - Chartered Surveyor

Mark Franklin- retired Accountant and Bromyard Town Councillor

Dee Dunne- Thomas Deputy Mayor of Bromyard and Vice chair of Bromyard Town Council

Alan Seldon- Herefordshire Council Councillor

Nigel Shaw - Herefordshire Council Councillor

Sheenagh Davis MBE Founder of the H.O.P.E. Centre Bromyard

Tom Fisher - Worcester Leominster Bromyard Greenway





# Kington Economic Investment Plan 2021



July 2021

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*Kington strives to be a town linked to vibrant rural communities where individuals, businesses, creativity and community thrive, care and work together to create an exceptional quality of life for all. We strive to be a model of a contemporary small town seamlessly touching the past while embracing the future that offers exceptional quality of life at every stage of life respecting each other and the natural environment. Deeply rooted in our history and confident of our future, we cherish each other and our unique natural environment.*

Kington Town Economic Investment Plan Statement 2021

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Market Town Investment Plans

This Kington Town Investment Plan is one of five Market Town Investment Plans commissioned by Herefordshire Council. Herefordshire's market towns, including Kington, play a critical role in the county's economy, as focal points for employment; for retail, tourism, leisure and culture; for business investment and growth; for housing; and for access to services. The market towns often provide the key interface between the wider rural areas, access to employment and local services, and connectivity to and from Hereford and other neighbouring areas.

The market town investment plans identify a long term vision for the growth of the towns and a programme of potential projects to enable sustainable economic development to deliver the vision. The market town investment plans will also play a key role in the development a new long term county wide 'big plan'. The big plan will identify how we will address long term economic challenges in creating new opportunities for growth across the county, how we retain/ attract younger generations, creating great places to live, study, work and invest.

## The Vision for Kington

Kington strives to be a town linked to vibrant rural communities where individuals, businesses, creativity and community thrive, care and work together to create an exceptional quality of life for all. We strive to be a model of a contemporary small town seamlessly touching the past while embracing the future that offers exceptional quality of life at every stage of life respecting each other and the natural environment. Deeply rooted in our history and confident of our future, we cherish each other and our unique natural environment.

## The Main Challenges facing the town

Kington is the smallest market town in the county with a population of 3,277 (2019 Mid-Year Population Estimates ONS). It has 922 residents over the age of 65 years, 28% compared to the England average of 20%. It has 540 under 16 year olds who have limited access to activities and opportunities.

Kington has a weak visitor economy compared to the UK average. It has a smaller stock of jobs per head than the England average with low income levels and a low skills base. The town is more deprived than the England average in terms of employment, income, skills, and health. Kington suffered a loss of 280 jobs (24%) between 2015 and 2018 (1,160 to 880). Kington has a greater proportion of low value properties than the national average.

## The Town's Assets and Strengths

Kington is a distinctive town on the Welsh border which has a very strong vernacular and individual character making its built environment unique and engaging for visitors. The key gateway position of the town gives it real potential to operate as a gateway into Wales (and vice versa), as a small little-known settlement it has significant capacity with the right investment to delight and surprise people as a visitor destination exploiting its position as a location on the crossroads of the A49 and A44 with access to Wales and central locations in the Marches. The visitor appeal of the town is further enhanced by its access to both a river and little known but beautiful open spaces.

The town is a key walking node in relation to major routes such as Offa's Dyke and there is real potential to build on this aspect of its location and connections and raise awareness of the walking offer. The proposals to develop AONB status provide the opportunity for the town to benefit from a

new designation. It would both help raise the profile of the centre and potentially be the spur to further interest and investment by local businesses.

### Issues in Kington

Issues in Kington	Targets
Weak visitor economy	Kington becomes a more liveable place with a more effective high street repurposed around pedestrians through an innovative shared space facility within the next 5 years.
Weak visitor economy High Population of over 65s Vacant shops	A more sustainable and fully functioning town where young people have the opportunity of employment and a stake in governance and older people are enabled to live full, independent lives for longer.
Improved Food and drink Offer Weak visitor economy	Visitor numbers and tourism spend will rise to regional average within ten years.
Low stock of jobs / Employment Opportunities Income Levels	Employment opportunities in the town will rise to the county average within 5 years and the national average within 15 years
Weak visitor economy	Visitor numbers and tourism spend will rise to regional average within ten years.

### Project summary

The MTIP identifies a number of potential projects that will contribute to the delivery of the town’s vision. These include:

Development of employment opportunities:

- New employment site

Improvements to support the visitor economy:

- Promotion of Kington’s role as a significant walking centre with a strong crafts sector
- Kington lighting and banners scheme
- Improved food and drink attraction/offer
- AONB Status
- Wesleyan Chapel

Civic amenities, housing, skills development and projects aimed at young people

- Shop/Building Frontage Scheme
- Kington High Street Regeneration and Kington Market Hall and surrounds
- Kington Police and Fire Station relocation and redevelopment

The MTIP shows how each of these projects contribute to the delivery of Kington’s Vision. It will provide a platform for successful funding bids as suitable funding opportunities become available.

Herefordshire Council will continue to work with Kington Town Council and other local stakeholders to identify new project and funding opportunities, carry out feasibility and foundation work, and support local organisations to apply for funding.

## BACKGROUND

This Kington Town Investment Plan is one of five Market Town Investment Plans commissioned by Herefordshire Council. Herefordshire's market towns, including Kington, play a critical role in the county's economy as focal points for: employment; retail, tourism, leisure and culture; business investment and growth; housing; and access to services. The market towns often provide the key interface between the wider rural areas, access to employment and local services, and connectivity to and from Hereford and other neighbouring areas.

The market town investment plans (MTIPs) identify a long term vision for the growth of the towns and a programme of potential projects to enable sustainable economic development to deliver the vision. The MTIPs will also play a key role in the development a new long term county wide 'big plan'. The big plan will identify how we will address long term economic challenges in creating new opportunities for growth across the county and how we retain/ attract younger generations, creating great places to live, study, work and invest.

### Community Including the Impact of Covid-19

The damage to the economy and to health from Covid-19 has been felt across Herefordshire. During 2020 and the early part of 2021, the pandemic reached all corners of the county and has had an impact on every community. During 2020, the UK economy contracted by 9.9%.(source: ONS<sup>1</sup>). It remains to be seen what the long-term impact of the pandemic will be, but within many sectors we are likely to see a shift to working, learning and engaging in commerce remotely on digital platforms.

The projects proposed in this Plan have been developed through engagement with key stakeholders in Kington and will help the town to attract essential investment as the need to promote recovery opens up new funding opportunities.

Attitudes towards working from home have changed substantially since the start of the COVID pandemic and many workers will continue to work from home long after it has ended.

There could be positive implications for Herefordshire's Market Towns in what is being termed 'hybrid working'. The Centre for Towns recently reported that its research indicates "big potential for places to market themselves as online working destinations" as predictions indicate that the longer people are required to work at home, the greater the adoption of home working will be beyond the current situation.

The best performing towns are ones with a healthy mix of age groups and professions. An increase in home working would have a significant positive impact in rebalancing Herefordshire's market towns demographics and towns should therefore actively promote themselves to attract in and retain a thriving working age population.

Towns will need to work closely with Herefordshire Council to ensure that digital connectivity is adequate to support the needs of home workers. Clearly Herefordshire market towns have a significant 'quality of life' offer, with a good range of local services.

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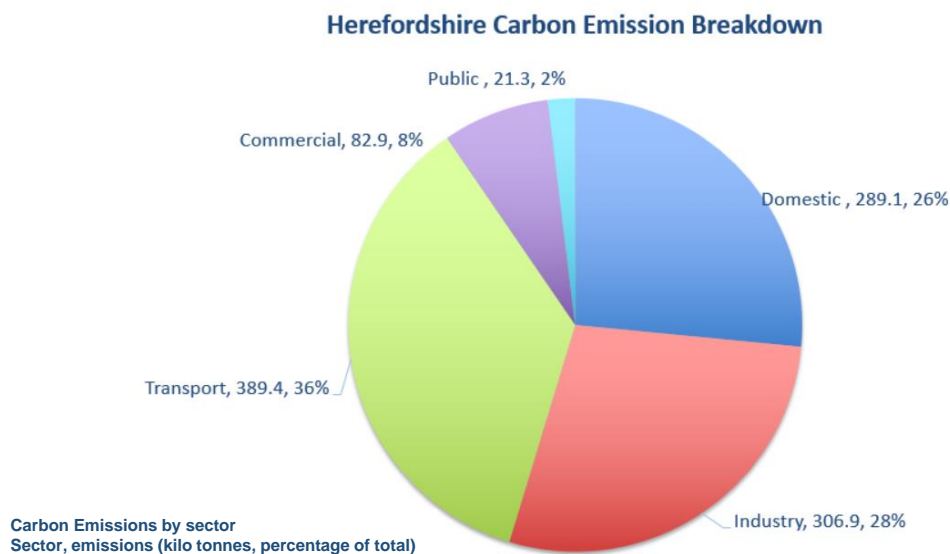
<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossdomesticproductgdp/articles/coronavirusandtheimpactonoutputintheeconomy/december2020>

## Climate and Ecological Emergency

On 8 March 2019 Herefordshire Council declared a Climate Emergency following unanimous support for a climate emergency resolution at full council. This declaration was subsequently updated and strengthened on 11 December 2020 when Herefordshire Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) following support for a climate and ecological emergency resolution at full council.

Further to these declarations the council approved the ambitious new target to become zero carbon and nature rich by 2030.

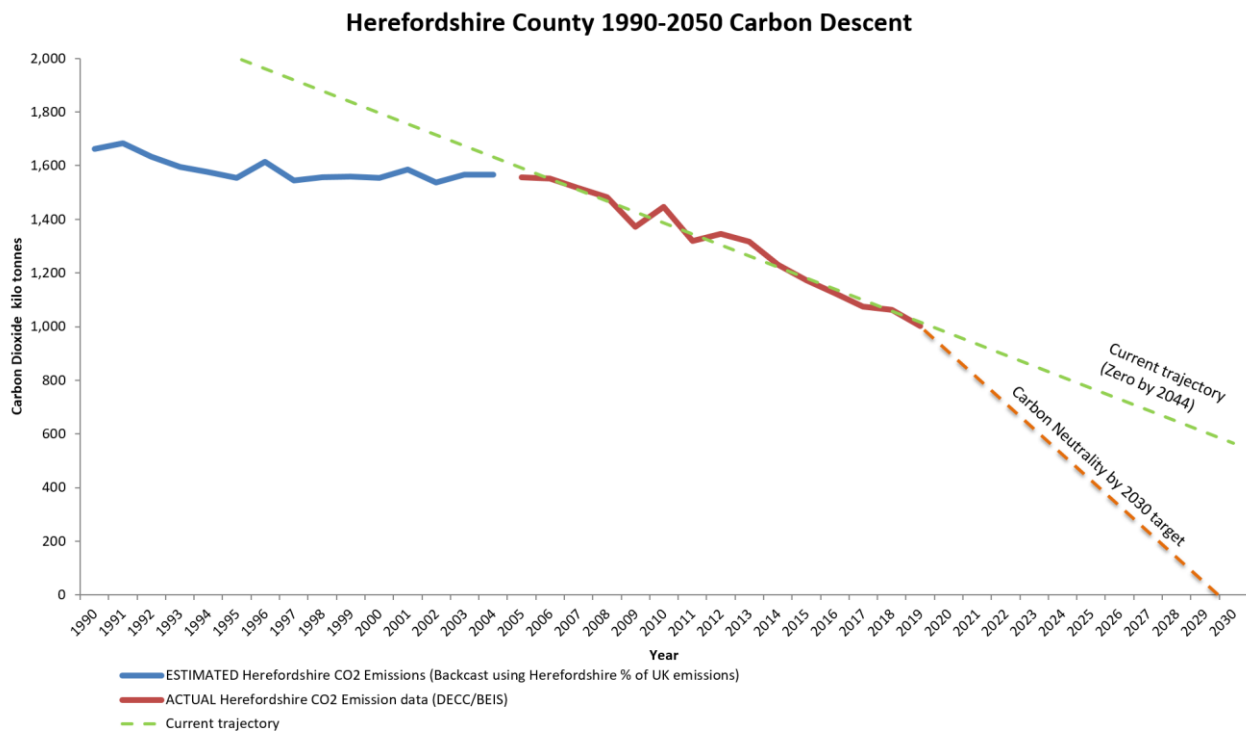
The below chart illustrates Herefordshire’s current carbon emission split and the areas of focus for the Kington MTIP to support the Herefordshire’s journey to net zero.



In order to achieve this target, as illustrated below, a new Herefordshire Climate & Nature Partnership and Board have been established to catalyse and coordinate new action across the County. These actions have been grouped into a series of six different action plans including: Housing & Buildings; Transport; Energy; Farming & Land Use; Waste and Food.

The details of the Herefordshire Climate & Nature Partnership, including the six themed action plans are set out: <https://zerocarbon.herefordshire.gov.uk/>





As a key strategic plan the Kington MTIP is strongly committed to delivering Herefordshire’s net zero and nature rich commitment and will work in partnership with its communities, businesses and the Herefordshire Climate & Nature Board to achieve this through the development and delivery of the plan.

## Economy

Herefordshire faces a number of long term economic challenges such as the lowest level of productivity of any county in England<sup>2</sup>, a low wage economy (19% below the national average<sup>3</sup>), a deficit of higher level skills (41.4% of the population has NVQ level 4 national average of 43.1%<sup>4</sup>), an aging population (25% over 65 compared to a 18% nationally), and a significant shortage of labour (2.9% claiming unemployment benefits<sup>5</sup>).

However, the county has a significant number of opportunities, including local strengths in food and drink, tourism, and agriculture, specialisms in fast growing global markets like cyber security, an outstanding quality of life, and new university (New Model Institute in Technology and Engineering). The county is also very well placed to benefit from a changing post Covid lifestyle trend, as people now look to increasingly work remotely away from populated cities to locations offering a better quality of life.

The market towns have a crucial role to play in addressing the long term economic challenges, and realising the county’s many opportunities. They are key local centres for housing, culture, access to public services, tourism, with strong local communities and identities. Establishing great vibrant places to live and meaningful employment opportunities will be key to rebalancing the aging

<sup>2</sup> [ONS Regional Differences in Productivity July 2021](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Understanding Herefordshire ONS data 2019](#)

<sup>4</sup> [ONS Population Survey 2020](#)

<sup>5</sup> [ONS claimant count October 2021](#)



population by retaining/ attracting younger generations to study, live and work in the county for generations to come.

Kington is particularly well placed to realise some of these opportunities, significantly contributing the future economic success of the county as a whole. A highly attractive and popular market town, offering a great place to live, visit and work.

As people's approach to work and quality of life requirements change, Kington is well placed to benefit from an increasing transition to a digital economy, with people working from home or flexible workspaces in attractive, less densely populated locations away from city centres.

The Plan identifies a vision for growth and a programme of investment projects required to deliver the vision and support the economic development of Kington over the next fifteen years. Funding from many different sources will be needed to achieve them. The Plan identifies the timetable for delivery, lead body and potential sources of investment for each of the projects.

## CONTEXT

Kington is the smallest of Herefordshire's market towns with a population of just over 3,000. Kington town is an important service centre for its rural hinterland. The Kington economy has suffered along with the fortunes of the farming industry in the area. Its rural location and lack of good transport connections means a shortage local employment opportunity, with low pay rates and many part-time occupations in small businesses including farming and the retail and service sectors.

There is a small tourist industry, though concentrated in the summer months, but Kington maintains the air of an unspoilt town on the borders. There is a traditional livestock market, situated off Duke Street, on a Thursday, where farmers bring their stock to market. There is currently a weekly food and crafts market every Friday and also a W.I. market in Bridge Street on Friday morning where home cooked goods are sold. The High Street has a number of resilient and interesting independent shops.

The Town is bypassed by the A44 which was formerly a trunk road and still provides an important cross regional east/west route between England and Wales for long distance freight, commercial and tourist traffic. It is connected to Hereford by the A4111/A438 or alternatively the A480 through Lyonshall and Credenhill.

The town is identified as one of the five market towns in the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy to have a good provision of independent retailers. Kington is a primary location for food shopping for residents, but its historic environment and niche retail offer also makes it an attractive destination for visitors.

Kington has a different employment profile compared to other parts of Herefordshire – locally, there are more self-employed people and more people working in agriculture, construction, transport, accommodation and skilled trades. While a proportion work in Kington itself, many travel to other parts of Herefordshire, Powys and further afield for work.

It is widely accepted that improving the town centre and making it an attractive destination for both residents and visitors will benefit the local economy and promote future growth within the town.

For the purpose of this Plan the town boundaries are those based on the Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA's) for Kington we have used to inform the data analysis based on the 2019 Index of deprivation. The work has also been cognisant of the boundaries set out in the Kington Neighbourhood Plan and Kington Town.

## THE MAIN CHALLENGES FACING THE TOWN

Rose Regeneration has undertaken a full review of all extant documents produced in the last five years relating to Kington's economic and community development (see Appendix 1). This contextual analysis has informed the selection and prioritisation of investment proposals in the Town Investment Plan.

The main challenges facing Kington:

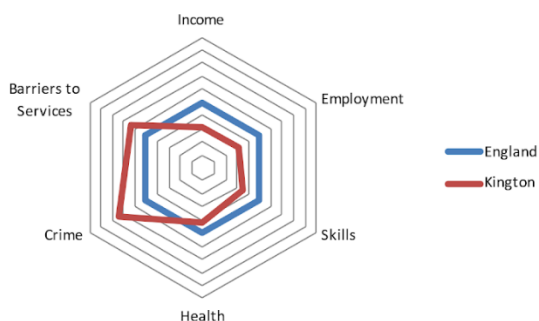
- Weak visitor economy vs UK average;
- Low Income levels;
- Low Skills Base;
- Only less deprived than the England average in terms of Crime and Barriers to Services;
- Smallest of the market towns. Population just over 3,000 with a higher proportion of over 65s than the national average;
- Significantly smaller stock of jobs per head than the national average;
- Loss of 250 jobs 2015 -18. Key sectors: agriculture, manufacturing, construction, retail, real estate, health;
- Higher proportion of low value properties than the national average.
- Shortage of activities and opportunities for young people

We have reviewed the 2019 Indices of deprivation to identify the main challenges facing the town the key findings of this work are summarised below:

## English Indices of Deprivation 2019

### Kington

### Domains of Deprivation



Domains	England Average	Kington
Income	16422	10083
Employment	16422	10440
Skills	16422	11620
Health	16422	13809
Crime	16422	24602
Barriers to Services	16422	20929

The radar diagram ranks all 32,844 Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in England according to the indices of deprivation. Each LSOA has a population of circa 1,500 people or 650 households.

- The blue line indicates the England average;
- Within the blue line is more deprived;
- Outside the blue line is less deprived.

The radar diagram above is derived from the English Indices of Deprivation 2019. It ranks each neighbourhood in England in terms of their characteristics in relation to the following indicator sets:

- The Income Deprivation Domain measures the proportion of the population experiencing deprivation relating to low income.
- The Employment Deprivation Domain measures the proportion of the working-age population in an area involuntarily excluded from the labour market.
- The Education, Skills and Training Deprivation Domain measures the lack of attainment and skills in the local population.
- The Health Deprivation and Disability Domain measures the risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health. The domain measures morbidity, disability and premature mortality but not aspects of behaviour or environment that may be predictive of future health deprivation.
- The Crime Domain measures the risk of personal and material victimisation at local level.

- The Barriers to Housing and Services Domain measures the physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services. The indicators fall into two sub-domains: 'geographical barriers', which relate to the physical proximity of local services, and 'wider barriers' which includes issues relating to access to housing such as affordability.

## THE VISION FOR KINGTON

Kington strives to be a town linked to vibrant rural communities where individuals, businesses, creativity and community thrive, care and work together to create an exceptional quality of life for all. We strive to be a model of a contemporary small town seamlessly touching the past while embracing the future that offers exceptional quality of life at every stage of life respecting each other and the natural environment. Deeply rooted in our history and confident of our future, we cherish each other and our unique natural environment.

### Strategic Objectives

This vision is the basis of an integrated and forward-looking development strategy which links business, industry and tourism with community, rural life and the countryside to a sustainable and green future.

Our key strategic objectives include making Kington a place that:

Celebrates its environment and welcomes visitors by:

- providing a thriving and diverse tourism economy rooted in its unique heritage and nationally-renowned walking
- providing a distinctive and high quality built and natural environment that is easy to explore
- showcasing a rich and accessible local heritage that can be shared by residents and visitors
- demonstrating the highest standard of design – respecting the scale, style and setting of the townscape/landscape.
- demonstrating that it is actively addressing climate and ecological issues to support the present and improve the future

Performs a role as an attractive and vibrant local service and employment centre:

- which provides a range of services to support the residents of the town and surrounding villages
- which promotes Kington and its hinterland as a location which encourages small businesses, supports farming
- which encourages and enhance the use of all community facilities.
- which provides an alternative and exciting independent retail and food and drink offer
- which provides a pedestrian and cycle friendly High Street and town centre shopping and visitor environment
- which provides appropriate sites and premises for local businesses to thrive

## THE TOWN'S ASSETS AND STRENGTHS

We have set out below the key assets and strengths of the town

- Heritage Buildings – Kington is a distinctive town on the Welsh border which has a very strong vernacular and individual character making its built environment unique and engaging for visitors
- Visitor economy potential – the key gateway position of the town gives it real potential to operate as a gateway into Wales (and vice versa), as a small little-known settlement it has significant capacity with the right investment to delight and surprise people as a visitor destination exploiting its position as a location on crossroads of A49 and A44 with access to Wales and central locations in the Marches. The visitor appeal of the town is further enhanced by its access to both a river and little known but beautiful open spaces.
- A Walking Hub – the borderlands nature of the town makes it a key walking node in relation to major routes such as Offa's Dyke and there is real potential to build on this aspect of its location and physical connections and raise awareness of the walking offer.
- Natural Environment/ Rural Hinterland – the proposals to develop AONB status provide the opportunity for the town to benefit from a new designation. It would both help raise the profile of the centre and potentially be the spur to further interest and investment by local businesses.
- Well performing schools – in terms of residential desirability the remote and high-quality environment along with its well performing schools make Kington an attractive locale for new residents seeking the opportunity to live in a rural milieu. This is an asset for local employers and is attractive to those looking to move out of Cities to work from home and can support more local spend.

## SPATIAL CONTEXT

The Herefordshire Core Strategy contains a chapter on place-shaping. This contains a vision for Kington focused upon 'the creation of new homes, new employment opportunities, delivery of and access to services, including affordable housing, reducing the need to travel to other centres, and utilising the natural and historic environment as economic assets ... Kington's role in providing facilities and services to its hinterland should be maintained and, where possible, enhanced. However, as the smallest of the market towns and with significant environmental and locational constraints, the challenges that the town faces are such that it will need to be flexible in terms of the way it both encourages and accommodates development'. A review of the Core Strategy has now been commenced which will update the evidence base particularly in relation to biodiversity and green infrastructure. This links to the Herefordshire Green Infrastructure Study of 2010.

The Core Strategy takes a spatial approach in signalling how Kington can support rural regeneration within the town itself and also for the area it serves. While Kington is expected to accommodate 200 new homes during the plan period [a mix of market and affordable sizes and types], no strategic housing locations are proposed for Kington, with new housing accommodated on small scale sites that support the business, community and visitor facilities. For example, by making available small scale employment sites, maintaining and enhancing the retail, leisure or office offer of the town, make provision for infrastructure and amenity space and enhance the historic and heritage assets (e.g. important buildings, scenic views, landscape features). In aligning with the Core Strategy, the Kington Neighbourhood Plan refers to:

Proposals which make better use of land at Hatton Gardens Industrial Estate and Arrow Court Industrial Estate as well as supporting small-scale new build or workshops or the conversion of buildings to business use (e.g. live-work units). Intensive husbandry enterprises will only be supported where any adverse impacts (e.g. environment, traffic) can be mitigated.

Kington has a conservation area, designated in 1969, which recognises the town's architectural and historical significance dating back to the 12th century and leading to a small, historic market town with a tight urban grain with burgage boundary walls. Kington includes a Market Hall and former old Wesleyan Chapel, both Grade II listed buildings. The Conservation Area is currently on the national Heritage at Risk Register and key heritage features that should be protected and taken forward within future schemes form part of the evidence base for the Plan. The Plan encourages retail, leisure, office, commercial, cultural and tourism developments.

Kington is described as 'a centre for walkers' and has walkers are welcome status. The Town is situated close to the Offa's Dyke Path, The Mortimer Trail, The Arrow Valley Trail, The Herefordshire Trail and The Wyche Way, all long-distance footpaths. Kington hosts an annual festival titled 'Kington Walks'. The Plan seeks to promote and develop this niche market and enhance facilities that can support this type of visitor (e.g. local food outlets). Kington also has a food, arts and crafts market and a local food market. The Kington Livestock Market holds regular sheep and cattle sales. The Plan focuses on extending the variety, choice and quality of shops and services so as to improve the overall attractiveness of the town centre.

The spatial impact of the proposed MTIP priority projects will, when aligned with Core Strategy and Neighbourhood Plan, make Kington a more attractive place to live, work, invest and visit:

- The refurbishment and repurposing of the Market Hall would reclaim one of the most attractive and important spaces in Kington, underpinning footfall and creating a visible anchor for the town's visitor economy;
- The proposed investment in the High Street will support improved footfall and encourage further investment in the town;
- The investment in the town's footpath network will provide an improved product to support the promotion of the town as a walking hub.
- AONB status would protect the natural environment surrounding the town and enhance the activity-based tourism offer.

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The Plan has been developed through a dialogue with as many stakeholders in Kington's future as possible, in order to establish a solid evidence base, of demand and need. Engagement with Kington Town Council, the Local Herefordshire Council Member, local business community, voluntary sector and other key local stakeholders has played a major role in the development of this Plan.

The process of developing the Plan commenced with a town walk and follow-up meeting involving the Herefordshire Council Cabinet Member, the local Herefordshire Councillors, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Kington, Kington Town Councillors and local businesses. Kington Town Council, which played a key role in helping to identify all the key stakeholders in the Town. This was followed up by some 50 individual contacts by email, telephone and video call as well as engagement with the public and voluntary organisations.

The next significant engagement event was a town Zoom meeting to which all those identified were invited; this meeting was chaired by the Mayor and included twenty local stakeholders. The meeting identified a number of themes for the Town Investment Plan to consider and develop. A number of thematic meetings with key stakeholders were then held to consider the key themes in more detail and identify the vision, strategic objectives and project ideas for inclusion in the Plan. In addition to these themed meetings a young people's focus group was held to seek the views of young people in the town.

Following the completion of these meetings, there has been a range of consultations and discussions with potential delivery and funding partners. This has included engagement with private landowners, a number of Herefordshire Council officers, the Town Clerk, Kington Town Councillors, and others.

Throughout the process, there has been regular dialogue with representatives of Herefordshire Council.

## THEORY OF CHANGE

A Theory of Change linked to the projects proposed arising from the strategy is set out below:

Project	Intervention Framework	Issues in Kington	Action	Output	Outcomes	Impact	Transformation Target
Kington High Street Regeneration	Tourism/Visitors Town/Civic amenities	Weak visitor economy High Population of over 65s Vacant shops	Invest in public realm and in active travel measures and balanced car parking provision to support improved footfall at both ends of the Town	Refurbished public realm New car parking spaces provided at bottom end of the Town	Improved safety for pedestrians and cyclists Increased footfall in the town centre	Increased tourism spend in the local economy Increased resident spend in the local economy More vibrant High street Better functioning town centre	Kington becomes a more liveable place with a more effective high street repurposed around pedestrians through an innovative shared space facility within the next 5 years
Police and Fire Station relocation and redevelopment	Town/Civic Amenities	Availability of Affordable housing	Bring forward more affordable housing	Improved and more efficient public services rationalising public estate to open up opportunities for investment new homes provided close to town centre	People of all backgrounds and means supported in living in Kington	A more sustainable and vibrant town	A more sustainable and fully functioning town where young people have the opportunity of employment and a stake in governance and older people are enabled to live full, independent lives for longer
Tourism offer/Walking and Craft Hub	Tourism/Visitors Town/Civic Amenities	Weak visitor economy	Develop and promote Walking to increase awareness of the walking and Craft	Increase in tourism footfall	More people enjoy the tourism offer of Kington, more	Increased tourism potential in Kington realised	Visitor numbers and tourism spend will rise to regional average within ten years.



Project	Intervention Framework	Issues in Kington	Action	Output	Outcomes	Impact	Transformation Target
			related tourism offer		local jobs sustained		
Shop/building frontage grant scheme	Tourism/Visitors Town /Civic Amenities	Weak visitor economy	Investment in key buildings in conservation area	Improved Built environment in the Town	More footfall and private investment	More demand to visit and invest in the town	Visitor footfall increases and the town centre has a repurposed high street within the next 5 years
Kington Market Hall and surrounds	Tourism/Visitors Town/Civic amenities	Weak visitor economy	Invest in key public building to encourage a wide range of activities to encourage more visitors and footfall in the Town	An attractive multi-purpose public space for the Town Focal space/point for key events	More people enjoy the tourism offer of Kington; more local jobs sustained	Improved tourism offer and/or town amenities	Kington becomes a more liveable place with a more effective high street repurposed around pedestrians through an innovative shared space facility within the next 5 years
Improved Food and drink Offer	Tourism/visitors	Improved Food and drink Offer	Support the development of more local food and drink related business and identify the opportunities for physical premises investment in this context	More local sourcing and selling of food	Increased dynamism of local food and drink sector	More dynamic local economy	Visitor numbers and tourism spend will rise to regional average within ten years.

Project	Intervention Framework	Issues in Kington	Action	Output	Outcomes	Impact	Transformation Target
Hatton Gardens Extension/new Employment Site	Business/Economy	Low stock of jobs/ Employment Opportunities Income Levels	Acquire and encourage the development of new employment land and/or business space	new employment land new employment space new jobs	Long term supply of employment land and growth secured and managed	Improved job opportunities and income levels	Employment opportunities in the town will rise to the county average within 5 years and the national average within 15 years
AONB Status	Tourism/Visitors	Weak visitor economy	Work actively to explore and support the achievement of AONB status	Achievement of new landscape designation	Enhanced tourism brand and offer for Kington	More dynamic and employment generating tourism offer	Visitor numbers and tourism spend will rise to regional average within ten years.
Wesleyan Chapel	Business/Economy	Run-down buildings	Investment in key buildings	Creation of a new residential or commercial space	Enhanced liveability and more commercial space in Kington	More attractive and vibrant town centre	Visitor footfall increases and the town centre has a repurposed high street within the next 5 years
Kington lighting and banners scheme	Town/Civic Amenities Tourism/Visitors	Weak visitor economy	Support the implementation of the lighting and banners scheme	Improved fittings for lighting and other decorations	More people enjoy the tourism offer of Kington, more local jobs sustained	Improved tourism offer and/or town amenities	Visitor numbers and tourism spend will rise to regional average within ten years.

Project	Intervention Framework	Issues in Kington	Action	Output	Outcomes	Impact	Transformation Target
Accessibility, improved Bus and Car parking offer	Town/Civic Amenities	Weak visitor economy High Population of over 65s Vacant shops	Holistic investment in the civic, employment and visitor infrastructure make Kington a more balanced place in terms of its demography	Refurbished public realm New car parking spaces provided at bottom end of the Town	Improved safety for pedestrians and cyclists Increased footfall in the town centre	Increased tourism spend in the local economy Increased resident spend in the local economy More vibrant High street Better functioning town centre	A more sustainable and fully functioning town where young people have the opportunity of employment and a stake in governance and older people are enabled to live full, independent lives for longer

## SUGGESTED PROJECTS

The following projects and ‘investment themes’ emerged through the stakeholder engagement process. These projects and themes were validated through a wider stakeholder meeting in late December 2020 and subsequent group and one to one discussions in the first quarter of 2021.

The tables below provides a short form summary by way of an overview of projects and themes, those projects that could be considered appropriate for Herefordshire Employment Land and Incubation Space capital programme funding (below) and individual descriptions of those projects that are considered strategically significant, with the potential to attract alternative funding outside of the council. It is supported by a theory of change table, showing our aspirations for impact.

The package of projects identified in this Town Investment Plan will need to access a range of funding sources in order to be delivered.

Herefordshire Council has earmarked some £20 million for Employment Land and Incubation Space capital programme as an investment pot for capital projects in the county’s five market towns.

This funding can be used by the council to invest in projects which can demonstrate an appropriate business case which show the ability of the projects to generate capital receipts or income which can be used to payback the initial investment over time. Some of the projects in the Plan may secure funding through this route subject to detailed business cases being developed and considered by the council.

The majority of the projects identified will need to explore alternative funding options which could include private investment including , Heritage Lottery, charitable trusts, other public sector funding such as the capital programmes of the West Mercia Police Service, the Hereford and Worcester Fire service, the Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, the Marches LEP, Homes England etc. In addition to these sources of funding there are a range of Government funding opportunities already in place and more will be announced going forward. Some of the projects in the Plan will require revenue funding as well as capital investment. There may be opportunities to package projects together to bid for funding as well as to bid for funds in phases on the larger projects. Different funders will requires different information and governance arrangements which will need to be considered on a bid by bid basis. The evidence base and supporting information produced to support this Plan will be a useful information and policy context to help inform bids for funding.

In May 2021 the Town Council and wider stakeholders met to consider the relative priority to allocate to each project. A scoring matrix based on the good practice methodology identified by the Town Hub which supports the implementation of the Town Fund was used to assess the relative merit of each project. Within the matrix there are 8 themes chosen, identified and validated through local stakeholder consultation.

For Kington the key criteria agreed with local stakeholders were: contribution to net zero; attraction of more visitors/inward investment; increased GVA (a measure of the productivity of businesses); increased business diversity (an increase to the range and variety of businesses operating locally); higher skills; better population balance (supporting a wide demographic spread of age groups); greater equity (supporting fairer access to all determinants of quality of life) and equality agenda (eliminating any form of discrimination). Each project was scored by the group on a scale of 1-5 where one is lowest to provide a group composite score. These scores then used to rank the project as set out in the summary table below. A summary of the process is set out at Appendix 2

### Summary Table

Project	Summary	Potential Funding Source
1. Shop/Building Frontage Scheme	A public sector grant scheme is proposed to encourage investment in the frontages of shops and other town centre buildings to make the town a place to visit and spend time in. Elsewhere in the country grant schemes have been successfully used to encourage property owners to invest in town centre properties. Provisional budget - £75,000	Government Grants/Private Sector/Historic England
2. Kington High Street Regeneration	The main shopping street in Kington is narrow making it difficult to visit, shop and spend time in the town centre. The proposal is that the High Street should be refurbished to make it more pedestrian friendly whilst maintaining vehicle access throughout the day. Provisional budget - £2 million	Future capital grant programmes such as Levelling Up

## Summary Table

Project	Summary	Potential Funding Source
=3. Tourism Offer	<p>Kington's role as a significant walking Centre with a strong crafts sector should be promoted and developed. Investment is proposed in the local footpath network as well as in interpretation material, signage with a focus on walking and possibly crafts and the development of walking App for use on smart phones.</p> <p>Provisional budget - £50,000</p>	<p>Herefordshire Destination BID Private Sector Herefordshire LCWIP – Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan /</p>
=3. Kington Market Hall and surrounds	<p>The proposal is to renovate/refurbish Kington Market Hall and surrounding area and to utilise the market hall as a focus for crafts and associated activities. There is also an opportunity to add more interpretative material about the town to promote its key attractions including the walking routes.</p> <p>Provisional budget - £250,000</p>	<p>Herefordshire Council potential asset transfer to Kington Town Council Plus, range of external grants Private sector</p>
=3/new employment site	<p>There is the opportunity to explore a small extension to Hatton Gardens or a new site along the Bypass A range of small-scale employment uses and start up units could be accommodated on land near or adjacent to the existing Estate.</p> <p>Provisional budget - tbc</p>	<p>Private sector Marches LEP, Government Grant Herefordshire Council,</p>
6. Kington lighting and banners scheme	<p>This project aims to light up key elements of the Town throughout the year and at the same time make a significant improvement to the Christmas lights. It will ensure key buildings and streets are lit and or decorated with banners etc to support key events and activities including walking and crafts.</p> <p>Provisional budget -£50,000</p>	<p>Kington Town Council</p>
=7. Improved food and drink attraction/offer	<p>Kington and the surrounding villages home to a number of food and drink manufacturing businesses which would support the development of the town's visitor economy. A small-scale food and drink manufacturer such as a brewery/distillery and associated visitor facility could attract significant additional footfall to the Town. There are also a number of old and rundown pubs/former pubs in the town which would benefit from refurbishment and could be used to further improve the existing food and drink offer. Provisional budget - £1 million</p>	<p>Private sector/ Government Grant</p>

## Summary Table

Project	Summary	Potential Funding Source
=7. AONB Status	The proposal is to include Kington and surrounding area in England and Wales in the designation of a new AONB. Such a designation will significantly enhance the profile of Kington as a walking town. Provisional budget - £200,000	Central Government Natural England CPRE
9. Wesleyan Chapel	This iconic listed building is in a key location near to the hub of the town centre. The building is in disrepair and needs significant investment it has potential for a range of uses. It has just changed ownership and the new owners should be supported in reviewing the future of the building. Provisional budget- £2 million	Private Sector
10. Kington Police and Fire Station relocation and redevelopment	There is an opportunity to relocate the Police and Fire Stations from their current location in Churchill Road to provide new modern facilities with lower maintenance costs, better access and potentially faster response times. This could also allow the existing sites to be redeveloped for housing. Provisional budget - £2 million	One Public Estate, Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service West Mercia Constabulary

The project below has been adjusted to reflect the views of the group so that it addresses wider access issues and electric charging points for cars as well as car parking

Accessibility, improved Bus/Car parking offer	A full review of the location, quantity and demand for car parking and bus services in the town is required to consider improved public transport links and car parking to serve the southern end of the Town. The current Livestock Market site provides an opportunity to improve car parking in the Town.	Herefordshire Council
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## Suggested Projects

Investment Proposal Form					
Project Name: <b>Kington High Street Regeneration</b>					
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism &amp; the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town &amp; Civic amenities</i>		
<p><i>Description:</i> Over the years several ways of improving the High Street have been considered but there is only one which allows all the constrains to be met and that is combine the space with pedestrians ensuring that it is predominately pedestrian and the vehicles are secondary.</p> <p>The road and pavements of Kington High Street are a public asset owned by Herefordshire Council. Herefordshire Council will therefore need to agree, design and implement any regeneration proposals for the Street. To inform a possible design for the regeneration scheme, it is recommended that Herefordshire Council commission a Transport study for Kington in line with similar studies completed in each of the other market towns. Such a study will be able to consider the nature of the scheme in the context of wider transport needs and can be used to inform a bid to the Council's Highways capital programme as well as other potential funding schemes</p>			<i>Indicative Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
			£2 million	3 years	A new public realm and high street offer for Kington
<i>Demand Analysis</i>	Chamber of Trade and stakeholder feedback				
<i>Potential funding sources</i>	Public sector grants/ investment				
<i>Exit (Sustainability) Strategy</i>	The ongoing maintenance responsibilities will stay with the current property owners.				

Project	Delivery Model	Rationale
<p>The works could cost in the order of £2million.</p>	<p>Whilst not a perfect fit with the mechanics of the capital budget this opportunity does provide scope for engagement with a number of commercial owners of properties in relation to joint venture work and capital investments (below the state aid threshold) in the fabric of key premises. There is also scope to provide enhanced and charged for public and market space.</p> <p><b>Next Steps</b> Council to consider preparing a transport plan for Kington and commission feasibility work to inform its future Highways Capital Programme</p>	<p>As a consequence of current market failure it is unlikely that normal development equations would lead to this level of key high street investment. This is particularly true in view of the need to think about long term re-visioning of the High Street. Many of the approaches proposed to redeveloping commercial space, which supports commercial development do not fit traditional investment models. A local authority is equipped to borrow at lower commercial rates and take a very long view in the way it approaches regeneration, having regard to social value alongside commercial returns</p>



Investment Proposal Form				
Project Name: Kington Shop/ building frontage grant scheme				
Intervention Framework	Economy and business	Tourism & the Visitor Economy	Town & Civic amenities	
<p>Description: Investment in the public realm needs to be complemented by investment in the frontages of shops and other town centre buildings to make the town a place to visit and spend time in. A grant scheme is required to encourage property owners to invest in town centre properties. It is suggested that any grant from the scheme would need to be 50% matched by the private property owners making the application.</p> <p>It is recommended that grants should be dependent on the property condition and private sector match would need to be between £1000 and £5000 per property.</p>		Cost	Timescale	Outputs
Demand Analysis	Chamber of Trade and stakeholder feedback – cost based on consultation with Leominster Heritage Action Zone for comparison	£75,000	1 year - A quick win opportunity to support post-covid recovery	At least 30 properties improved
Potential funding sources	Private Sector, Government Grants, Heritage Lottery, ,			
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	The ongoing maintenance responsibilities will stay with the current property owners.			

### Investment Proposal Form

Project Name: Kington Hatton Gardens Extension/new employment site

Intervention Framework	Economy and business	Tourism & the Visitor Economy	Town & Civic amenities		
<p>Description: The adopted Herefordshire Core Strategy confirms that the Hatton Gardens industrial estate will continue to serve the employment needs of Kington. Whilst not the only employment site in the town it is the best located in a strategic position off the A44.</p> <p>There is an opportunity to bring forward land near to the existing Hatton Gardens Industrial Estate for small-scale B1 and B8 uses or along the Kington Bypass. Herefordshire Council could seek to acquire a site to ensure an improved supply of employment land and premises to serve the town.</p> <p>Without an intervention the current owners of the land are unlikely bring forward any development and future employment opportunities in the town will be limited.</p>			Indicative Cost	Timescale	Outputs
			Demand Analysis	Evidence base for revised Core Strategy/ Future proposed draft Neighbourhood Plan	
Potential funding sources	Herefordshire Council Employment Land and Incubation Space capital budget, (refunded through land sales and income), Marches LEP, Central Government, Private sector,				
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	Sell developed sites to private sector or retain as an income stream.				

### Investment Proposal Form

Project Name: Food and drink offer

Intervention Framework	Economy and business	Tourism & the Visitor Economy	Town & Civic amenities		
<p><i>Description:</i> Kington and its environs are home to a number of food and drink manufacturing businesses which could potentially further support the development of the town's visitor economy. A town centre distillery and or brewery with an associated visitor centre such as the Ludlow Brewery in Shropshire could generate significant visitor numbers.</p> <p>It is recommended that Herefordshire Council and Kington Town Council may work with local businesses and other interested parties to find a suitable site/building which could further develop existing operations and support a new visitor attraction and potentially other associated activities. There are also a number of old and rundown pubs/former pubs in the town which would benefit from refurbishment and could be used to further improve the existing food and drink offer as well as arrange community events and activities such as film nights and could include community owned and run models.</p>			Cost	Timescale	Outputs
			Up to £1million to be borne by private sector / charitable trusts	Within 5 years	Visitor numbers and spend  Jobs
			<i>Demand Analysis</i>	Based on business planning of individual businesses	
			Potential funding sources	Private Sector, Heritage Lottery, adhoc grants and Charitable Trusts depending on the governance model.	
			Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	None required to be managed by private or other independent entities	

Investment Proposal Form					
Project Name: Kington Police and Fire Station relocation and redevelopment					
Intervention Framework	Economy and business	Tourism & the Visitor Economy	Town & Civic amenities		
Description There is an opportunity to relocate the Police and Fire Stations from their current location in Churchill Road This will also allow the existing site to be redeveloped as a mixed retail/housing scheme.  It should also improve operational efficiency, make revenue savings and deliver an improved service to the public. Herefordshire Council could acquire the existing sites for redevelopment to deliver new homes for the Town. Alternatively, the sites could be sold to a private developer.			Cost	Timescale	Outputs
Demand Analysis	A feasibility study has recently been completed by consultants Jacobs - for land acquisition and development		Estimated £2million	5 years	New joint Police and Fire station  New homes
Potential funding sources	Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service, West Mercia Police One Public Estate,				
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	New facility to be managed jointly by Police and Fire Service				

Investment Proposal Form				
Project Name: Accessibility: Improved Bus / Car Parking Offer linked to Kington High Street Regeneration				
Intervention Framework	Economy and business	Tourism & the Visitor Economy	Town & Civic amenities	
<p>Description: In order to maintain its role as a service and employment centre in north Herefordshire, Kington has to provide sufficient public transport links and car parking in the right locations and with an affordable and attractive charging regime to attract both visitors and local residents from surrounding villages and towns.</p> <p>There is an opportunity to supplement the Tourism offer and could include a community bus for walkers, as well as improved links to Hay and Hereford.</p> <p>Whilst Kington is well provided with readily available car parking to serve the top end of the High Street there is a strong view from local stakeholders that car parking needs to be improved to support footfall from the lower end of the High Street.</p> <p>There is an opportunity to address this issue by providing more low cost long term car parking on the McCartney's Livestock market site. The introduction of charging points for electric cars will also be important to support carbon reduction and reduce emissions in the town.</p>		Cost	Timescale	Outputs
		£50,000 Depending on nature of charging and provision (signage)	One to five years	New car parking spaces provided  New bus routes/more frequent services
		Some ongoing subsidy will be required for new bus routes or services		
Demand Analysis	Proposed Kington Transport Study, Chamber of Trade			
Potential funding sources	External bids including Levelling Up Fund			

Investment Proposal Form				
Project Name: Herefordshire Marches AONB				
Intervention Framework	Economy and business	Tourism & the Visitor Economy	Town & Civic amenities	
<p>Description: Natural England has already registered a proposal for an AONB to include Kington and the surrounding area. They are currently will reviewing and prioritising proposals received for new and extended National Parks and AONBs, and new landscape designation approaches. They aim to identify an initial programme of designation priorities which they can begin in 2021/22, the scope of which will be subject to available resources. They have confirmed that they will update proponents, partners and stakeholders on our proposed programme as soon as possible this year.</p> <p>Wider support from key local stakeholders could assist this proposal in coming to fruition.</p>		Cost	Timescale	
		Outputs		
Demand Analysis	Report and proposal developed by CPRE	<p>Approx. £200,000 per annum based on discussions with proposer – revenue projects fund</p>	<p>Up to 5years to establish</p>	
Potential funding sources	Natural England, Central Government,			<p>Increased visitor numbers</p> <p>Enhanced natural and built environment</p>
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	New dedicated entity established to take forward			

### Investment Proposal Form

Project Name: Visitor Economy- Walking Hub

Intervention Framework	Economy and business	Tourism & the Visitor Economy	Town & Civic amenities		
<p>Description Herefordshire’s visitor economy has suffered from a lack of investment and marketing for many years and Kington has been no exception. The new town vision identifies the development of tourism as a key strategic objective.</p> <p>The potential launch of the Herefordshire BID in January 2022 should theoretically address the marketing issue and the repurposing of the town centre would significantly enhance the town’s appeal as a visitor attraction. Kington could also benefit from a county-wide strategy to integrate festivals and events while the regeneration of the High Street would directly address the aspiration to position the town as a gateway for walking and cycling holidays and other rural activities. The main opportunity for the Town is develop itself as a walking centre.</p> <p>Investment is needed in interpretive and promotional material such as a local walking App, signage etc. Investment is also required in the local footpath network.</p>			Cost	Timescale	Outputs
			£50,000 (to ensure accessibility for all)	One year onwards	Increased visitor numbers and tourism spend
Demand Analysis	Significant and well-tested demand for strategic support for Kington’s visitor economy				
Potential funding sources	Central government grant funding. Marches LEP, Herefordshire Destination BID				
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	One off initial investment will require some ongoing maintenance				

Investment Proposal Form				
Project Name: Kington Market Hall				
Intervention Framework	Economy and business	Tourism & the Visitor Economy	Town & Civic amenities	
<p>Description: Kington Market Hall is the most prominent public building in the town serving as the town's market hall and as a key hub/ focus for the town centre. The proposal is to renovate and refurbish the market hall, Place de Marines and associated buildings including toilets. The core building is a Victorian red brick market hall dating back to 1885.</p> <p>A refurbished building could provide a real focal point for the town centre and could be used to hold a wider range of regular markets as well as other events and activities including craft fairs, events and festivals. The primary focus should be more regular and wide ranging markets etc. There is also an opportunity to include interpretive material about the Town in the form of a large plan in the Places de Marine.</p> <p>Herefordshire Council could consider a Community Asset Transfer of the building to encourage local use and engagement with what is a currently underutilised asset.</p>		Cost	Timescale	Outputs
		£250,000	Up to 5 years	More visitors and local spend
Demand Analysis	Work being undertaken by Town council to confirm demand			
Potential funding sources	Range of external grants and contributions.			
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	To pass ownership to Town Council or other local entity			



Project Name: Kington Wesleyan Chapel				
Intervention Framework	Economy and business	Tourism & the Visitor Economy	Town & Civic amenities	
<p>Description: The former Wesleyan Chapel in Harp Yard is a square, stone building with a hipped corrugated iron roof. The building consists of two storeys and a cellar and associated land. It is thought that Harp Yard was the site at which John Wesley, the great Methodist leader, preached when he visited Kington in August 1746. In 1801. The building and associated land are located in a central position just off the top end of the High Street.</p> <p>The building has been derelict for a number of years and has been in a number of different ownerships but no viable scheme has yet come forward. The building and associated site have the potential to be converted into a number of commercial, office, residential or other uses.</p>		Cost	Timescale	Outputs
Demand Analysis	Work being undertaken by private owners to confirm demand	Up to £2million Depending on scheme	Up to 5 years	More visitors and local spend
Potential funding sources	Private sector, Heritage Lottery plus range of external grants			
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	To stay in private ownership			

Project Name: Kington lighting and banners scheme								
Intervention Framework	Economy and business	Tourism & the Visitor Economy	Town & Civic amenities					
Description: The proposal is to purchase and install multi-purpose brackets, light fittings and seasonal decorations in key locations in and around Kington High Street. Once installed the brackets/fittings can be used to light and decorate the Town as appropriate during key activities and events throughout the year. The fittings will be multi-purpose to allow bunting, flags, banners and Christmas lighting to be added to the streetscape to make the Town more attractive as well as to help promote key events and other activities.			Cost	Timescale	Outputs			
			Demand Analysis	Work being undertaken by Town Council to confirm demand		£50,000	1 year	More visitors and local spend
			Potential funding sources	Kington Town Council, plus range of external grants and possible section 106 funding				
			Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	Town Council or other local entity to maintain				

### Next Steps

This is one of five Market Town Economic Investment Plans commissioned by Herefordshire Council for each of Herefordshire's market towns.

Herefordshire Council has identified a number of projects which could be funded by them. As a result, in addition to this Market Town Investment Plan, Rose Regeneration has completed outline business cases (OBCs) and Project Mandates for the following projects for the Council's consideration.

- OBC's have been developed and submitted for:
- New Employment Site Project/ Extension to Hatton Gardens
- Project Mandates have been developed and submitted for:
- Kington High Street Regeneration and Shop Front Grant Schemes

Once the Plans, OBC's and Project Mandates have been considered by Herefordshire Council it is recommended that the council works with the five Market Town Councils to establish an appropriate delivery mechanism to oversee, secure funding for and monitor the delivery of the Market Town Economic Investment Plans. This delivery mechanism should be led and supported by Herefordshire Council and should involve representatives from each Town Council.

# APPENDIX 1 – STRATEGIC CONTEXT SUMMARY

National context	Regional Context	Herefordshire Context	Kington Context
<p>Industrial Strategy – ‘places’ foundation: tackling entrenched regional disparities.</p> <p>Industrial Strategy Productivity Evidence Review – some cities and rural county areas have been falling behind, including Herefordshire. County Councils Network analysis of GVA in 36 county areas found Herefordshire to be experiencing the smallest economic growth 5.3% between 2014 and 2018).</p> <p>A low carbon future in a changing climate – UK obligations under the 2015 Paris Agreement - setting a net zero target for carbon emissions by 2050.</p> <p>HM Treasury/Government department resources - levelling up economic opportunity across all nations and regions of the country by investing in infrastructure, innovation and people.</p> <p>Build Better, Build Greener, Build Faster - reforming the planning system (NPPF, Planning for the Future White Paper) to give more emphasis to quality, design and the environment.</p> <p>COVID-19 recovery measures - protecting and restoring livelihoods, improving living standards and new economic opportunities.</p>	<p>Local Industrial Strategy and Strategic Economic Plan – inclusive growth, connectivity, skills, enterprise and innovation, trade and investment. Herefordshire’s sectoral specialisms: food and drink, education, advanced manufacturing and engineering, defence and construction. Growth opportunities for (i) manufacturing and engineering, (ii) food supply chain/agri-tech innovation, and (iii) cyber security and resilience.</p> <p>Skills Plan and Skills Sectors Deep Dives – the provision of Higher Education provision and Further Education courses relevant to these growth opportunities in Herefordshire.</p> <p>Cyber Resilience Alliance / Science and Innovation Audit – the largest cluster of cyber security activity outside of London: growth in direct jobs, wider investment in products and processes and acting as a regional testbed.</p> <p>Growth Hub and Enterprise Zone with specialisms in defence and security at Skylon Park, Hereford.</p> <p>Economic recovery plan – investment in infrastructure and jobs: Hereford city streetscape improvements and NMITE Skylon campus development.</p>	<p>Herefordshire is a cold spot for social mobility – it is in the bottom 20 list of Local Authorities in England in terms of the chances that disadvantaged children will do well at school and get a good job.</p> <p>The importance of creating high-quality, highly skilled jobs against a backdrop of traditional low-skill, low-wage economy.</p> <p>County Plan – improving sustainability, connectivity, wellbeing and becoming carbon neutral by 2030-2031: Talk Community (hubs), community wealth building (increasing the amount of money that stays in the local economy); and Sustainable Food County (a whole system approach to tackling obesity, diet related ill health, food poverty, waste and climate change).</p> <p>Hereford Town Investment Plan – intended to deliver urban regeneration, a stronger skills base, and improved connectivity in the city. Under the strapline ‘green and fair’ the TIP recognises Hereford’s connectivity to market towns and countryside (e.g. tourism – attract and disperse approach). Telling stories about place, identifying and implementing a vision, strong partnership working and securing funding/investment are all needed for pandemic Recovery and Transformation.</p> <p>Skylon Park – Enterprise Zone for defence and security, advanced manufacturing, food and drink processing and sustainable technologies. Local Development Order to simplify planning arrangements. Weaving old industrial landscape with future proofing to allow for growth and change. Intended to act as a catalyst for economic growth across Herefordshire.</p> <p>Hereford Transport Strategy describes tragic flows, delays and congestion schemes which increase physical activity (e.g. cycling, walking) generate high value-for-money.</p>	<p>Herefordshire’s Economic Vision – enabling market towns to maximise their role in building thriving, distinctive, service centres that support their communities and rural hinterlands is a countywide ambition.</p> <p>Place-shaping for Kington is focused upon ‘the creation of new homes, new employment opportunities, delivery of and access to services, including affordable housing, reducing the need to travel to other centres, and utilising the natural and historic environment as economic assets’.</p> <p>Kington has more self-employed people and more people working in agriculture, construction, transport, accommodation and skilled trades compared to the rest of Herefordshire. The Kington Area Neighbourhood Plan supports better use of existing industrial estates and small-scale new build or the conversion of buildings to business use.</p> <p>Kington is described as ‘a centre for walkers’ and has Walkers are Welcome status. The KANP focuses on extending the variety, choice and quality of shops and services so as to improve the overall attractiveness of the town centre for residents, businesses and visitors.</p> <p>Kington sits in an area which is seen as a candidate for being designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)</p>

## APPENDIX 2 – PROJECT PRIORITISATION

A detailed project scoring matrix showing the working for the prioritisation process is set out below:

Project	Theme	Description	Indicative Cost (,000)	Contribution to Zero Carbon	More Visitors and Inward Investment	Increased GVA	Increased Business Diversity	Higher Skills	Leads to Better Population Balance	Greater Equity	Equality Agenda	Score
Shop/Building Frontage Scheme - Kington	Commercial Development	A public sector grant scheme is proposed to encourage investment in the frontages of shops and other town centre buildings to make the town a place to visit and spend time in. Elsewhere in the country grant schemes have been successfully used to encourage property owners to invest in town centre properties.	£75	3	5	5	4	3	2	3	3	70%
Kington High Street Regeneration	Public Realm	The main shopping street in Kington is narrow making it difficult to visit, shop and spend time in the town centre. The proposal is that the High Street should be refurbished to make it more pedestrian friendly whilst maintaining vehicle access throughout the day.	£2,000	3	5	5	4	0	2	4	4	67.5%
Tourism Offer/Walking Hub	Tourism	Kington's role as a significant walking Centre with a strong crafts sector should be promoted and developed. Investment is proposed in the local footpath network as well as in interpretation material, signage with a focus on walking and possibly crafts and the development of walking App for use on smart phones.	£50	5	5	3	3	2	2	3	3	65%
Kington Market Hall and surrounds	Commercial Development	The proposal is to renovate/refurbish Kington Market Hall and surrounding area and to utilise the market hall as a focus for crafts, events / festivals, café etc. There is also an opportunity to add more interpretative material about the town to promote its key attractions including the walking routes.	£250	4	4	4	4	2	2	3	3	65%
Hatton Gardens Extension – Kington	Employment Space	There is the opportunity to explore a small extension to the existing Hatton gardens Industrial Estate. A range of small-scale employment uses and start up units could be accommodated on the site.	£1,000	3	5	5	4	3	2	2	2	65%

Project	Theme	Description	Indicative Cost (,000)	Contribution to Zero Carbon	More Visitors and Inward Investment	Increased GVA	Increased Business Diversity	Higher Skills	Leads to Better Population Balance	Greater Equity	Equality Agenda	Score
Kington lighting and banners scheme	Public Realm	This project aims to light up key elements of the Town throughout the year and at the same time make a significant improvement to the Christmas lights. It will ensure key buildings and streets are lit and or decorated with banners etc to support key events and activities including walking and crafts.	£50	5	5	4	2	3	2	2	2	62.5%
AONB Status - Kington	Green Infrastructure/Tourism	The proposal is to include Kington and surrounding area in England and Wales in the designation of a new AONB. Such a designation will significantly enhance the profile of Kington as a walking town.	£200	4	5	2	3	2	2	3	3	60%
Improved Car parking offer - Kington	Public Realm	A full review of the location, quantity and demand for carparking in the town is required to consider improved car parking to serve the southern end of the Town. The current Livestock Market site provides an opportunity to improve car parking in the Town.	£50	4	5	3	3	0	2	3	4	60%
Food and Drink Offer	Commercial Development	Kington and the surrounding villages home to a number of food and drink manufacturing businesses which would support the development of the town's visitor economy. A small-scale food and drink manufacturer such as a brewery/distillery and associated visitor facility in the Town could attract significant additional footfall to the Town. There are also a number of old and rundown pubs/former pubs in the town which would benefit from refurbishment and could be used to further improve the existing food and drink offer.	£1,000	4	5	3	3	3	2	2	2	60%
Wesleyan Chapel - Kington	Commercial Development	This iconic listed building is in a key location near to the hub of the town centre. The building is in disrepair and needs significant investment it has potential for a range of uses. It has just changed ownership and the new owners should be supported in reviewing the future of the building.	£2,000	3	4	3	3	2	2	2	2	52.5%

Project	Theme	Description	Indicative Cost (,000)	Contribution to Zero Carbon	More Visitors and Inward Investment	Increased GVA	Increased Business Diversity	Higher Skills	Leads to Better Population Balance	Greater Equity	Equality Agenda	Score
Kington Police and Fire Station relocation and redevelopment	Housing	There is an opportunity to relocate the Police and Fire Stations from their current location in Churchill Road to provide new modern facilities with lower maintenance costs, better access and potentially faster response times. This could also allow the existing sites to be redeveloped for housing.	£2,000	3	0	2	2	0	5	4	3	47.5%

## Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Form

Please read EIA guidelines when completing this form

### 1. Name of Service Area/Directorate

<b>Name of Head of Service for area being assessed</b>	Roger Allonby
<b>Directorate</b>	Economy and place

<b>Individual(s) completing this assessment</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Job Title</b>
	Rob Ewing	Programme Manager
<b>Date assessment completed</b>	10/09/2021	

### 2. What is being assessed

Activity being assessed (eg. policy, procedure, document, service redesign, strategy etc.)	Market Town Investment Plans (MTIPs)	
What is the aim, purpose and/or intended outcomes of this activity?	Economic development of market towns	
Name of lead for activity	Roger Allonby	
Who will be affected by the development and implementation of this activity?	<input type="checkbox"/> Service Users <input type="checkbox"/> Patients <input type="checkbox"/> Carers <input type="checkbox"/> Visitors	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Communities <input type="checkbox"/> Other Local businesses and their employees
Is this:	<input type="checkbox"/> Review of an existing activity <input type="checkbox"/> New activity <input type="checkbox"/> Planning to withdraw or reduce a service, activity or presence?	
What information and evidence have you reviewed to help inform this assessment? (name sources, eg demographic information for services/staff groups affected, complaints etc.)	Detailed stakeholder engagement in collaboration with Herefordshire Council and the Town Councils Indices of deprivation Review of strategies and policies and impact on each market town More detailed consultation will take place for each project during planning	
Summary of engagement or consultation undertaken (eg. who and how have you engaged with, or why do you believe this is not required)	Town Zoom meetings – wide range of stakeholders Written to each stakeholder Thematic stakeholder groups Young people’s focus group Team Leominster	
Summary of relevant findings	For each town – series of projects that will improve the local economy and improve opportunities	

	An equality impact assessment will be carried out for each potential project
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### 3. The impact of this activity

Please consider the potential impact of this activity (during development and implementation) on each of the equality groups outlined below. **Please tick one or more impact box below for each Equality Group and explain your rationale.** Please note it is possible for the potential impact to be both positive and negative within the same equality group and this should be recorded. Remember to consider the impact on staff, public, patients, carers etc. in these equality groups.

Equality Group	Potential <u>positive</u> impact	Potential <u>neutral</u> impact	Potential <u>negative</u> impact	Please explain your reasons for any potential positive, neutral or negative impact identified
Age	x			Kington High Street regeneration will make the High Street more accessible
Disability				Kington High Street regeneration will make the High Street more accessible
Gender Reassignment		x		
Marriage & Civil Partnerships		x		
Pregnancy & Maternity	x			Kington High Street regeneration will make the High Street more accessible
Race (including Travelling Communities and people of other nationalities)		X		
Religion & Belief		X		
Sex		X		
Sexual Orientation		X		
Other Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Groups (eg. carers, care leavers, homeless, social/ economic deprivation, etc)		X		
Health Inequalities (any preventable, unfair & unjust differences in health status between groups, populations or individuals that arise from the unequal distribution of social, environmental & economic conditions within societies)	x			Improving economic recovery post-Covid will increase job opportunities in the market towns

What actions will you take to mitigate any potential negative impacts?	Risk identified	Actions required to reduce/ eliminate negative impact	Who will lead on the action?	Timeframe
	Group not consulted	Identify any additional consultees	RR	
	Project risk	Ensure EIA carried out during detailed project development	RA	
	Programme risk	Continue consultation during project development	RA	

### 4. Monitoring and review

How will you monitor these actions?	The output from the market town investment plan project is a set of economic development strategies, one for each market town. Each strategy has identified a set of potential projects that will support the economic development of the market town. The projects have been identified and specified in the strategies but will only be commissioned once the feasibility is established and suitable funding has been identified.
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	A specific EIA will be developed for all commissioned projects. These project specific EIAs will identify the monitoring requirements for the project.
<b>When will you review this EIA?</b> (eg in a service redesign, this EIA should be revisited regularly throughout the design & implementation)	A process will be put in place to ensure that the MTIPs are kept up to date. This process will include the objective of reviewing the EIA for each MTIP and ensuring that EIAs are carried out for each commissioned project.

## 5. Equality Statement

- All public bodies have a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to set out arrangements to assess and consult on how their policies and functions impact on the 9 protected characteristics.
- Herefordshire Council will challenge discrimination, promote equality, respect human rights, and design and implement services, policies and measures that meet the diverse needs of our service, and population, ensuring that none are placed at a disadvantage over others.
- All staff are expected to deliver services and provide services and care in a manner which respects the individuality of service users, patients, carers etc, and as such treat them and members of the workforce respectfully, paying due regard to the 9 protected characteristics.

<b>Signature of person completing EIA</b>	Rob Ewing
<b>Date signed</b>	10.09.2021



# **Title of report: Grant acceptance and Purchase of accommodation to meet strategic housing priorities, as a consequence of the restrictions caused by Covid-19**

**Meeting: Cabinet**

**Meeting date: Thursday 16 December 2021**

**Report by: Cabinet member housing, regulatory services, and community safety;**

## **Classification**

Open

## **Decision type**

Key

This is a key decision because it is likely to result in the council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the council's budget for the service or function concerned. A threshold of £500,000 is regarded as significant.

This is a key decision because it is likely to be significant having regard to: the strategic nature of the decision; and / or whether the outcome will have an impact, for better or worse, on the amenity of the community or quality of service provided by the authority to a significant number of people living or working in the locality (two or more wards) affected.

## **Wards affected**

(All Wards);

## **Purpose**

To accept a grant from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) via the Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme and the associated grant terms and conditions.

To approve the acquisition of up to six properties from the open market. This will enable the council, as part of the Covid-19 emergency response, to accommodate six people who have a long and/or repeated history of rough sleeping. The six properties would be self-contained accommodation suitable for those with disabilities and /or accessibility issues, subject to the market value.

## **Recommendation(s)**

**That:**

- a) Cabinet accepts the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities capital grant of £423,360 for the purposes of purchasing up to six properties and a revenue grant of £65,194 for a dedicated support worker for 23 months; and**
- b) Authority to purchase the properties be delegated to the Director for Economy and Place, following consultation with relevant cabinet members and Chief Finance Officer.**

## **Alternative options**

1. Do nothing. This is not recommended as the council has a statutory duty to house those who are homeless and capital grant funding has been awarded from the DLUHC to purchase six properties to help it meet this duty. The council is currently accommodating circa 49 people in emergency accommodation as a result of the Government's 'everyone in' initiative during the covid 19 pandemic. The council is also accommodating an increasing number of people (circa 71) in temporary accommodation. There is significant pressure on our temporary accommodation provision and an ongoing shortage of transitional accommodation available in the county which this grant seeks to start to mitigate. If the grant is not accepted we will not be able to draw the funding down and the project could not proceed as planned.
2. The council could purchase/create fewer than six units, however, this is not recommended as funding has been secured from the DLUHC to assist in the purchasing of these properties. There is some flexibility with this model e.g. we might purchase fewer properties, but create six units from them. This depends entirely upon the housing market and what properties are available at the time of purchase and would be done in consultation with DLUHC

## **Key considerations**

3. As a local authority the council has a statutory duty to house those who are unintentionally homeless and are in priority need and a duty to understand and plan to meet local housing need.
4. There is a shortage of transitional accommodation for homeless people within Hereford City and without such accommodation, the council is placing homeless applicants in Bed and Breakfast (B&B) and hotel accommodation which is costly to the council as housing benefits cannot be claimed by the tenant whilst in these forms of accommodation.
5. The council is currently housing 49 homeless people in emergency B&B, hotel accommodation and other forms of temporary accommodation until long-term accommodation can be provided. The council is looking at several alternative solutions to assist in reducing the number. The purchase of up to six properties is one of the proposed solutions and will focus on people with the highest levels of need and those who are unlikely to be housed by Registered Providers (RP's) due to unresolved issues of anti-social behaviour (ASB) and rent arrears etc.

6. A revenue grant of £65,194 has been secured to support the people in the six properties for 23 months. The support will be focused on developing tenant's skills for independent living and supporting them to manage their accommodation, develop financial management tools, attend appointments and become tenancy ready.
7. Once in the transitional accommodation tenants will be able to enter into wider support systems which could include accessing appropriate health care. It is proposed that the tenancy will last for no more than two years which will give each tenant the time and support needed to move into other accommodation e.g. via home point or into private rented. At the move on stage new tenants will move into the transitional accommodation and be supported by the council's Housing Solutions Team.
8. It is proposed to purchase six properties from the open market. Discussions are taking place with Registered Providers and external agencies to ensure the properties are managed under a full repairing lease meaning the maintenance of the properties will not be the responsibility of the council. The rental income from the properties will cover the cost of the lease.
9. The support worker will be employed by the council's Housing Solutions Team and will provide day to day support.
10. Due to the increased vulnerabilities of households as a consequence of the restrictions created by Covid-19 and the requirements of DLUHC in housing rough sleepers the council have implemented a partnership with external partners and the Voluntary Sector called Project Brave.
11. A housing pathway plan has been developed through Project Brave to provide a structured exit strategy for those who are currently housed as part of DLUHC's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. To date this has delivered a homeless hub in Hereford, the expansion to Hope Scott House as transitional accommodation and the current conversion of 4 & 5 Blackfriars Street into six additional units of transitional accommodation. The purchase of additional properties has also been identified as a priority.
12. Each property will have an allocated budget of £10,000 for improvement works with a contingency budget of £5,000. The procurement of the building improvement works will be in accordance with the council's contract procedure rules.

## **Community impact**

13. In the County Plan 2020-2024, the council has expressed an ambition to protect and improve the lives of vulnerable people and to reduce the number of people in Herefordshire identified as homeless and to develop its own housing stock.
14. The council's Delivery Plan 2020-2024 embraces the principal of no "second night out" and "housing first" through developing a model of delivery that prevents homelessness.
15. The six properties to be purchased will provide accommodation for six individuals who could potentially return to rough sleeping in Herefordshire.
16. These properties will enable transitional housing which is a stepping stone towards independent living and reduces the risk of homelessness and rough sleeping reoccurring.

## Environmental Impact

17. The properties to be purchased will be centrally located and would therefore allow individuals the opportunity to either walk or use public transport to move around. This in return would help to reduce the carbon emissions and go some way to improving air quality. It will also help sustainable modes of transport.
18. Purchasing the units will have a minimal environmental impact as they are already established properties. When updating and refurbishing the units we will seek to improve the energy efficiency of the property wherever possible.

## Equality duty

19. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
  - b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
20. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. As this is a decision to purchase and refurbish properties for a vulnerable cohort we believe that this decision will support the council in discharging its equality duty in particular advancing equality of opportunity for this cohort many of which share a protected characteristic. It will have a positive impact on our equality duty.

## Resource implications

21. A Capital grant funding of £423,360 has been awarded by DLUHC. This funding must be spent by 31 March 2023 and has been added to the capital programme by the S151 Officer.
22. Funding of £250,000 has been sourced from the Better Care fund (BCF).
23. Further funding of £385,040 has been sourced from Strategic Housings Empty Property Investment and Development capital budget.
24. A revenue grant of £65,194 has been awarded by DLUHC.
25. The rental income received is expected to meet all on going revenue costs for the premises.
26. Breakdown of scheme costs are set out in the tables below.

<b>Capital cost of project</b>	<b>Acquisition Costs</b>	<b>Building Works</b>	<b>Contingency</b>	<b>Total capital scheme costs</b>
Purchase of 6 x1 bed self-contained units	£968,400	£60,000	£30,000	<b>£1058,400</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£968,400</b>	<b>£60,000</b>	<b>£30,000</b>	<b>£1058,400</b>

<b>Funding streams - Capital</b>	
DLUHC Grant	<b>£423,360</b>
BCF Grant	<b>£250,000</b>
Strategic Housing funded from borrowing	<b>£385,010</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£1058,400</b>

<b>Revenue budget implications</b>	<b>Proposed weekly rent</b>	<b>Proposed weekly housing management fee @ 25% proposed weekly rent</b>	<b>Proposed weekly maintenance budget @ 75% proposed weekly rent</b>
1 bed flat	£97.81	£24.45	£73.36
Total per annum	£5086.12	£1,271.10	£3,814.72
<b>TOTAL per annum for 6 flats</b>	<b>£30,516.72</b>	<b>£7,628.4</b>	<b>£22,888.32</b>

## **Legal implications**

27. The Rough Sleeping Accommodation 2021 – 2024 Grant from DLUHC is being offered to the council in accordance with section 19 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 to provide longer term, move on accommodation and support services to rough sleepers.
28. The draft grant funding agreement has been reviewed by legal services and the grant is not subject to any unusual or onerous terms or conditions. The council has the power to enter into the grant funding agreement under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011. Under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 the council has a general power of competence meaning that it has the same powers as any individual to act (subject to the council's fiduciary and statutory duties) and therefore can accept the grant and use it for the purposes set out in the grant funding agreement.
29. In addition to the general power of competence, Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 ('LGA') provides that councils can act when specifically permitted by legislation or to facilitate the discharge of its statutory functions. Section 120(1) LGA provides the power to acquire by agreement, any land inside or outside its area for the purposes of any of its statutory functions including those under those under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996, which sets out the council's duties in relation to providing accommodation to those that are homeless.

## **Risk management**

30.

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
<p>Cost of refurbishment works could escalate and cause an overspend if unforeseen problems occur.</p>	<p>A full inspection of each property will be undertaken and an estimate of costs will be sought. The works will then be monitored on a regular basis through update meetings. This will ensure the budget is not overspent. This will be managed at a service level</p>
<p>Due to increasing house prices it might not be possible to purchase all six units</p>	<p>We are continually in discussions with DLUHC. It was recognised as a risk by DLUHC which is why they have extended the purchase time. However, the grant is only drawn down on successful purchase of each unit. If a unit is not purchased then the grant remains with DLUHC. Notwithstanding the above, it is quite possible that this will not happen as prices for 1 bed units have remained static.</p>
<p>Approval to purchase the accommodation is refused. This will have an implication on the council's homelessness budget due to further cost of temporary accommodation and could return individuals to the street.</p>	<p>Approval is sought for the purchase to remove six individuals from temporary accommodation or off the street, therefore reducing revenue on support costs and alternative accommodation costs.</p>
<p>Failure to spend DLUHC funding by 31 March 2023 will result in the grant offer being retracted and any funds drawn down against the project needing to be returned. This could have an impact on future bids, reputation and relationships with partnering organisations.</p>	<p>On approval of the decision to purchase the six properties, negotiations with property agents can start immediately to ensure the funding is spent. This will be managed at service level. The capital element of this fund is managed by Homes England. They have very clear points where drawdown can be requested. This will all be tracked and monitored through the Homes England Investment Management System.</p>
<p>The properties would be the first homelessness accommodation that the council would own. As soon as the properties are tenanted the tenants would enter into our wider support systems.</p>	<p>The opportunity for excellent publicity and a flagship project when successful. This would be managed at a corporate level in terms of publicity</p>
<p>Ongoing maintenance and future refurbishment costs.</p>	<p>This will be managed via a full repairing lease. Going forward permission has been approved to develop our own housing. Any future costs will be included within the overall housing maintenance budget.</p>
<p>Support costs.</p>	<p>For the first 23 months, this will be 100% funded through revenue grant received from DLUHC and then delivered in house through the council's Housing Solutions Team.</p>



## Consultees

31. The Cabinet Member for housing, regulatory services and community safety, who is in support of the opportunity.
32. The Cabinet Member for commissioning, procurement and assets, who is in support of the opportunity.
33. DMT, who is in support.
34. Political Group consultees. No comments received.
35. Project Brave, who are in support of the purchase of 6 additional properties.

## Appendices

None.

## Background papers

None identified.

## Report Reviewers Used for appraising this report:

Please note this section must be completed before the report can be published		
Governance	Sarah Buffrey	Date 18/11/2021
Finance	Louise Devlin	Date 15/11/2021
Legal	Alice McAlpine	Date 18/11/2021
Communications	Luenne Featherstone	Date 17/11/2021
Equality Duty	Carol Trachonitis	Date 19/11/2021
Risk	Kevin Lloyd	Date 17/11/2021
Approved by	Neil Taylor	Date 29/11/2021

