

Supplement 1 to the agenda**Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee**

Wednesday 15 January 2025, 10.00 am

Conference Room 1 - Herefordshire Council, Plough Lane Offices, Hereford, HR4 0LE

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Market Towns Investment Plans

Meeting: Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee

Meeting date: Wednesday 15 January 2025

Report by: Head of Economy and Regeneration

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

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

Purpose

This report provides an overview of the development Market Town Investment Plans for Herefordshire's five market towns in 2021-22, in order to seek the views of the scrutiny committee on the benefits of the process and how projects identified are being progressed.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) **That the committee notes this report and;**
- b) **The committee considers lessons learnt with the implementation of the Market Town Investment Plans.**

Alternative options

1. The Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee has requested that this matter is considered, in order that the council can learn the lessons from the development of the Market Town Investment Plans and considers what, if anything else, needs to be done to support this initiative. There are no alternative options.

Key considerations

2. In September 2020, the council commissioned consultants, Rose Regeneration to work with town councils and other local stakeholders to develop, through local engagement, Market Town Investment Plans, (MTIPs), for each of the five market towns: Bromyard; Kington; Ledbury; Leominster and Ross-on-Wye. Whilst Herefordshire Council commissioned the development of the plans, it was the intention that they would be led locally within each town.
3. This was in recognition that Herefordshire's market towns 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.
4. 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".
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. All five MTIPs, (which are enclosed as Appendices 1 to 5 to the report), were approved and adopted as providing direction for the identification of future economic development projects in the market towns at Cabinet on 31 March 2022. The key projects identified in each MTIP are summarised below.
8. **Bromyard** - the MTIP for Bromyard identifies a number of potential projects that will contribute to the delivery of the town's vision. These include:
 - Development of employment opportunities:
 - a. EcoHub – development of new employment land
 - Improvements to support the visitor economy:
 - a. Bromyard Eastern Enhancement – a range of proposals including a permanent festival site; community facilities; public realm improvements; and shop front grants scheme
 - b. Greenway – phased development of a multi-user track from Bromyard to Rowden
 - Civic amenities, skills development and projects aimed at young people:
 - a. Health and Wellbeing Hub in the centre of Bromyard

- b. 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

9. **Kington** - the MTIP for Kington identifies a number of potential projects that will contribute to the delivery of the town’s vision. These include:

Development of employment opportunities:

- a. New employment site

Improvements to support the visitor economy:

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

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

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

10. **Ledbury** - the MTIP for Ledbury identifies a number of potential projects that will contribute to the delivery of the town’s vision. These include:

Development of employment opportunities:

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

Improvements to develop a more sustainable and fully functioning town:

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

Civic amenities and projects aimed at young people

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

11. **Leominster** - the MTIP for Leominster 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:

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

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

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

Skills Development and projects aimed at young people

- a. The Skills Foundry

12. **Ross-on-Wye** - the MTIP for Ross-on-Wye identifies a number of potential projects that will contribute to the delivery of the town's vision. These include:

Development of employment opportunities:

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

Improvements to support the visitor economy:

- a. Brampton and Sellack Cycleway
- b. Riverside Canoe Bunkhouse & Pontoons
- c. Museum Without Walls
- d. Civic amenities and projects aimed at young people
- e. Enhanced sports centre and skate park
- f. Market House and Apron Plaza and High Street pedestrianisation
- g. Community facilities at the Ryefield Centre
- h. Shop/building frontage grant scheme

13. Overall, the MTIPs identified that in the majority of the towns there is a demand for additional employment land. For example, stakeholder feedback and evidence in Ross-on-Wye established 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.
14. In late 2021, whilst the MTIPs were still being finalised, Herefordshire Council used discretionary funding from the Government, as part of the Covid-19 recovery, to support all five market towns. Through this process, the Council awarded £20,000 from Welcome Back funding and £10,000 from the Great Places to Visit Fund to each of the Town Councils, with projects reflecting some of the emerging themes from the plans. and a summary of the Town Council Activities are shown as Appendix 7.
15. In relation to Leominster, a number of the projects identified in the MTIP, including the enhancement of Corn Square and the delivery of a shop/ building frontage grant scheme, have been achieved due to the Historic England funding of £1.3 million and Herefordshire Council's match funding of £2.1 million towards the Leominster Heritage Action Zone project, which has significantly improved the quality of the public realm and conservation of the heritage of the town.
16. Since the MTIPs were adopted in 2022, these have been used as key reference documents to reflect the priorities for each respective town. The idea is that the MTIPs will be used to guide the council and act as a platform for potential funding bids, as and when suitable funding opportunities become available for capital investment to support the economic recovery and development of the market towns. Within each MTIP there was a commitment that Herefordshire Council will continue to work with the Town Councils 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.
17. Alongside the MTIPs, there has been other Herefordshire Council investment in the five Market Towns, from sources including Section 106, Highways, as well as UKSPF and REPF. Much of this may have contributed towards some of the themes of MTIPs. Whilst not exhaustive, examples of this investment is listed in Appendix 7, alongside the Covid-19 recovery mentioned above.
18. Soon after their publication and adoption of the MTIPs in summer 2022, three of them were used to support applications for Round 2 of the Government's Levelling Up Fund. Local Authorities were permitted to support one application per parliamentary constituency, plus transport-focused application, so it was agreed to submit the following three applications:
 - a. North Herefordshire constituency – a package of public realm improvements in Leominster and Ledbury town centres and enhancements to the Leominster Old Priory building.
 - b. Hereford and South Herefordshire constituency – development of the site infrastructure and development plots for the Ross Enterprise Park
 - c. Transport Theme – a package of transport and active travel measures in and around Hereford city, including the Hereford Travel Hub.

Whilst, considerable effort was taken in developing these three bids, which were supported by £125,000 Government Capacity funding, unfortunately, the only project which was successful was the transport themed one, focussed around the development of the Hereford Transport Hub.

19. Given the significant focus and desire to develop more employment land within market towns, and following the disappointment of the Levelling Up Fund application for Ross Enterprise Park, as part

of the budget setting for 2024/25, Herefordshire Council allocated £12 million within the Council's Capital Programme to support the development of employment land. This involved allocating £8 million towards the development of Phase 1 of the Ross Enterprise Park, and £4 million to be used to explore opportunities within the other four market towns.

20. Work is now well underway on the final detailed design of Ross Enterprise Park, with work on site due to commence in 2025 and further investigations are ongoing in relation to the other market towns.
21. Around the same time as submitting the Levelling Up Fund bids in summer 2022, Herefordshire Council also identified an opportunity to use some of the Council's allocation of UK Shared Prosperity Funding to support the development of feasibility studies for each of the market towns, to allow them to progress some of the projects within their MTIPs. This was in recognition of the fact that it is often difficult to find revenue funding to progress projects to the point where they can then apply for capital funding and £25K was allocated for each market town for spending in 2024/25.
22. Officers have been working with town councils over the last few months to identify which projects they wish to take forward using the UKSPF feasibility funding, and then developing detailed specifications and commissioning consultants to take these projects forward between December 2024 and March 2025.
23. The feasibility study funding is being used to support the following projects for each town:
 - Bromyard** – Bromyard Town Council delegated this project to the Bromyard Development Community Interest Company, who are being supported to consider a range linked initiatives to the east of Bromyard, which they are collectively referring to as the Bromyard Eastern Enhancement Project. The project involves:
 - a. Carrying out a feasibility study to explore the potential expansion of the Linton Trading Estate, the establishment of a permanent enhanced festival site and the creation of a 'green commute' along the old railway line into Bromyard.
 - Kington** – supporting Kington Town Council with a study covering three town centre priorities, including:
 - a. Reviewing town centre car parking and considering options to increase suitable parking provision for the town.
 - b. Consideration of the potential relocation of the Police and Fire Station to a more accessible location, to enhance response times and free up space within the town centre for either housing or additional car parking.
 - c. Developing options to improve the Market Hall and its surrounds, building on its limited use for markets, to address the poor state of this listed building, improve the visual appearance to the town, and identify solutions to address the physical restrictions and potential threats, costs and opportunities for the building.
 - Ledbury** – supporting Ledbury Town Council to develop a local tourism, events and markets plan, with the aim of:
 - a. Maximising the tourism opportunities for the town, improving the local markets and events offering, considering options to improve the local Visitor Information Service, increasing joint working between the various heritage buildings and local attractions, and ensuring that local businesses benefit from the improving profile of Herefordshire as a result of the work of Herefordshire County BID.
 - Leominster** – supporting Leominster Town Council to establish a way forward for the Leominster Old Priory.

- a. Carrying out a feasibility study into the development of a business incubation hub and shared business space at the Old Priory Centre, including providing options for delivery models.
- b. Considering potential future uses for the areas of the Old Priory building currently occupied by Leominster Youth Hostel, including an options analysis, recommendations and suggested delivery models, identifying likely costs and next steps for development.
- c. Understanding future options for sustainable transport links to the above projects located at the Old Priory site, which should include a full review of current and planned transport links.

Ross-on-Wye – supporting Ross-on-Wye Town Council to explore the feasibility of two town centre projects:

- a. Consideration of the pros and cons of pedestrianising or introducing pedestrian-priority schemes for the town centre, to increase the town centre footfall, support greater economic activity and improve the visitor experience.
- b. Investigating the development of an external area adjacent to the Market House, known as the Market Apron, to create a flat area from the steps of the Market House to hold markets and other town centre events.

Community impact

24. 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.
25. The development of the MTIPs was 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.
26. At the time of the production of the MTIPs, the then County Plan 2020 - 2024 stated 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.”
27. The new Herefordshire Council Plan 2024 – 28 states that, as part of the Council’s growth objectives, we will: “Support market towns and Hereford city to be vibrant hubs through working with residents, local organisations and businesses.”

Environmental Impact

28. The MTIPs align well with the Council’s [environmental policy commitments](#) particularly in terms of the commitment to: “Promote links between environmental sustainability, economic growth and wellbeing.”
29. 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.”

30. 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.

Equality duty

31. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to consider how it can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that it is paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.
32. As the MTIPs are very high-level and do not address the actual delivery of projects, it is not believed that it will have an impact on the council's equality duty at this stage. An equality impact assessment (EqIA) was carried out when the MTIPs were developed and is included in Appendix 6 and EqIAs will be carried out for any projects taken forward by Herefordshire Council.

Resource implications

33. As a background report for the Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee, there are no direct resource implications to this paper.
34. Any future Herefordshire Council funding or resources to support the delivery of MTIP projects would need to be considered separately.
35. Support and liaison with Town Councils about the delivery of MTIP projects would generally be through the Economic Development team, and would be subject to staff capacity and alongside other priorities.

Legal implications

36. 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

37. The following are the primary risks identified in delivering the MTIP project:

Risk / Opportunity	Mitigation
<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 purpose and scope of the MTIPs was clearly communicated at each stage.</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>Projects being considered for funding are likely to be subject to the development of detailed business cases, and would need to meet specific eligibility requirements, which may include conditions that they generate an income or capital receipt to repay the investment.</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 were shared with Town Councils.</p>
<p>Funding may not be available for all identified schemes, and will be heavily dependent on Government funding and their priorities.</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 within 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>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 particularly affect those in North Herefordshire.</p> <p>The main risk is that there will be a small increase in costs to obtain phosphate credits.</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.</p>

Consultees

38. There was considerable stakeholders engagement and consultation by the consultants in all five market towns 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.

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 (dated 10 Sept 2021)
- Appendix 7 – Welcome Back Funding: Town Council Activities

Background papers

Report and minutes of Herefordshire Council Cabinet on 31 March 2022, when Cabinet approved the Market Town Investment Plans for the five Market Towns.

Service Level Agreements with all five Town Councils in relation to the allocation of Welcome Bank funding for each Market Town, dated November 2021.

Report and minutes of Herefordshire Council Cabinet on 29 June 2022, when Cabinet approved the submission to government of three bids to the Levelling Up Fund by the deadline of the 6 July 2022.

Report Reviewers Used for appraising this report:

Please note this section must be completed before the report can be published		
Governance	Henry Merricks-Murgatroyd	Date 06/01/2025
Finance	Karen Morris	Date 23/12/2024
Legal	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.
Communications	Luenne Featherstone	Date 09/01/2025
Equality Duty	Harriet Yellin	Date 07/01/2025
Procurement	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.
Risk	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date Click or tap to enter a date.

Approved by Ross Cook Date 09/01/2025

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

MTIP	Market Town Investment Plan
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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 Statistics¹). 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

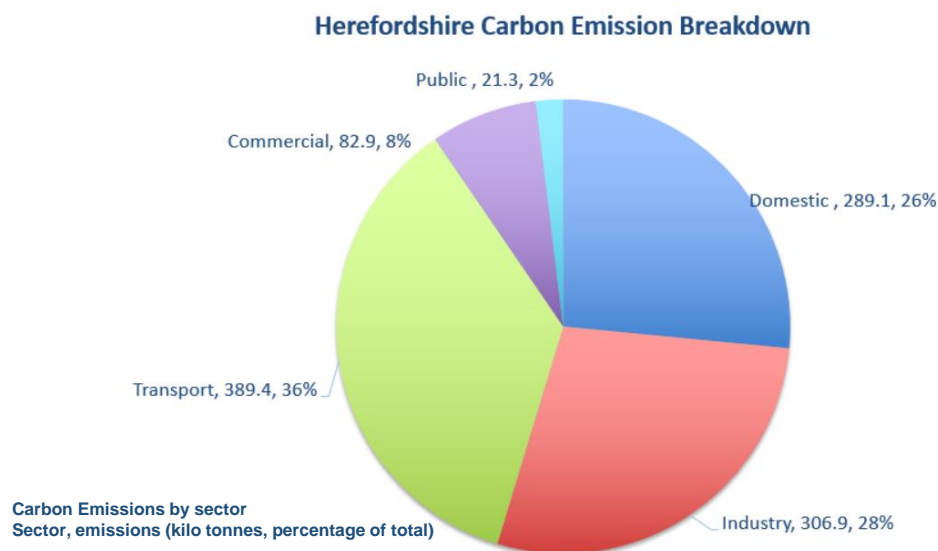
On 8 March 2019 Herefordshire Council declared a Climate Emergency following unanimous support for a climate emergency resolution at full council. This declaration was subsequently

¹ <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.

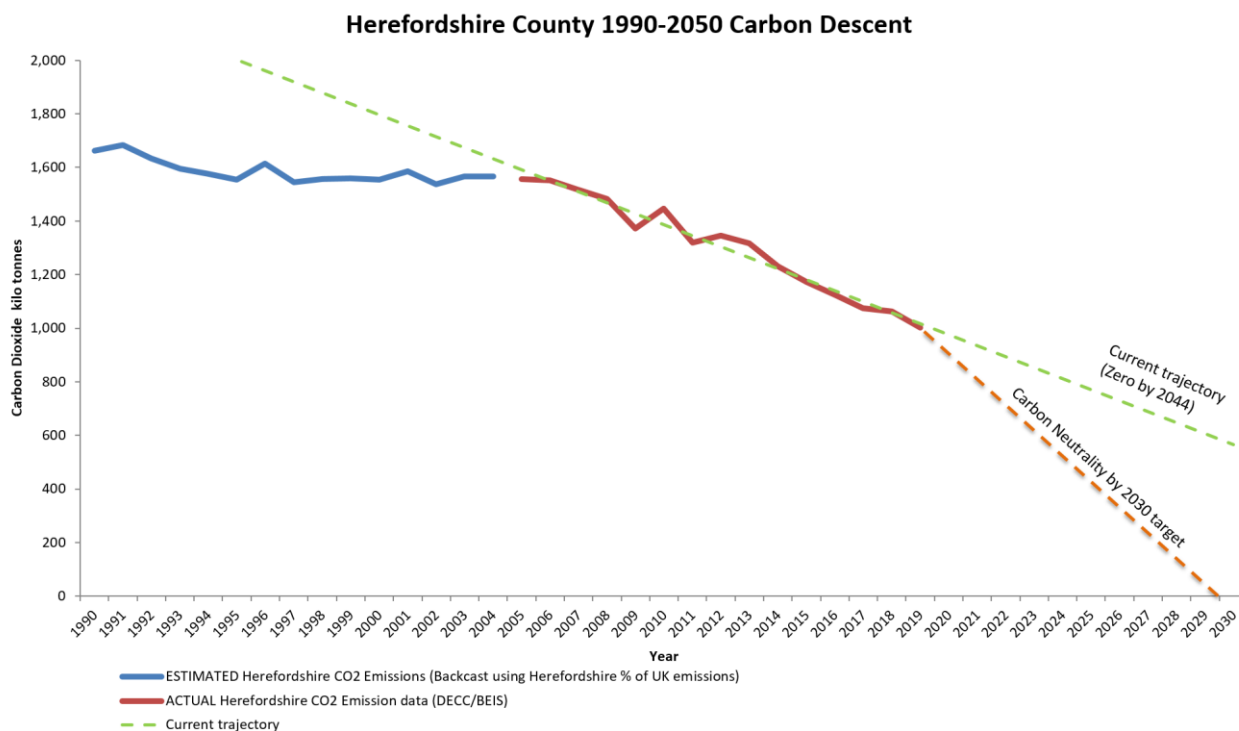
Further to these declarations the council approved the ambitious new target to become zero carbon and nature rich by 2030.

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 England², a low wage economy (19% below the national average³), a deficit of higher level skills (41.4% of the population has NVQ level 4 national average of 43.1%⁴), an aging population (25% over 65 compared to a 18% nationally), and a significant shortage of labour (2.9% claiming unemployment benefits⁵).

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.

² [ONS Regional Differences in Productivity July 2021](#)

³ [Understanding Herefordshire ONS data 2019](#)

⁴ [ONS Population Survey 2020](#)

⁵ [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 less⁶ 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

⁶ [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.

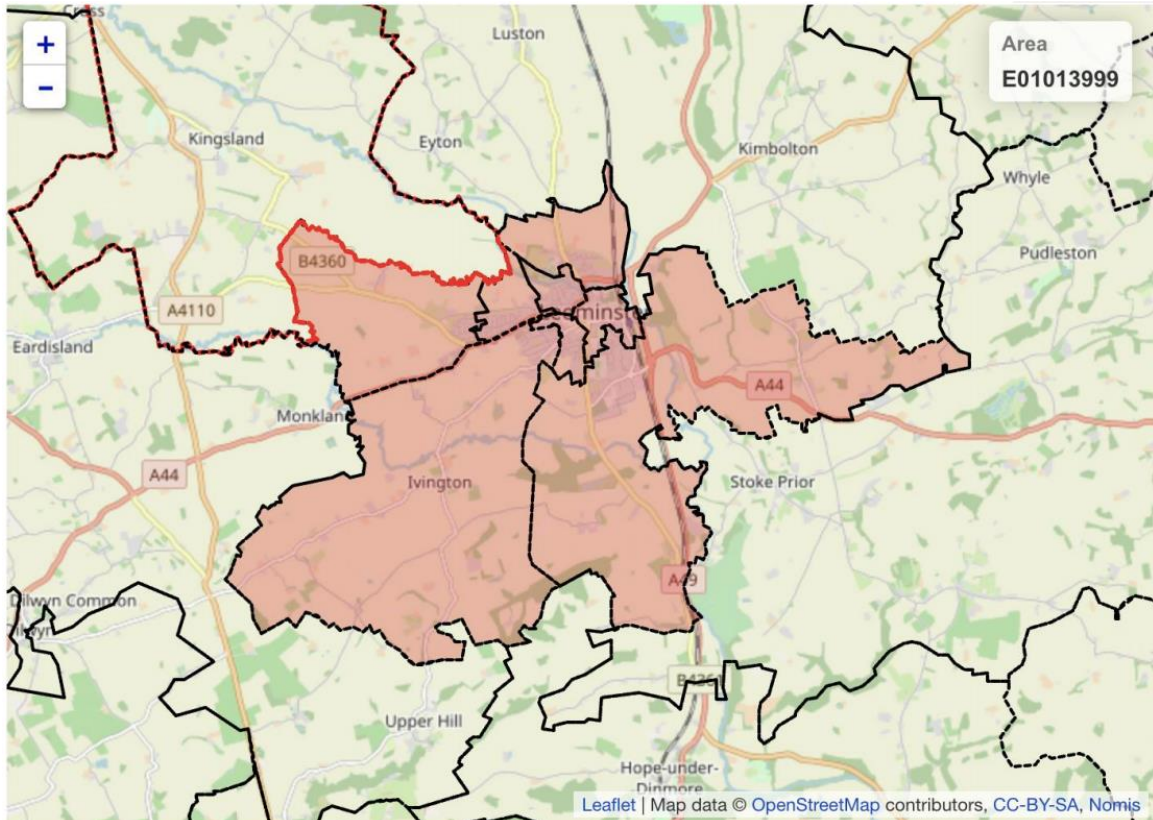
The town is bisected by the A44 which was formerly a trunk road and still provides an important cross regional route for long distance freight, commercial and tourist traffic from mid Wales to the West Midlands.

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.

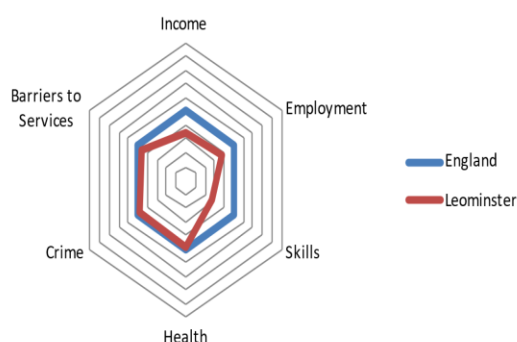
For the purpose of this work, Leominster's town boundaries are those based on the Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA's) for Leominster we have used to inform the data analysis based on the 2019 Indices of Deprivation. The work has also been cognisant of the boundaries set out in the Leominster Neighbourhood 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 & the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town & 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 & the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town & 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	
				£1,000,000-£3,000,000 Depending on extent of scheme	5 years	100 parking spaces 50 Cycle racks
	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 & the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town & 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"> • The visitor experience centre planned to complement the existing farm cider production premises at Newton Court Farm; and • 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. <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 & the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town & 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 & the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town & 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 & the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town & 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 & the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town & Civic amenities</i>	
<p><i>Description:</i> The Worcester Bromyard Leominster Greenway project (wblgreenway.org.uk) 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 Corridor³. Providing gateway to WBL Greenway, and other trails thereby creating sustainable communities through tourism and reducing isolation⁴</p> <p>Phase 2: creation of a similar multi-user track from Steens Bridge to Fencote (6km) creating sustainable communities through tourism and reducing isolation⁴</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 & the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town & 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 & the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town & 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 & the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town & 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
Demand Analysis	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.				
Potential funding sources	Central Government. Maarches LEP. Private sector business community.				
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	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 <i>analysis of GVA</i> 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><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.</p> <p>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.</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 and 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	
Leominster																				
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
Bromyard																				
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
Kington																				
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
Ledbury																				
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
Ross on Wye																				
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.

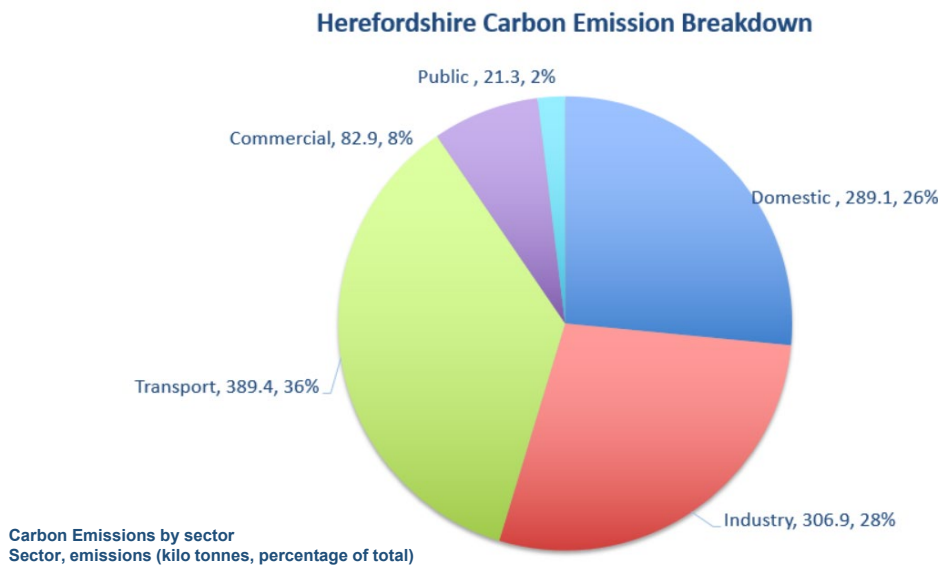
The market town investment plans identify a long term vision for the growth of the towns and a programme of potential projects to enable sustainable economic development to deliver the vision. The market town investment plans will also play a key role in the development of a new long term county wide ‘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.

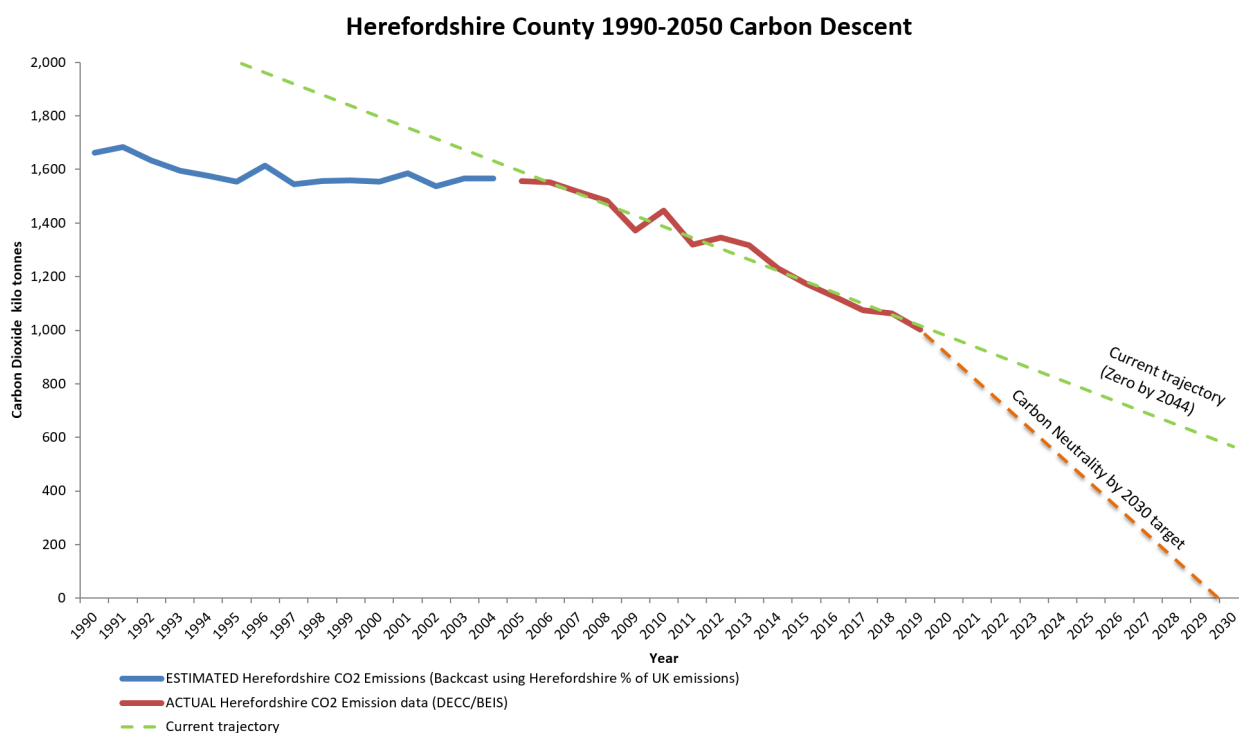
Further to these declarations the council approved the ambitious new target to become zero carbon and nature rich by 2030.

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 Statistics¹). 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.

¹ <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 England², a low wage economy (19% below the national average³), a deficit of higher level skills (41.4% of the population has NVQ level 4 national average of 43.1%⁴), an aging population (25% over 65 compared to a 18% nationally), and a significant shortage of labour (2.9% claiming unemployment benefits⁵).

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.

² [ONS Regional Differences in Productivity July 2021](#)

³ [Understanding Herefordshire ONS data 2019](#)

⁴ [ONS Population Survey 2020](#)

⁵ [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 Hereford⁶. 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.

⁶ 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 average⁷
- 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.

⁷ [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

Ross on Wye

Domains of Deprivation



Domains	England Average	Ross on Wye
Income	16422	29803
Employment	16422	20282
Skills	16422	25895
Health	16422	31872
Crime	16422	20122
Barriers to Services	16422	22993

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 Plan⁸ characterises these challenges in terms of ‘market failures’ as follows:

⁸ <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"> • reduced opportunities for the types of organic growth that arises from business clustering, • more limited opportunities to attract talented employees and inward investment; • long travel distances for business and employees who need to access jobs and markets by car; and • a general lack of economic momentum in growth sectors.
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 ² 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 offer 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 ² 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"> • to 'glass in' the ground floor of the Market House, • to seek Herefordshire Council's permission to terrace the Market Apron and create a central focus to the Town Centre. <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"> • The Lost Fountain (The Prospect) • Underhill (Market House) • River boats from the Wye Tour (Riverside) <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-side 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 & the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town & 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 m² 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 m² 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 & the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town & 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>		
			£2M (est)	18 months	Enhanced facilities to meet national sports standards		
			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 & the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town & Civic amenities</i>		
<i>Description</i>			<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
<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. 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>			£350K (est)	6 months	High quality national standard skate and recreation park
<i>Demand Analysis</i>	This project is a long standing aspiration for the town for which there is strong support.				
<i>Potential funding sources</i>	<p>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.</p>				
<i>Exit (Sustainability) Strategy</i>	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 & the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town & Civic amenities</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>			<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
			<p>Demand Analysis</p> <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>	<p>Potential funding sources</p> <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&D and light industry Public Open Spaces and squares.</p>	<p>Est £40 Million</p>
<p>Exit (Sustainability) Strategy</p> <p>N/A</p>					

Investment Proposal Form

Project Name: Riverside Canoe Bunkhouse & Pontoons

<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism & the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town & 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>		
			Demand Analysis	<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>	£700k (est)	18 months	<p>A community and tourist facility to support riverside activities, increase visitor numbers and length of stay. An improved public realm in a conspicuous part of the town</p>
			Potential funding sources	<p>Revenues generated could service debt finance subject to a business plan and sourcing of loan provider such as the Marches Investment Fund.</p>			
			Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	<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 & the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town & Civic amenities</i>		
			<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</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"> • The Lost Fountain (The Prospect) • Underhill (Market House) • River boats from the Wye Tour (Riverside) 					
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>		£200k (est)	12 months	Local economy boosted via footfall/visitor spend
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 & the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town & 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 & the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town & Civic amenities</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>			<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
			<p>Demand Analysis</p>	<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>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>
<p>Exit (Sustainability) Strategy</p>	<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		
<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: • Pedestrianisation of the High Street running from the Market House to Edde Cross Street (scheme 55) • Extension of the pavement running under the Town walls in Wilton Road to Royal Parade • New pedestrian crossing in Wilton Road from Town Wall to near top of Wye Street (No. 56) • Improved traffic management measures in Copse Cross St/south section of High St”.</i></p> <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>			<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
			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	<p>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.</p>				
Potential funding sources	<p>The Ross Movement study identifies Funding sources for identified schemes as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herefordshire Council’s Public Realm Annual Plan • S106 – Developer funding • Grant – third party funding sources such as DfT, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homes England, • Local Enterprise Partnerships, or similar bidding opportunities as they arise 				

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 & the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town & Civic amenities</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>		<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>
		<i>Outputs</i>	
Demand Analysis	Chamber of Trade and stakeholder feedback	£200,000	1 – 5 years
Potential funding sources	Private Sector, Government Grants, Heritage Lottery,		
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	The ongoing maintenance responsibilities will stay with the current property owners.		
			At least 30 properties improved

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 & the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town & Civic amenities</i>		
<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.			<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
			£1M - £1.5M and the RTC could contribute £200k.	Planning & tendering during 2021, and completion by Sept 2022.	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)
Demand Analysis	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.				
Potential funding sources	Ross Town Council would seek to contribute £200k. other sources of funding include Historic England and National Lottery with				
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	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"> • <i>Industrial Strategy</i> – ‘places’ foundation: tackling entrenched regional disparities. • 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). • 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. • <i>HM Treasury</i>/Government department resources - levelling up economic opportunity across all nations and regions of the country by investing in infrastructure, innovation and people. • 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. • COVID-19 recovery measures - protecting and restoring livelihoods, improving living 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <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. ○ <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. ○ 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. ○ <i>Growth Hub</i> and <i>Enterprise Zone</i> with specialisms in defence and security at Skylon Park, Hereford. ○ <i>Niche tourism offer</i> with potential to increase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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. ▪ The importance of creating high-quality, highly skilled jobs against a backdrop of traditional low-skill, low-wage economy. ▪ <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). ▪ <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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Herefordshire Economic Vision</i> – enabling market towns to maximise their role in building thriving and distinctive service centres. ➤ 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. ➤ 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,

National context	Regional Context	Herefordshire Context	Ross-on-Wye Context
<p>standards and new economic opportunities.</p>	<p>awareness and visibility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Economic recovery plan</i> – investment in infrastructure and jobs: Hereford city streetscape improvements and NMITE Skylon campus development. 	<p>connectivity to market towns and countryside (e.g. tourism – attract and disperse approach).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Telling stories about place, identifying and implementing a vision, strong partnership working and securing funding/investment are all needed for pandemic Recovery and Transformation. ▪ <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. 	<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"> ➤ These targets will be met through the Model Farm development (an urban extension) and smaller sites set out in the Neighbourhood Development Plan. ➤ <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’. ➤ 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. ➤ Harnessing growth and development opportunities not only requires sensitivity towards built and natural environments, but also lead to accessibility improvements within the town.

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 ² 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

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%¹). 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).

¹ 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.

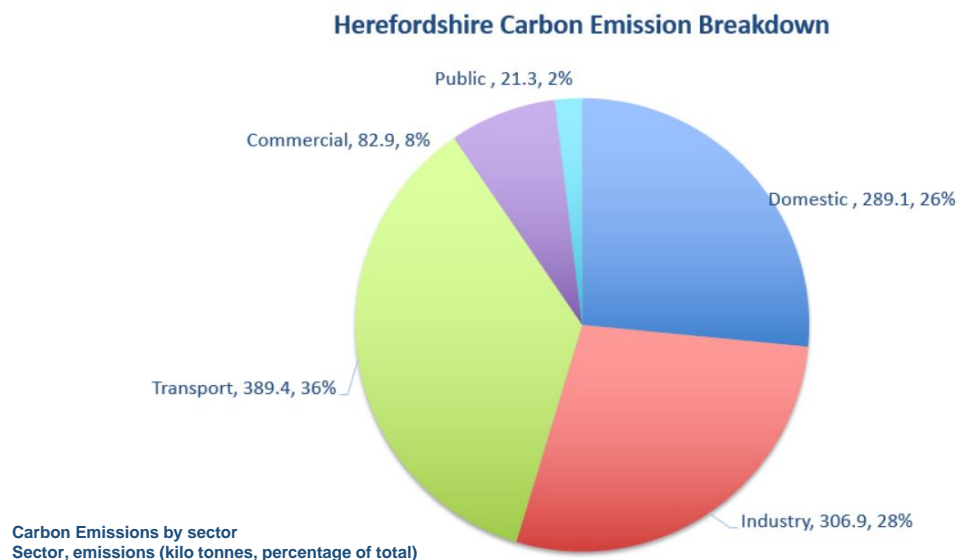
The MTIPs identify a long term vision for the growth of the towns and a programme of potential projects to enable sustainable economic development to deliver the vision. The market town investment plans will also play a key role in the development a new long term county wide ‘big plan’. The big plan 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.

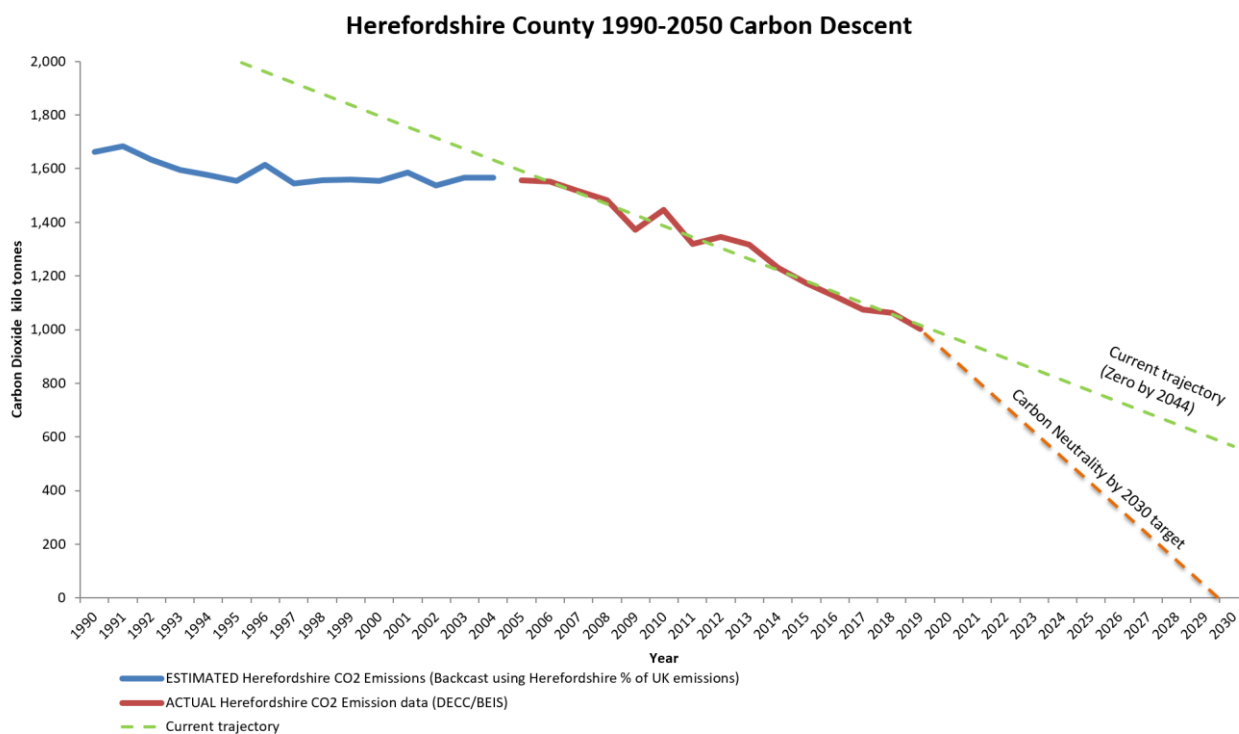
The below chart illustrates Herefordshire’s current carbon emission split and the areas of focus for the Ledbury MTIP to support the Herefordshire’s journey to net zero.



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 England², a low wage economy (19% below the national average³), a deficit of higher level skills (41.4% of the population has NVQ level 4 national average of 43.1%⁴), an aging population (25% over 65 compared to a 18% nationally), and a significant shortage of labour (2.9% claiming unemployment benefits⁵).

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.

² [ONS Regional Differences in Productivity July 2021](#)

³ [Understanding Herefordshire ONS data 2019](#)

⁴ [ONS Population Survey 2020](#)

⁵ [ONS claimant count October 2021](#)

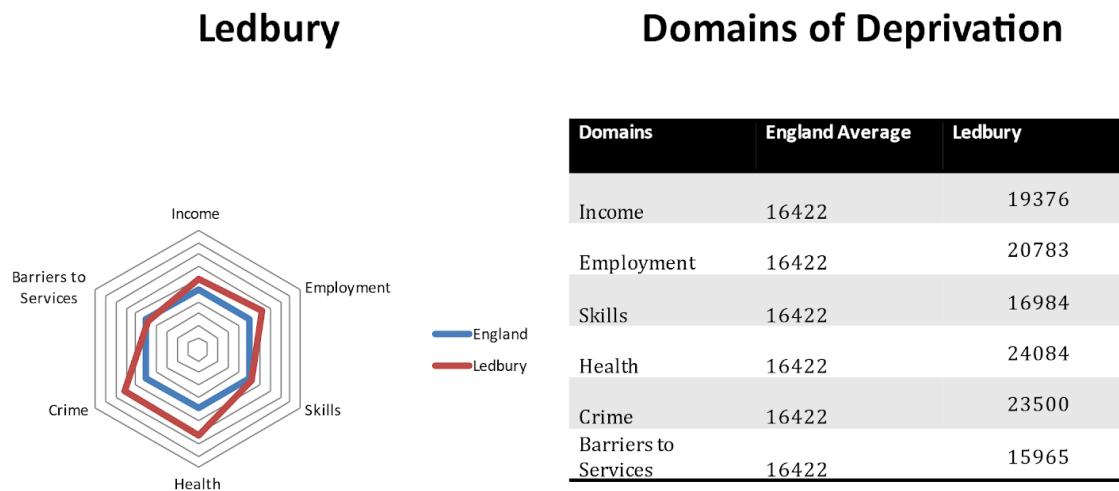
THE MAIN CHALLENGES FACING THE TOWN

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, Ornuo, 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 & the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town & 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 & the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town & 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 & the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town & 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 & the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town & 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 & the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town & 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>
<p><i>Demand Analysis</i></p> <p>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.</p>		£500k	18 months
<p><i>Potential funding sources</i></p> <p>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.</p>			
<p><i>Exit (Sustainability) Strategy</i></p> <p>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.</p>			
		<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 & the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town & 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	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.
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.				

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 & the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town & 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>	
		£TBC	12-18 months	Business units to meet the requirements of local businesses to relocate within the town, or start and grow businesses. The potential to encourage high tech and related start-ups linking to defence and security, engineering and food sectors with a requirement for higher level engineering skills and a link to NMITE	
		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.

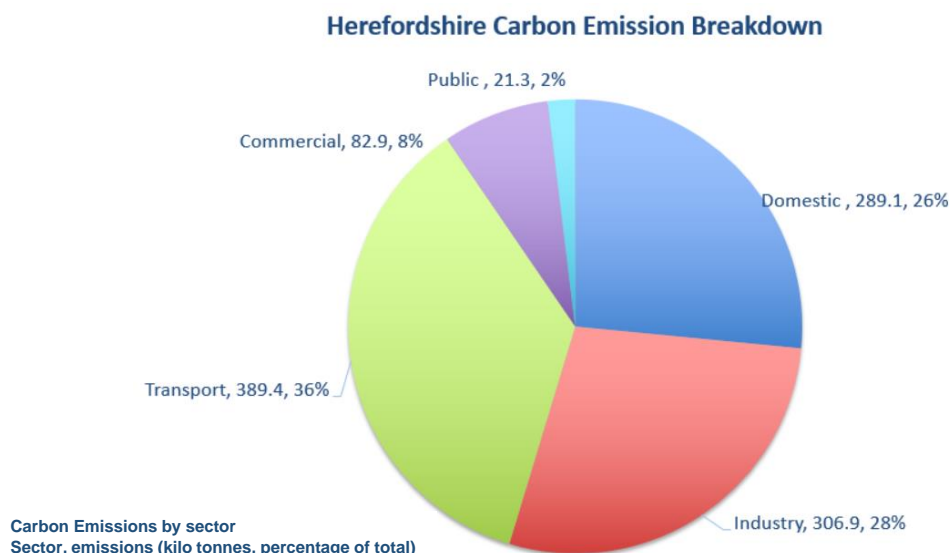
The MTIPs identify a long term vision for the growth of the towns and a programme of potential projects to enable sustainable economic development to deliver the vision. The market town investment plans will also play a key role in the development a new long term county wide ‘big plan’. The big plan 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.

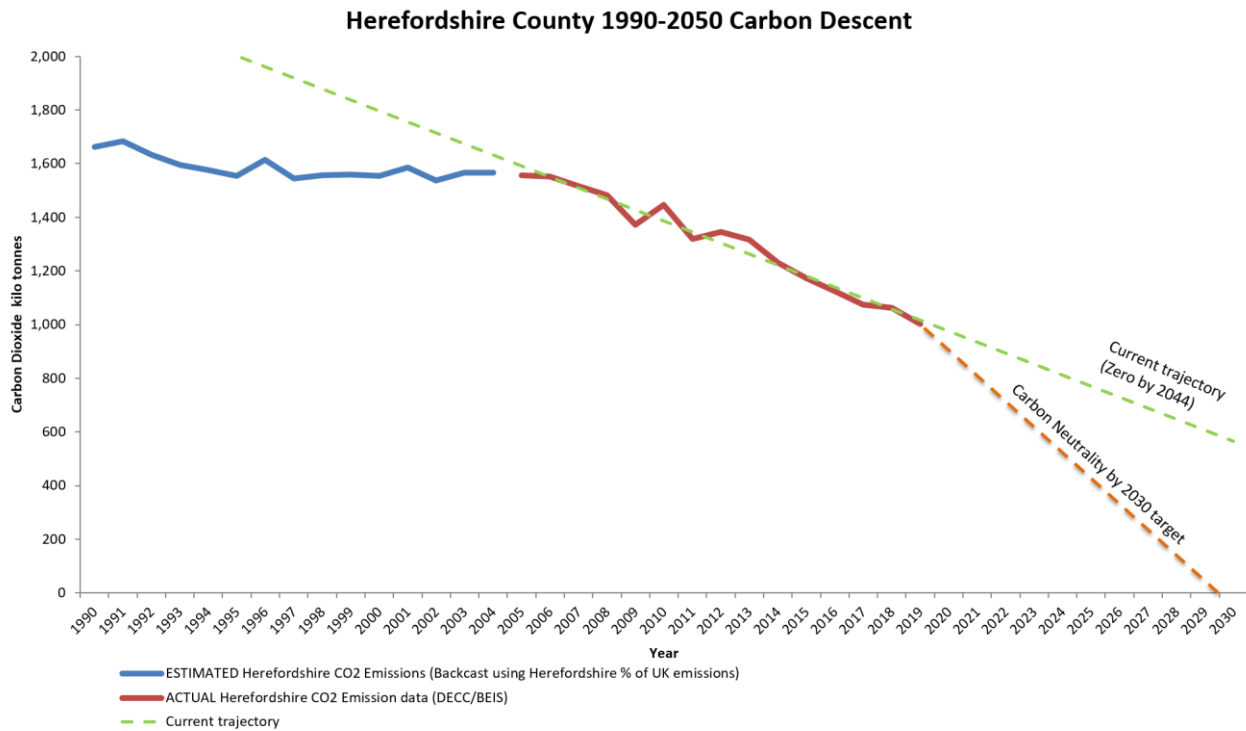
The below chart illustrates Herefordshire’s current carbon emission split and the areas of focus for the Bromyard MTIP to support the Herefordshire’s journey to net zero.



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 England¹, a low wage economy (19% below the national average²), a deficit of higher level skills (41.4% of the population has NVQ level 4 national average of 43.1%³), an aging population (25% over 65 compared to a 18% nationally), and a significant shortage of labour (2.9% claiming unemployment benefits⁴).

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.

¹ [ONS Regional Differences in Productivity July 2021](#)

² [Understanding Herefordshire ONS data 2019](#)

³ [ONS Population Survey 2020](#)

⁴ [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 Statistics⁵) 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.

⁵ <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

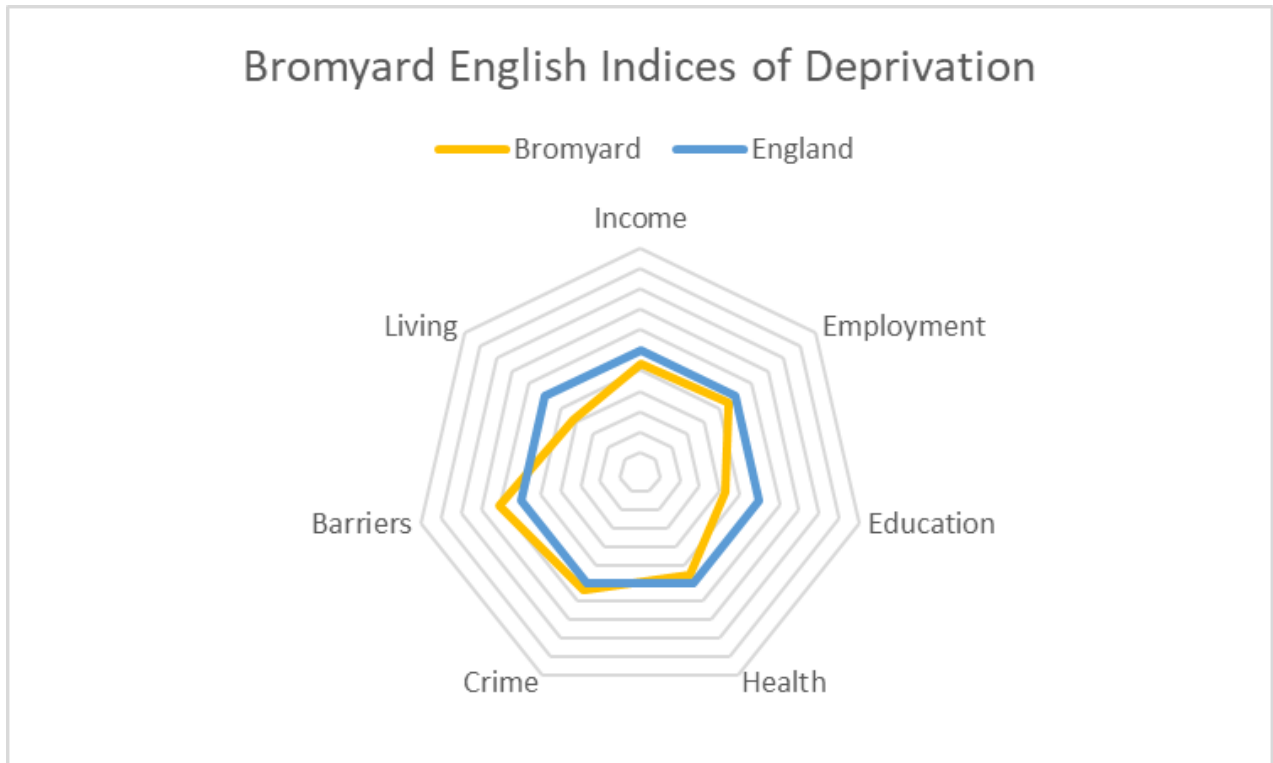
This vision provides the basis for our Town Investment Plan.

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"> 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). 2) Community building and lake on festival site. 3) Reconfiguration of parking provision. 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. 5) Improvement and full utilisation of empty independent retail units (shop front grants included) 6) Public realm improvement – enhancement of environmental quality, by delivering new street furniture, signage, planters etc, in keeping with the town’s heritage 	<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; vertical-align: middle;">£6.2M</td> <td style="text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;">Up to 6 years</td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <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 & the Visitor Economy</i>	Yes						
<i>Town & 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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<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>					
<i>Economy and business</i>	Yes						
<i>Tourism & the Visitor Economy</i>	No						
<i>Town & 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	200m2 new health space 42 j3 obs, £325100,000 turnover per year
<i>Economy and business</i>	Yes		
<i>Tourism & the Visitor Economy</i>	Yes		
<i>Town & 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		

Greenway			
<p>Phase 1: Permissive footpath along the disused railway line from Bromyard – A44 at Linton adjacent to proposed festival site.</p> <p>Phase 2: Create a multi-user track for walkers, cyclists, equestrians and people with limited mobility along the same route.</p> <p>Phase 3: Create similar multi-user track from Bromyard to Rowden benefitting Town Centre businesses with potential.</p>	<p><i>Cost and Matched Funding</i></p> <p>£700k</p>	<p><i>How Long to Deliver? From When to When?</i></p> <p>2021-2028</p>	<p><i>Outputs (eg jobs created, floorspace created/reused, businesses supported, skills developed)</i></p> <p>1000 tourists per year at £70 per tourist - £70,000 per annum</p>
<i>Economy and business</i>	Yes		
<i>Tourism & the Visitor Economy</i>	Yes		
<i>Town & Civic amenities</i>	Yes		
Demand Analysis	On-going investigations with the proponents of this Herefordshire wide scheme in the context of its Bromyard components.		
Funding Sources	Central Government grant funding; private sector crowd-funding		

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 & the Visitor Economy</i>	No		
<i>Town & 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

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: ONS¹). 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.

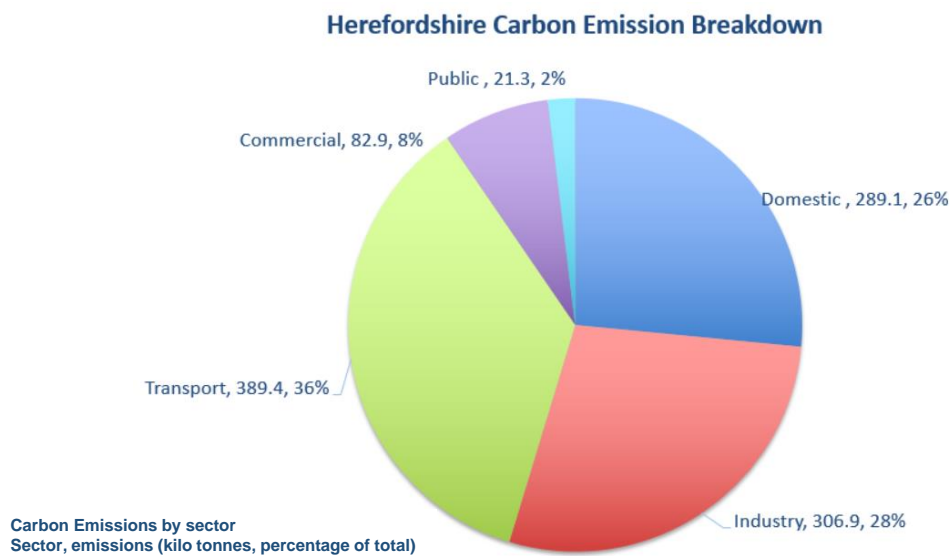
¹ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossdomesticproductgdp/articles/coronavirusandtheimpactonoutputintheeconomy/december2020>

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.

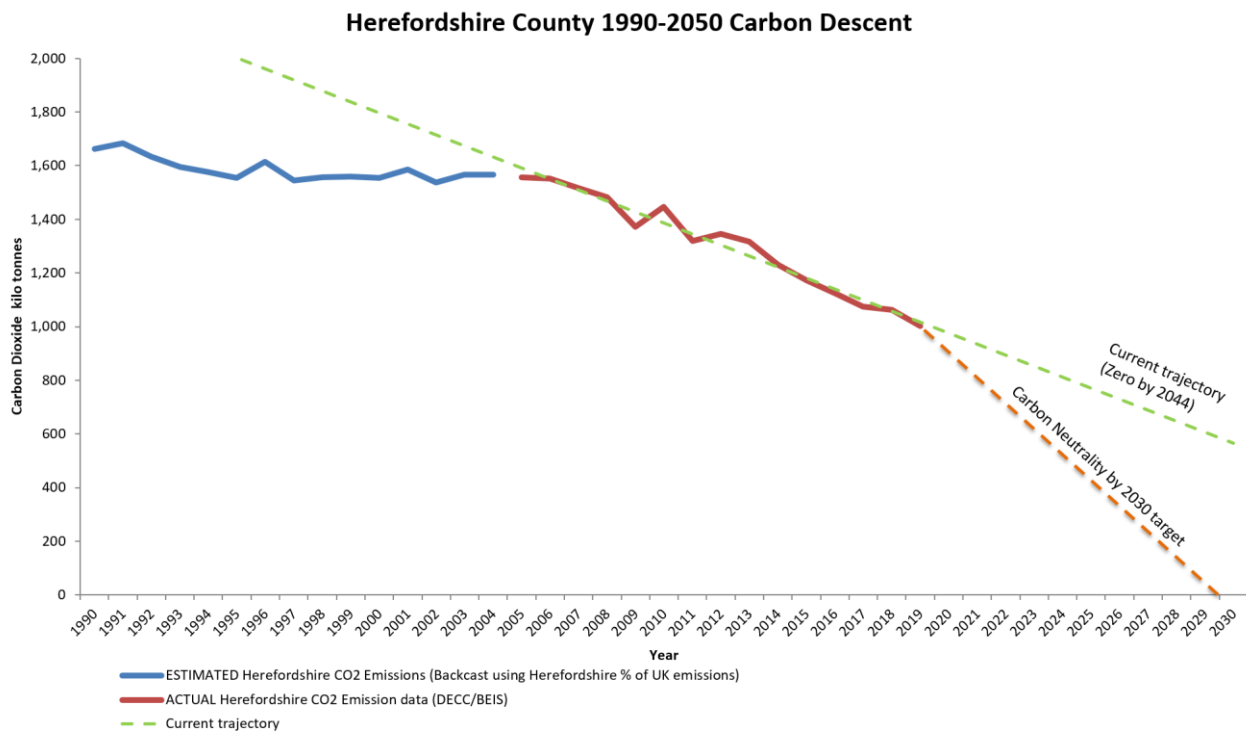
Further to these declarations the council approved the ambitious new target to become zero carbon and nature rich by 2030.

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 England², a low wage economy (19% below the national average³), a deficit of higher level skills (41.4% of the population has NVQ level 4 national average of 43.1%⁴), an aging population (25% over 65 compared to a 18% nationally), and a significant shortage of labour (2.9% claiming unemployment benefits⁵).

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

² [ONS Regional Differences in Productivity July 2021](#)

³ [Understanding Herefordshire ONS data 2019](#)

⁴ [ONS Population Survey 2020](#)

⁵ [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:

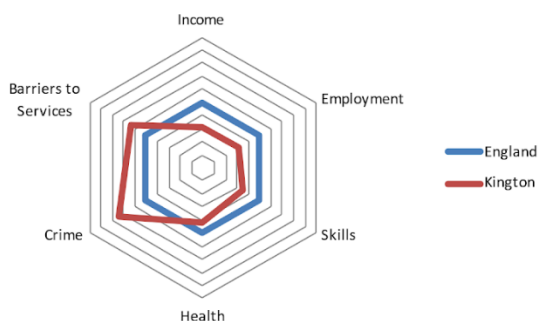
- Weak visitor economy vs UK average;
- Low Income levels;
- Low Skills Base;
- Only less deprived than the England average in terms of Crime and Barriers to Services;
- Smallest of the market towns. Population just over 3,000 with a higher proportion of over 65s than the national average;
- Significantly 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: Kington High Street Regeneration					
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism & the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town & 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 constraints 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>Next Steps 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			Cost	Timescale	Outputs
<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>			Estimated £2million	5 years	New joint Police and Fire station New homes
Demand Analysis	A feasibility study has recently been completed by consultants Jacobs - for land acquisition and development				
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
		Some ongoing subsidy will be required for new bus routes or services		New bus routes/more frequent 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
		Approx. £200,000 per annum based on discussions with proposer – revenue projects fund	Up to 5years to establish
Demand Analysis	Report and proposal developed by CPRE		Increased visitor numbers
Potential funding sources	Natural England, Central Government,		Enhanced natural and built environment
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	
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

Name of Head of Service for area being assessed	Roger Allonby
Directorate	Economy and place

Individual(s) completing this assessment	Name	Job Title
	Rob Ewing	Programme Manager
Date assessment completed	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"/>	Staff
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Patients	<input type="checkbox"/>	Communities
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Carers	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other Local businesses and their employees
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Visitors		
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 positive impact	Potential neutral impact	Potential negative 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.
When will you review this EIA? (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.

Signature of person completing EIA	Rob Ewing
Date signed	10.09.2021

Support for Market Towns – Since MTIPs Adopted

Welcome Back Funding: Town Council Activities

Town Council Project / Activity	How activities were delivered and budget
Bromyard	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvements to public rights of way / cycling routes; working with private landowners and highways to develop potential enhancements to public routes with low intervention strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flowerpots in alleyways – (find irrigation solutions) Murals on walls and paving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town Council commissioned Rose Regeneration find solutions within time frame to enhance public alleyways and routes working with highways and property teams – low intervention, low maintenance and no infrastructure costs. Commission artists, graphic designers to work with mural artists on scheme. Team to project manage. (£20,000 from Great Places to Visit Fund = £30,000 Total)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-imagine the historic market square with a new brand and narrative for Bromyard to address its history, food, culture and current food and rural life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rose Regeneration commissioned a marketing and events company to lead on a programme of market events, food festival marketing and promotion of the spring and summer of events to attract tourists. (£20,000 from Great Places to Visit Fund = £30,000 Total)
Kington	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of lights, banners and infrastructure for events and festivals but specifically for Christmas 2021 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Installation of lights, banners and supporting infrastructure in the High Street and nearby streets, centred on the Market Hall in the centre of Kington
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide marketing support for winter food festival 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through the provision of leaflets, banners, posters, online marketing activities including pre event marketing for events such as the Makers Festival, Walking Festival and Kington Festival
Ledbury	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hire of LED Christmas Trees in 2021 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50 LED Christmas Trees will be hung on the Hanging Basket hooks around the town
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supply of Christmas tree in cemetery chapel for Candle Lighting event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8ft Christmas Tree to be purchased from local Christmas Tree supplier
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hire of gazebos for use by Market Stall holders at the Christmas event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Installed gazebos
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To purchase 6 x lamp post projecting banners and infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Installation of infrastructure to 6 lamp posts on the way into Ledbury
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintenance to Bye Street Toilets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carried out maintenance to the Bye Street Toilets to enable them to be reopened for use by residents and visitors to Ledbury
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of additional Covid signage and hand sanitisers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Film / Book themed Saturday 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linked the event to World Book Day (30/03/2022) and Ledbury's cultural heritage Hold a fancy dress competition Hold story telling events in venues around the town
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hire of Disney Characters and other expenditure for Christmas Lights Switch on event and Late night shopping event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hire of character and singer for Christmas Events

Town Council Project / Activity	How activities were delivered and budget
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trees and shrubs and planters for Ledbury in Bloom and Town Trail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Ledbury in Bloom to provide new planters around the town to supplement and in some cases add to those already provided in the town but in need of replacement. Both organisations have been contacted in respect of this project and are working together to establish what is required (£5,000 from Great Places to Visit Fund)
Leominster	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Bus Station Project</u>: Greening Leominster's Bus Station: work in collaboration with Leominster in Bloom to improve Leominster bus station through planting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permission for works requested from Herefordshire Council. A works schedule and maintenance plan implemented in collaboration with Leominster in Bloom. Works will included: Watering and maintenance work will be undertaken by Leominster Town Council.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Business Liaison and Support Project</u>: Leominster Independent Shops – promotional event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruited a Project Manager to carry out this vital project.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Temporary Toilets</u>: Providing additional temporary toilet facilities in Central Car Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through an external contractor.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Extra cleaning</u>: Additional Street Cleaning on Saturdays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17 x 4 hours = 68 additional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Through the wardrobe event</u>: free Children's Event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town Council staff and councillors delivered this free event in the town council building and garden.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Tree works in Leominster Town Centre</u>: pollarding of 4 trees on Etnam Street and 4 trees on West Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A tree surgeon completed works – including appropriate traffic management
Ross-on-Wye	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town & Country Trail maintenance; Improvements to public rights of way/ cycling routes. To carry out works on existing infrastructure and improve this heavily used Trail. The scope of works will be to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Scrape trail ○ Install new stone ○ Clear ditches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work delivered through BBLP/ Highways Authority as part of the Community Commissioning Model

Other Support for Market Towns

Town Council Project / Activity	How activities were delivered and budget
Bromyard	
<p>UK Shared Prosperity Funding</p> <p>Cultural Grants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bromyard Local History Society received a grant of £9,000 for its Food Stories of Bromyard exhibition. Bromyard Community Arts received a grant of £4,582 for its Arts for Everyone programme. <p>Community Grants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conquest Theatre Trust Ltd received £8,543 to upgrade the theatre lighting. Herefordshire Young and Young Adult Carers CIC, based as Bringsty, received £14,712 to support young carers with clubs and outings. <p>Festival & Events Grants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nozstock Ltd. received £15,000 towards Nozstock the Hidden Valley Festival. Bromyard Christmas Lights Association Ltd. received £11,850 towards Bromyard Christmas Lights Switch-On Event Parades, Entertainment and Local Business Promotion. Bromyard Folk Festival Limited received £6,621 towards the Bromyard Folk Festival. Bromyard Pride C.I.C. received £1,472.71 towards the Bromyard Pride Festival. 	
<p>Section 106 Investment</p> <p>Transport & Highways - £106,182.50</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pedestrian improvements along Tenbury Road from the Porthouse Rise housing estate down to the Porthouse Industrial Park. Work consists of footway widening and tactile paving adjustments to help improve pedestrian safety on the route into the town centre <p>Sports - £103,960.37</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting Bromyard Bowmen to deliver a replacement roof at their facility Bromyard Rifle Club to deliver improved kitchen and toilet facilities <p>Education - £36,900.57</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting Queen Elizabeth High School to install a third generation synthetic sports facility <p>Wetland phosphate mitigation - £20,847.00</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using funding to continue to manage the Luston wetland and invest in further phosphate mitigation schemes 	
<p>Highways Investment</p> <p>Approx. £800K of Highways works in and around Bromyard including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A44 between Bromyard and Bringsty B4203 by the Football Club B4214 by the Rock Caravan Park/ Rugby Club Bromyard Downs road past Brockhampton Primary School 	

Town Council Project / Activity	How activities were delivered and budget
Bromyard Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal reconfiguration to swap the gym and library has been working well Investment in new gym equipment at the start of 2024 Recent roof leaks have been repaired and the building is fully operational 	
Kington	
UK Shared Prosperity Funding <p>Cultural Grants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kington Museum & History Centre received a grant of £2,336 for new 'Through the Ages' exhibition. Caldah Innovations received a grant of £8,996 to develop a film project exploring creativity as a means to overcoming grief and loss. <p>Community Grants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kington Youth Hub CIC received £10,826 towards employing a Youth worker. Open Arms Kington received £9,993 towards community engagement & outreach with young people. Kington Cricket Club received £24,999 towards a replacement roof. Kington Town Council received £8,977 to upgrade toilet facilities with baby-change & accessibility facilities. <p>Festival & Events Grants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kington Horse Show & Agricultural Society received a grant of £10,000 towards the rejuvenation of the Kington Show. 	
Section 106 Investment <p>Highways & Transport - £54,940.40</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using to potentially support road safety/ crossing infrastructure, (subject to addressing safety concerns). <p>Off-Site Play & Open Space - £1,117.02</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with Kington Pollinators, a local community group, to provide biodiversity and natural play improvements at the play facility. <p>Wetland phosphate mitigation - £62,580</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using the funding to continue to manage the Luston Wetland and invest in further phosphate mitigation schemes. 	
Highways Investment TBC	

Town Council Project / Activity	How activities were delivered and budget
Ledbury	
<p>UK Shared Prosperity Funding</p> <p>Cultural Grants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ledbury Town Council received £9,000 for its Hidden Gems project. • Ledbury Places received £17,400 over two years for its Heritage Education Programme. • Ledbury Amateur Dramatic Society received a grant of £7,625 to support its marketing and promotion of the Market Theatre. • Ledbury Poetry received £14,000 over two years for its Community Development Programme, including its Creative Pathways in the Shire project and its School Holiday Programme. <p>Community Grants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Megan Baker House Ltd - Conductive education for motor disorders - £15,000 • Ledbury Community Hub - Youth mentoring, free meals, young family support, activities by and for young people - £15,000 • Ledbury Food Bank - Provision of emergency food and other essentials - £7,250 • Ledbury Community Hub - Meeting room, improving accessibility and IT upgrade - £11,160.16 <p>Festivals & Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ledbury Carnival Association - CARNIVAL GOES GOLD, celebrating the 50th consecutive Carnival in Ledbury - £7,500 • Ledbury Food Group - Ledbury Celebration 2024 - £974.17 • Ledbury Town Council - Ledbury's Christmas Festival - £2,500 • Ledbury Poetry - Ledbury Poetry 2024 Summer Festival: Children, Young People & Families Strand - £9,999 	
Section 106 Investment	
<p>Transport & Highways - £41,412.84</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution going towards the new implementation of 2 x bus shelters and associated groundworks for Martins Way and the Hawk Rise Estate. Delivery expected before the end of March 2025. • Partial spend was from previous Ledbury weight limit feasibility work completed earlier in the year. Remaining budget to be scoped but potentially put towards pedestrian improvements in the area. <p>Off-site play/open space - £75,160</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheme to be agreed with key stakeholders: Both Herefordshire Council and Ledbury Town Council own play areas within scope. Officers to liaise with Ward Members re: priorities and Ledbury Town Council. <p>Sports - £285,304.36</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project underway at Ledbury Rugby Club to provide new female and age range changing rooms. • Working group established to progress delivery of a relocated football club in accordance with the Ledbury Neighbourhood Development Plan. <p>Education - £664,833.60</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A feasibility study has been commissioned to Quattro Design, in liaison with the school. The outcomes of which will derive expansion options and cost analysis. 	

Town Council Project / Activity	How activities were delivered and budget
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with Locally Encouraging All to Flourish (LEAF) on the delivery of underfloor heating at St Katherine's Hall with regards to the youth contributions. <p>Primary Care - £19,896</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointment of Design Services is underway to complete a feasibility study to provide an assessment of land assembly options and feasibility cost planning to explore the possibility to develop a shared 'One Public Estate' facility in Ledbury. <p>Recycling - £9,480.84</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purchase of waste and recycling bins for the development. 	
<p>Highways Investment</p> <p>TBC</p>	
<p>Leominster</p>	
<p>UK Shared Prosperity Funding</p> <p>Cultural Grants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leominster Town Council received nearly £9,000 for their Leominster Winter Wonderland projects Leominster Priory received £9,000 for the Priory 900 project. Leominster Cultural Consortium has received £9,000 to enable more cultural activities to take place in the town. Golden Threads CIC received £9,000 to expand their health and wellbeing programme (yoga, dance movement etc.) Leominster Museum received £3,460 for its Sharing Songs and Stories exhibition Leominster Cultural consortium is a key delivery partner in the UKSPF/ Arts Council funded Our Place project and Leominster will benefit from funded on-the-ground cultural programming from 2024-2027. <p>Community Grants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Halo Leominster Leisure Centre received £24,999 to refurbish and upgrade the outdoor public tennis/ network courts. Leominster Community Centre received £11,544 to refurbish and improve accessibility to the centre. Leominster Town Council received £14,210 to undertake a community outreach programme for the Barons Cross and Ridgemoor areas. <p>Festival & Events Grants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leominster Festival Society received £15,000 towards Leominster Roars Grand Finale. PCC of St Peter & St Paul, Leominster received £15,000 towards Threads through Creation. Herefordshire Aero Club Limited received £2,500 towards Shobdon Airfest 24. Leominster Town Council received £5,000 towards Leominster Winter Wonderland 2024. Friends of Mortimer Forest received £1,900 towards Festival of The Forest. 	
<p>Section 106 Investment</p> <p>Transport & Highways – £206,413</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and delivery of the Leominster south zebra crossing and potential revised junction arrangements in this area. 	

Town Council Project / Activity	How activities were delivered and budget
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Persimmon Barons Cross housing development will deliver further direct highway mitigation measures and transport contributions. <p>Off-site play/open space – £80, 967.96 Ropewalk Avenue play area has been asset transferred to Leominster Town Council. We are working with the Town Council on the delivery of new equipment.</p> <p>Sports – £2,188</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> supporting Halo Leisure on phase 2 of a project to deliver improved lighting at the sports centre. <p>Education – £19, 916.44</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> supporting Leominster Primary School to deliver phase 2 of their autism hub and to install an outdoor canopy classroom. <p>Wetland phosphate mitigation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> using the funding to continue to manage the Luston Wetland and invest in further phosphate mitigation schemes 	
<p>Highways Investment</p> <p>Resurfacing (£487k since 2023)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> West Street, Burgess Street, South South, Worcester Road, Ryelands Road, Enterprise Way <p>Highway Improvements (2024/25)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgrade of pedestrian crossing facility at Westbury Street (planned for March 2025) Footway improvements along Ryelands Road and Etnam Street £300k support for Heritage Action Zone works <p>Town Council Grants (2024/25)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> £3k Public Rights of Way grant £5k Drainage grant <p>Remaining priorities for 2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pedestrian crossing at Westbury Street Public Rights of Way and Drainage Grants 	
<p>Ross-on-Wye</p>	
<p>UK Shared Prosperity Funding</p> <p>Cultural Grants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ross-on-Wye Town Council received a grant of £7,000 for its Heritage Trail app. CreateRoss received a grant of £18,000 over two years for the Museum without Walls (AR/ Virtual Reality History Trail). Ross-on-Wye Choral Society received a grant of £6,000 to improve concert performances. <p>Community Grants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ross-on-Wye Community Development Trust received a grant of £14,763 for a part-time salary, volunteer recruitment, community volunteer celebration. 	

Town Council Project / Activity	How activities were delivered and budget
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ross Juniors Football Club received a grant of £4,823 towards disability football outreach, visits to care home residents and slipper football. • Ross-on-Wye Town Council received a grant of £19,199.33 towards playground equipment for older children. <p>Festival & Events Grants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ross-on-Wye Town Council received a grant of £10,000 towards the Equinox Festival. • Linton Festival CIC received a grant of £2,650 towards the Linton Festival 2024. • Ross Beer & Cider Festival received a grant of £1,000 towards the Ross Beer & Cider Festival 2024. 	
<p>Section 106 Investment</p> <p>Transport & Highways - £931,715.70</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New full, raised signalised junction of Ledbury Road and Three Crosses Road to provide safer pedestrian crossing locations around the John Kyrle High School • New TRO with movement of 30mph limit to encompass the new Orchards housing estate, new signalised crossing and relocation of existing bus stops along the A40 in Hildersley • Design and construction for the addition of 17 x sets of dropped crossings with associated tactile arrangements over Ross South <p>Sports - £64,534.18</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ross skate park re-development • Ross tennis centre – tennis court replacement and facilities upgrade <p>Education - £1,140,33</p> <p>Library - £1,980</p> <p>Primary Care - £51,928.71</p> <p>Recycling - £16,218.60</p> <p>Affordable housing - £496,722.30</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase of dwelling to convert to affordable housing in Ross on Wye 	
<p>Highways Investment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £8 million county wide surfacing programme • £700k+ investment completed in Ross-on-Wye <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Broad Street (remedial works to be undertaken at Tarmac's expense in Spring 2025) ○ Gloucester Road ○ Alton Road ○ Archenfield Road ○ Station Approach 	