

Invest Herefordshire

Herefordshire's Economic Plan



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1. Introduction and Purpose

HM Government is pursuing economic growth with a renewed drive in a direct response to the recent recession and general economic downturn. Through agencies such as LEP's the government is looking to "rebalance" the economy to reflect the need to draw on private sector investment and jobs to build a sustainable recovery.

In an ever increasing competitive market place Herefordshire needs to stand out, to have its own identity, to be able to influence government and inform the direction of partners such as the Marches LEP. To do this we need to be certain of our priorities and direction, to understand our issues and opportunities, and to be coordinated and ready to take advantage.

Herefordshire is already rising to the challenge. Recent public and private sector projects demonstrate the ambition and confidence which exists in the County, the Old Market development, Enterprise Zone status, the roll out of Superfast Broadband, housing development at Hildersley in Ross, private sector investment from companies such as Cargill, Tyrrells, Heineken and Weston's, the Oval regeneration, all demonstrate a growing momentum within the County.

However, how can we go above and beyond what is currently planned, how can we identify new opportunities, how do we react quickly to investment proposals, and how can we build a picture that is coordinated, flexible, stretching but achievable? To achieve the changes required to make a significant difference within Herefordshire a new approach is required where all aspects of the Herefordshire economy participate and contribute their knowledge and resources.

This new approach takes the form of a **Herefordshire Economic Plan**

The Economic Plan will be ambitious but deliverable, it will build on the county's recent successes without sacrificing the county's character in delivering new infrastructure, working in partnership and recognises that greater focus on targeted, coordinated investment is the only route to the effective provision of economic change.

The Master Plan will detail clear projects and priorities that, in combination, will enable the economic growth required to deliver a resilient county and act as an attractive investment proposition. We will use the plan to:

1. Identify priority projects that can improve conditions for future economic growth and a higher value economy;
2. Guide investment to and within the County, illustrating its potential;
3. Act as a vehicle to raise the profile of the County regionally, nationally and internationally;
4. Inform our negotiations with government, partner Local Authorities and crucially the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership;
5. Build upon the statutory policy framework, including the Local Development Framework; and

In all reality Herefordshire began this process some time ago and has already reaped tangible benefits. We are now taking this approach and process to a wider audience and inviting others to help deliver an intriguing economic and financial proposition. The opportunities and challenges are clear, the proposition may be unique but our track record and desire demonstrates that it is deliverable.

2. A History of Delivery

The Master Plan will build upon a proven track record of success and achievement. Combining economic development, employment and skills, with infrastructure, strategic transport and quality of life we will deliver a proposal that caters for all aspects of economic growth.

Herefordshire is an entrepreneurial county, there is; a significant proportion (insert figure) of the population who are self-employed, disproportionately high levels of patent registrations, and good business survival rates. The county's business base is both diverse and healthy.

The core business sectors are manufacturing, defence and security, food and drink production, and agriculture. A number of global companies operate alongside well known British brands; Cadbury, Heineken, Tyrells, Cargill, Weston's Cider, Kingspan, all of which have interests in the county.

Much has been achieved in recent years. Hereford in particular is a vibrant, growing city; with its new £100m retail and leisure development partnering a successful Enterprise Zone and emerging proposals for a new University, the future is very bright and offers firm foundations upon which to expand even further.

The Council is proactively pursuing the county's continuing growth. The recently adopted Core Strategy will deliver 16,500 new homes, new infrastructure to reduce congestion and improve access to markets, and sufficient employment land to meet the needs of a growing business base.

The keys to success will be new highway and transport infrastructure that enables the development of industrial and housing schemes; a business led skills program that ensures firms have employees with the necessary skills, and access for all to superfast broadband to take advantage of the increasing opportunities offered by the internet.

The economic game changer will be the creation of the new NMITE University that offers a new approach to learning based on real-world problem solving through the blending of high quality engineering, design, liberal arts and humanities with communication and employability. Herefordshire will develop the opportunity to retain graduates with skills targeted at the growth sectors of the future.

Ideally situated at the heart of the UK, south west of Birmingham with the Welsh border to the west and Worcestershire to the east, Herefordshire represents a part of the United Kingdom rich in heritage, culture enterprise, landscapes and wildlife, with significant tourism potential.

Despite its relatively rural location the county benefits from a direct high speed rail link to London, Manchester and Cardiff, in addition to hourly services to Birmingham. The well placed transport links don't end there, Birmingham, Bristol and Cardiff airports are all accessible within an hour and half drive, giving access to a host of European and further afield destinations.

Successes to date

The Master Plan concept builds on several years of ambitious growth and economic development planning led by Herefordshire Council and supported by key partners, investors and businesses. During the last five years the county has been successful in:

1. Securing Enterprise Zone status for the largest business park within the county. Now with 45% of the available land built upon or sold the Zone has made a significant start towards creating its target of over 4,000 jobs.
2. Over x business supported with grants or business advice.
3. Opening a new £100m retail and leisure expansion of the city centre. Anchored by a Debenhams and Waitrose, the British Land funded scheme is fully let 20 months after opening, has created over 700 jobs, and has been the catalyst behind Hereford moving 38 places up the national retail ranking list.
4. Securing over £43m from central government for road infrastructure schemes which will bring forward several hundred city centre homes, and form the first section of a Hereford bypass.
5. Working with BT in delivered superfast Broadband to 55,000 homes and businesses across the County. By the end of 2016 90% of homes and businesses will be able to access fibre enabled Broadband.
6. Facilitating the building x number of new homes over the past three years.

The council has a proven track record of acting as an enabler, and has demonstrated its ability to make conditions ripe for investment. The council and partners believe in the growth of Herefordshire, for the county to be truly successful businesses and investors need to share that belief.



The economic plan is the start of our project designed to show that Herefordshire is open for business. We want people to be talking about the county, to be excited about our future and to come and see what we have to offer. The direction and structure given by the economic plan will inspire confidence in the business and investment community to the extent that they see Herefordshire as a high quality investment location.

Herefordshire is without doubt one of the best places to live in the country and with all the investment being made it is becoming the right choice for business too.





3. Challenges and Opportunities

As with any county or region there are challenges affecting the economic and social character of Herefordshire. The Master Plan acknowledges these challenges and aims to alleviate the impact they have on our economy and society through a series of projects that will each address the identified challenges.



Challenge 1 – Low wage economy

Herefordshire has very low unemployment, x% as of Jan 2016, finding jobs is not an issue within the county, however in 2016 Herefordshire finds itself within the bottom (x%) of local authority areas across Great Britain in terms of average weekly wage. This is largely a legacy of an economy built upon agriculture, food and drink processing, and manufacturing, it impacts on the resident population's disposable income, social mobility and living standards. Our solution to solve these social and economic issues is to aim to become a higher value economy with a focus on knowledge intensive employment and businesses.

Given the low benchmark position there is scope for significant wage level improvement, even a move up to the regional average will generate significant benefit in terms of wage levels and increased disposable income. Emerging evidence suggests that the low unemployment rate is beginning to pressurise wage levels as employers attempt to secure their workforce in a growing economy.

Challenge 2 – Skills and Higher Education

Herefordshire has specific skills challenges, with 10% of the working age population having no qualifications (8.6% nationally) and 16 areas in the county are amongst the 25% most deprived in England for adult skills. Local engineering and manufacturing companies are struggling to recruit people with the right skills, and recruitment is a significant challenge for the health and care sector.

The evidence is clear that increasing the level of skills in the workforce is fundamental to sustainable long term economic growth. As the national economy moves to a model characterised by high performing and high value added sectors, this in turn requires more people to be employed in higher level jobs with the skills to match.

It is therefore vital that we ensure that young people have the skills that they need to find work and that people are supported throughout their lives to upskill and achieve their potential. We need to be empowered to be responsive to changing and emerging business and skills needs. We need to be able to shape the skills system to meet economic and social needs. To be more effective and efficient we need to integrate provision at a local level.



Challenge 3 – Infrastructure and capacity

Large elements of the county are a considerable distance from the national motorway network, suffer from unreliable or slow Broadband connectivity, and patchy mobile phone coverage. In the Digital Age any under provision of electronic communication can be as big an inhibitor to growth as the lack of road, rail or utility infrastructure.

The Council is proposing a significant growth in housing and employment sites, and whilst infrastructure capacity is a not a feature unique to Herefordshire it is recognised that this growth can only be accommodated if the relating infrastructure is installed. The challenge requires this infrastructure to be in place in time to facilitate the growth and to bring confidence to the market that development can proceed.

The principle infrastructure constraints required to accommodate the level of proposed growth relate to the road infrastructure principally in and around Hereford, although with notable issues to also be addressed in Leominster, the capacity to treat waste water and mitigate phosphate discharge, and the provision of suitable broadband speeds to meet the needs of businesses and residents.

It is important that the development of an infrastructure package combines to address the requirements for a modern economy – ease of movement, readily available labour supply, availability of employment land, and access to markets, backed up by an enhanced quality of life offer incorporating modern retail, sporting and leisure opportunities.



Challenge 4 – GVA

Gross Value Added (GVA) represents a useful proxy for productivity. GVA measures the contribution to the economy of each individual producer, industry or sector in the United Kingdom and is a headline measure used to monitor economic performance.

Over the last decade, GVA in Herefordshire increased by 42.5 per cent; higher than regionally (36.3 per cent increase) but lower than nationally (43.8 per cent increase).

When measured per head of population, Herefordshire's GVA in 2013 was £17,900, highlighting lower levels of economic productivity when compared to both regional (£19,400) and national (£24,000) GVA.

When measuring the contribution to GVA of different industries within the local economy in 2012, 'production' (90 per cent of which is manufacturing)

was the highest locally at 21 per cent. Other high contributors were 'public administration, education and health' (18 per cent) and 'distribution, transport, accommodation and food' (17 per cent). Agriculture has the most significantly higher contribution to GVA locally (8 per cent) than nationally (1 per cent)

Meanwhile, finance and insurance', 'business services', 'information and communication' and 'real estate' made a significantly lower contribution locally (20 per cent of GVA) than both regionally (30 per cent) and nationally (38 per cent). This knowledge economy, founded on technological progress, advanced products and highly skilled workers, has driven economic growth for the last 40 years. Yet these sectors make a significantly lower contribution in Herefordshire than the more traditional, and shrinking, sectors of agriculture, public administration, and manufacturing.

The Herefordshire economy need re-shaping towards more knowledge-intensive ways of working – towards activities which create value from exploiting knowledge rather than physical assets and manual labour. There is a need to increase wages by creating knowledge intensive jobs, supporting knowledge intensive businesses, improve communications, and by attracting highly skilled employees by offering – opportunities for progression, choice and competition for jobs combined with a high quality of life.

4. Our Vision and Objectives – Measuring Success

There are various compelling reasons why we have chosen to develop an Economic Master Plan - to give direction, to build confidence, to attract inward investment, to present opportunities, but ultimately it is because we have a vision **to create the right conditions for economic growth and to move towards a higher value economy.**

There is recognition that growing the Herefordshire economy will provide benefit in the form of maintaining or increasing living standards, will assist in the tackling of poverty and increasing wage levels, can encourage investment leading to a virtuous cycle of further successes, and lastly growth can assist in the provision of improved public services. The Master Plan will help identify those conditions which will deliver economic growth.

In Herefordshire's case, it is proposed that growth should be focused on activity that produces a higher value economy. In an ever increasingly competitive environment the Herefordshire economy should turn towards activities which create value from exploiting knowledge whether in the manufacturing, leisure, or service sector.

The Master Plan will set out the ambition and conditions where there will be reward for innovation, incentives to grow research and development, and the ability to secure higher wages for increasingly skilled jobs.



Case study – Madley – BT’s UK Satellite Station

First commissioned in 1978, Madley, south east of Hereford, is BT’s sole operational UK satellite ground station, with over 65 antennas ranging in diameter from 90cm to 32m. Via these, Madley provides continuous access to more than 15 satellites spanning two thirds of the planet.

Madley transmits and receives a range of different services, including International News as it happens, Sporting Events, Corporate networks, Disaster Relief / Recovery, Internet gateway services, and voice comms. BT control and monitor point-to-point services, Broadcast distribution and contribution as well as self-contained data networks for specific customers.

Madley, as home to the BT Design & Delivery Teams, 24x7 Operations Teams, 2nd line support team as well as other key members of BT’s satellite community, is regarded as BT’s centre of Satcom excellence. The teams work together extremely closely, combining to provide exceptional collaboration in order to fully support our customers and the services provided.

As a site, BT Madley is secure with both resilience and diversity in terms of power systems and terrestrial backhauling. In addition to satellite services, the site is utilised as a true gateway for global connectivity via links to BT’s cable stations and BT Tower, providing a key link in BT’s worldwide fibre networks.

The site continues to be at the forefront of technology and personnel are involved in major BT initiatives. Madley is core to BT’s long term strategies and business sustainability. As such, the site operations are ready, willing and able to expand, not just in the areas of Satcom related activities, but also in terms of Data Centre housing and training schools.

Master Plan Objectives

It is the intended strategy of the Economic Plan to create the right conditions for economic growth and to move towards a higher value economy, to enable this aim to be achieved the Master Plan will initially focus on delivering to the following set of Objectives:

Theme	Headline Objective
Business	Create the conditions to encourage: new business start-ups, an increase in productivity and GVA, higher value employment and greater innovation.
Learn	To increase the range of HE provision and improve the balance between business demand and local supply for skills and qualifications.
Live	To offer a broader range of homes and jobs combined with a greater quality of life.
Movement and accessibility	To improve the connectivity of people and business to jobs and markets.
Visit	To develop a broader range of visitor and leisure attractions and increase the length of visitor stay and amount of spend.
Market Towns	Enable Market Towns to maximise their role in building thriving, distinctive, service centres supporting their surrounding hinterland and communities.
Environment	Improve competitiveness and growth through energy and resource efficiency and maintain and, where possible, enhance the ecological services from which its people benefit ie Herefordshire's natural capital

Target(s)

- Increase GVA to match the national average, an extra £124m per annum.
 - Create X new businesses by 2031.
 - Create X new jobs by 2031.
- Provide 1,500 HE student places in county by 2025.
 - Increased take up of apprenticeships.
 - Reduction in number of people with no skills to x%.
- Construct 16,500 new houses including 4,800 affordable homes.
 - Increase average wages to match the West Midlands average, an extra £170m per annum countywide.
- 100% of premises having superfast broadband, an additional x properties.
 - Reduction in through Hereford traffic average journey times (A49 to A49) by X minutes.
- Increase the total visitor spend to £X per annum.
 - Increase the total number of annual visits by 10% to over 525, 000.
- Reduce shop vacancy rates to X% in each market town by 2020.
 - Develop a distinctive visitor offer in each of the five market towns.
- Carbon dioxide reduction of 179,000 tonnes by 2021 a saving of £41m.
 - Reduction in the phosphate levels in the river wye to 0.05mg/l.
 - Create at least three large scale landscape projects that boost the county's ecological resilience, attracts visitors, and improve rural livelihoods by 2028

These Objectives will allow us to be strategic in our approach to the growth of the county. By focusing on these objectives the Plan will coordinate a number of individually operated projects into one strategic package of growth, which picks up on the interrelations between the various projects and packages it as a holistic growth strategy.

By deliberately focusing on the identification of projects, the coordination of messages to a number of difference audiences, the influencing of partners and the measurement of success, these Objectives are all requirements of a comprehensive strategic approach to the growth agenda within Herefordshire.

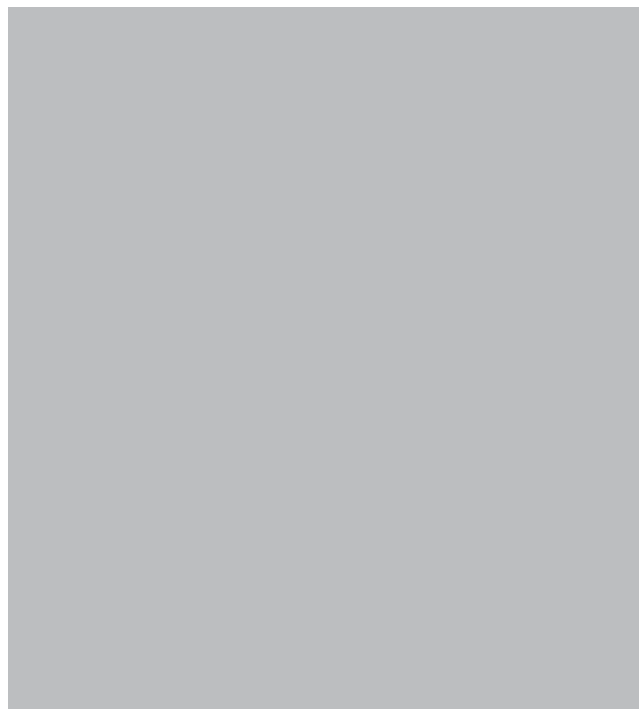
Taken together the Objectives provide a set of guiding principles that will influence the development of the Plan and provide a rational for the identification of key Projects and Targets which make up the specifics of the Plan.

The implementation of the Objectives will generate a series of intended positive strategic economic and social consequences such as increased wages, improved communication between partners, secured investment, and greater engagement with communities across Herefordshire. It is recognised that projects cannot operate in isolation and the focus on these Objectives will provide a framework where projects can interact and contribute towards an overall strategic goal.

Targets

To measure progress and demonstrate the benefit of the Master Plan approach it is important to identify specific Targets which can operate alongside the more strategic Plan Objectives. This will help provide focus for the delivery of the Master Plan and once priority projects have been identified a set of specific Targets will be generated.

The exact composition of these Targets will be determined through the development of a set of Very Important Projects (VIP's), projects that are crucial to the development of Herefordshire. However each particular theme within the Plan currently sets out a series of Targets that will be used as the basis for discussion.



5. The “Plan”

Any successful economy is an amalgamation of sectors, specialisms, and niches, these combine to form an overall picture which gives diversity and resilience. The Master Plan will take a similar approach. We believe that for the Herefordshire economy to be successful the stated Objectives of the Plan need to be focused through a number of **Key Themes**.

All of these Themes could be said to make a significant contribution to the success of the Herefordshire economy and combined would represent a comprehensive picture of activity that shapes and influences its future direction.

The Master Plan has an initial focus on the following Themes:



1 A Great Place for Business	Creating the conditions where business can flourish.
2 A Great Place to Learn	Establishing a high quality learning environment.
3 Great Market Towns	Generating opportunity across the county.
4 A Great Place to Visit	Creating a high quality destination for tourists and locals alike.
5 A Great Place to Live	Building inclusive, diverse communities exploring innovative new development models and housing design.
6 A Great Environment	Recognising and protecting the contribution made by the natural environment.
7 Great movement and accessibility	Addressing the transport and communication challenges of accommodating growth.

Breaking the Master Plan down into these Themes allows for focus of investment and specialisation with differing partners, additionally it demonstrates the contribution towards growth that can be delivered by a variety of sections of the economy.

Within each Theme there are one or two key projects identified. These Very Important Projects, or VIP's, will form the backbone of the Master Plan and their delivery will be critical to the achievement of the Plan's overall Vision and Objectives.

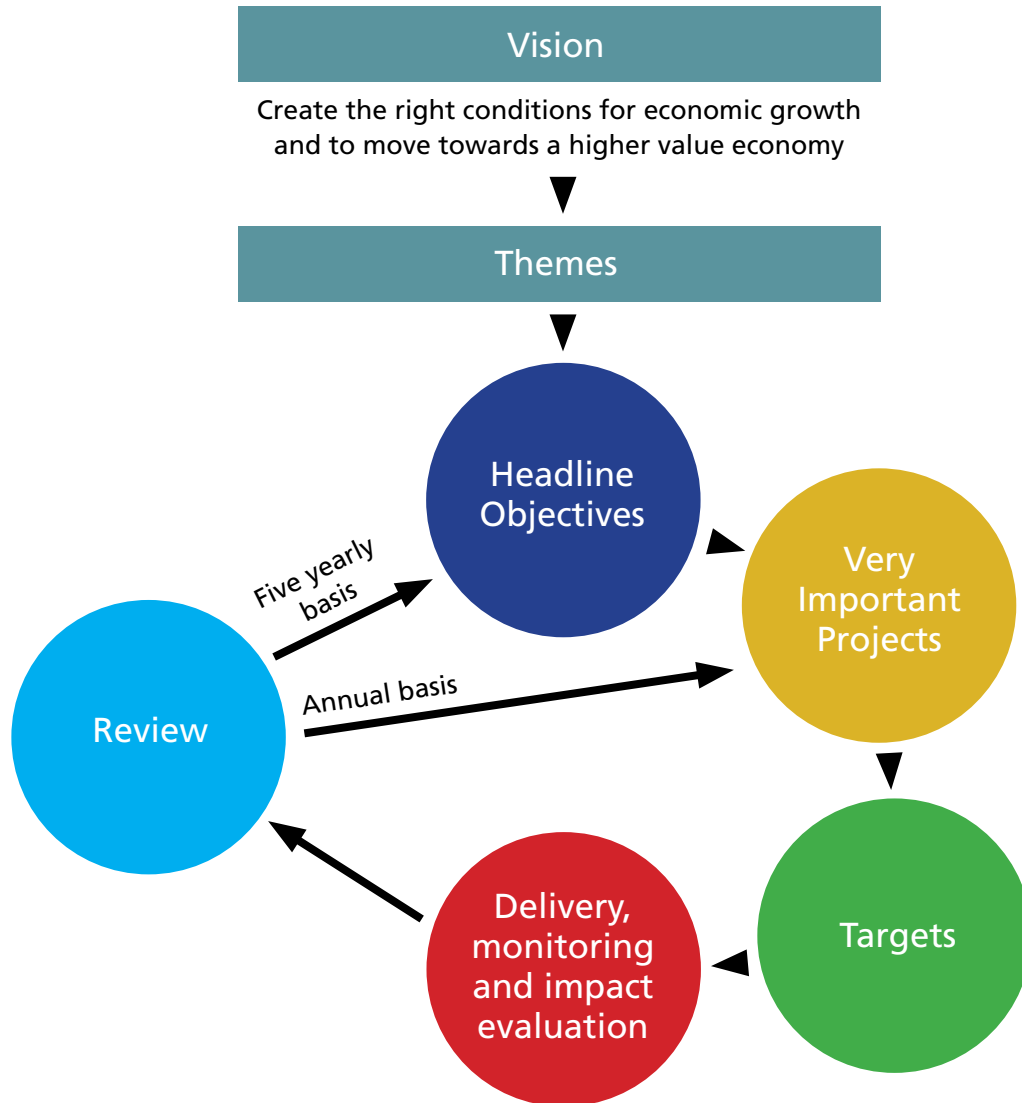
These VIP's are of a scale, impact or importance that they will form the priorities for future investment, whether from the Council's capital programme, the LEP or Government's resources, or utilising external private investment.

The Plan should be viewed as a living document. The content is not static but rather will evolve over time, as VIP's are implemented the next project should be ready to build on the previous investment. Engagement with the Plan is needed from partners and investors to ensure that a pipeline of potential projects is built. This approach will ensure that suitable projects that emerge across the county can easily be "plugged into" the Plan, this will enable swift reactions to changes in demand, market conditions or funding or investment opportunities.

Whilst the projects and VIP's will provide the strategic priorities for investment and delivery, each Theme will also need to provide or agree a set of specific Targets. These Targets will provide a series of success indicators, enable monitoring of the Plan's impact, and enable each project to demonstrate the contribution it brings to the overall Master Plan delivery.



The Plan Process



■ A Great Place for Business

The aim is to transform Herefordshire into a high value, knowledge economy, with a modern and diverse commercial property stock and to be at the forefront of innovation and the development of new sustainable industries.

Whilst the city in particular has enjoyed strong commercial development over the last 2 to 3 years principally as a result of the Enterprise zone status awarded to Rotherwas, additional major new and upgraded employment sites at Moreton, Three Elms and in the key market towns will help build the future economy of the county.

A supportive business landscape will be developed where businesses have access to a range of support from access to finance, growth and resilience planning, business accommodation, skills, and regulatory advice.

Capitalising on Herefordshire's entrepreneurial culture and high numbers of self-employed and SME's a series of business incubation centres will be created across the county. Aimed at supporting start up and growing businesses the centres will provide a focus for support to the key local sectors of defence, advanced manufacturing, and food and drink production.

Aiming to add value and increase productivity the centres will provide an opportunity for collaboration between businesses and HE or FE institutions helping bridge the skills gap and creating work ready employees.

Regular one to one dialogue will be held with all significant employers in the county to mitigate against economic shocks and maximise the investment opportunities to Herefordshire delivered by such large businesses.

To capitalise on an increasing catchment area, extending into south and central wales, south Shropshire and the Forest of Dean new office developments will be encouraged within Hereford city centre to accommodate a growing commercial services sector.

An engagement programme with schools will be critical to the development of future entrepreneurs. Across the county school children will be encouraged to expand their business awareness and skills with the aim of creating the next generation of business owners and start-ups.

Alongside a focused effort to attract inward investment there is likely to be continued growth in local companies, some of which will look to upgrade their current space and expand and it is important their demands for modern accessible office space are met.

Projects

The business projects include:

1. Development of a new Hereford Central Business District as a sub-regional office centre with linkages to the historic city and attractive pedestrian friendly routes to the station and to the new university and retail development at the Old Market;
2. Continued commitment to the build out of the Hereford Enterprise Zone and redevelopment of the existing Rotherwas industrial estate.
3. Encouraging delivery of existing major employment allocations at Three Elms, Moreton on Lugg, and the market towns;
4. Development of a suite managed workspace or 'Business Centres' across the county to encourage small, creative and innovative businesses including the construction of an innovation Centre at the Enterprise Zone developing the relationship between the NMITE university and local companies,
5. Developing an entrepreneurial culture among school children to create a genuine future career option of starting a business.



■ A Great Place to Learn

Herefordshire has an enviable reputation for its educational establishments, with schools and colleges that compare favourably with the best institutions across the UK, Hereford Sixth Form was named by the Times Education Supplement (TES) as the best “Sixth Form College of the Year” in its further education awards of 2016.

The master plan will aim to support the continuing high standards delivered by the counties existing educational establishments and identify areas where provision could be enhanced, specifically it is acknowledged that there is no dedicated higher education facility within the county currently.

Through the period of the master plan, Herefordshire will see a significant growth in its higher education provision. The creation of the NMiTE, new University project, will draw up to 5,000 students into the city. The curriculum will be targeted at the needs of engineering and technology employers to produce employment-ready, productive, industry relevant, innovative, economically and financially literate graduates who will be able communicators and project managers.

With a new approach to learning – based on real-world problem solving and the blending of high quality engineering and design with communication and employability skills targeted at the growth sectors of the future, the NMiTE project is projecting a student population of 5,000 by 2031.

NMITE are committed to the construction of a state of the art 21st century teaching and innovation campus in the centre of Hereford, developed on the latest ‘agile’ principles involving the construction/or refurbishment of teaching and administrative facilities. Linked to the city centre facilities will be laboratories and workshops and the NMiTE Application & Development centre on the Enterprise Zone.

Higher Education provision will also be expanded by other institutions. The Hereford College of Arts will be supported to develop and expand their range of course and the quality of dedicated facilities for their students, centred on new student accommodation situated conveniently within the city centre.

Investment in the Hereford and Ludlow College Holme Lacy campus will continue with an expanded range of facilities, courses, and outside events. The campus and college farm will host a variety of land based and rural craft events and will explore the potential for further development to cater for the growing outdoor lifestyle market.

Beyond higher and further education, schools at all levels will have an increased interaction with the local business community, both to ensure the development of school leavers with the required skills for the workplace but also to promote and foster entrepreneurship within the student population, leading to the next generation of local entrepreneurs and businesses.

Projects

1. Implementation of the New Model in Technology and Engineering University, with associated teaching and administration space, student accommodation, and linked laboratory and workshop space.
2. New build student accommodation and associated facilities for students attending the Hereford College of Arts.
3. Investment in the Holme Lacy campus and development of the campus and college farm for an expanded range of courses and outside, but linked, activities.
4. Increased linkages between the county's schools and the local business base, expansion of entrepreneurship based programmes such as Young Enterprise.

Great Market Towns

The various market towns offer diversity, distinctiveness, individuality and each has a unique shopping experience with minimal multiples and a predominance of local independent traders. Some market towns add to this offer with a particular localised specialism developing similar propositions in the other market towns will add to their viability and individuality.

During the master plan period each market town will build its own distinct identity and be able to define a key target audience and offer, this will build on existing niches that each market town already offers: Leominster and antiques, Ledbury and poetry, Ross and tourism, Bromyard and festivals, and Kington and walking.

Hereford city has successfully implemented a trader promoted Business Improvement District which covers circa 500 businesses within the city with its own board tasked with delivery of a definitive business plan. The BID has given traders a voice, and finance, with which to implement a package of projects designed to increase footfall and turnover.

Each of the market towns could explore following this initiative, albeit on a commensurate scale, with their own business plan and accompanying finance. This would build on local distinctiveness and improve trader engagement, whilst also leading to a better customer experience and increased vibrancy across the market towns network.

Encouragement will be given to the general improvement of the retail offer and environment within the Market Towns specifically to exploring planning policies which provide flexibility within the retail area and the business support available to build a distinctive and attractive retailing experience.

Minimisation of vacant property will also be encouraged, alongside other initiatives that benefit the vitality and vibrancy of the town centres, whether through increased town centre living, activities to bring in more retails and services, or exploration of other uses.

Herefordshire and its market towns will become both local service and retail centres serving their local community but also attractive, vibrant, destinations that offer year round activities for the visitor and tourist alike, encouraging multiple trips and favourable reviews, leading to long term stability for these vital community assets.



Projects

1. Review retail hierarchy's and, where appropriate, suggest alternatives to existing retail provision across the city to ensure an appropriate and flexible retail offer;
2. Develop a series of locations where a combination of small scale production and niche retailing can flourish for example in craft and arts or food and drink based industries.
3. The exploration of Business Improvement Districts in each of the market towns to give each a definitive business plan and locally allocated finance to deliver a range of improvements and programme of activity.
4. Grow the emerging local food and drink and hospitality sector which is typified by the growing number of craft pubs, breweries, pop-up food outlets and speciality offers, to attract a wider and more diverse customer base.
5. Develop specialised retail propositions within each of the market towns based on local niche markets and linking to leisure and tourism offers.
6. Develop key housing and employment allocations to facilitate growth across the market towns.



■ A Great Place to Live

The aim is for Herefordshire to be known by its residents, and be seen by its visitors, as a great place to live with a wide variety of sustainable, new and improved homes attractive to a diverse range of people including families, with high quality supporting social infrastructure.

The county already benefits from an attractive and distinctive environment with high quality buildings, streets and spaces, with a strong underlying landscape structure enhancing the special character of the county. This structure is to be supported by protecting and enhancing landscape designations, improving green infrastructure, improving the design and construction quality of developments, and by involving local communities in decision making process through mechanisms such as neighbourhood planning.

Hereford city centre is the most sustainable location within the county given its proximity to public transport nodes and retail, leisure and employment opportunities. The Urban Village project takes advantage of this location and will involve the construction of a genuine city centre community bringing activity during the day, additional trade to the city centre, whilst offering more sustainable lifestyle choices for residents.

New residential opportunities will also be created through the NMITE University with a requirement for an appropriate provision of student accommodation, this will be coupled with a series of starter home developments designed to cater for young professionals and those starting on the property ladder. The net effect will be to create genuine city centre living, with a sense of community and place.



Projects

The emerging living projects include:

1. Continuing to develop the city centre as an attractive place to live specifically the urban village project;
2. Providing opportunities for a variety of new homes including apartments, family housing, prestigious and affordable housing;
3. Exploring the regeneration and renewal of the existing housing stock;
4. The support to Parish councils looking to develop and implement neighbourhood plans;
5. The EMP will consider a VIP based on the development of a stronger housing offer for all key sectors;
6. Encourage a range of outdoor activities that attract visitors and serve local communities.



■ A Great Place to Visit

The plan will unlock the potential of the county as a unique, special place to visit at a regional and national level, offering a unique blend of heritage, architecture, countryside walks, rural communities to explore, modern leisure attractions, shopping, new and inspiring cultural and arts developments.

Herefordshire is a definitively rural county. Without the large scale visitor numbers drawn to better known locations such as the Lakes, Peak District, or South West, the county still has a host of attractions and events to tempt visitors. The offer is one that is rooted in both being local and distinctive, there is a preponderance of niche festivals, quirky accommodation, and fantastic food and drink.

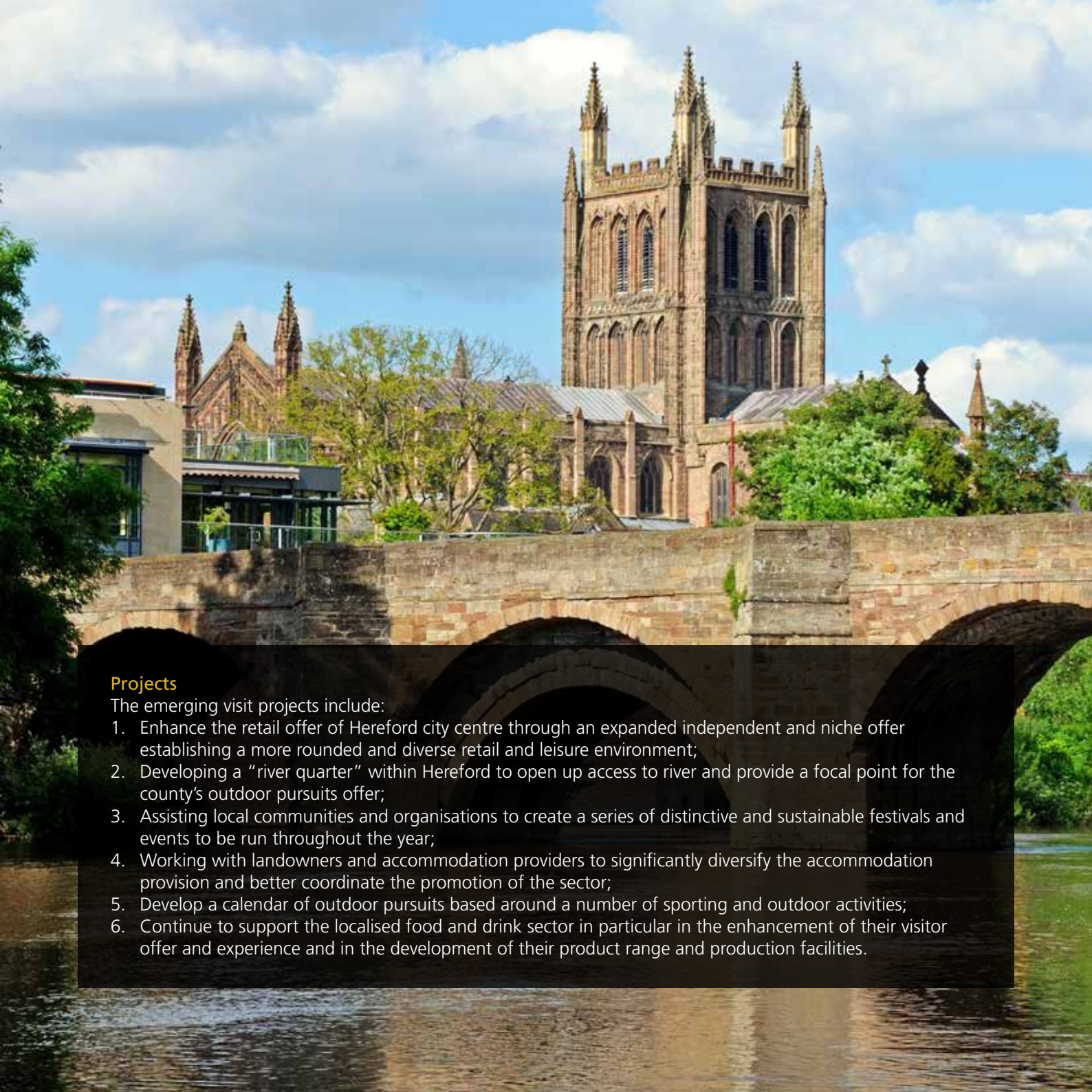
Potential exists to utilise the natural offer to enhance the visitor experience with specific emphasis being placed on the outdoor pursuits market. This will focus not only on the year round offer gained from walking and nature based tourism, cycling and water sports but also on developing a series of regular events such as long distance assault courses, orienteering, open water swimming and mountain biking. It will also be achieved by enhancing high quality landscapes to increase their attractiveness to walkers and nature lovers.

The traditional accommodation offered throughout the county will be supplemented through the provision of a new, quality, hotel offering high end accommodation and the potential for business conferencing. At the other end of the size scale encouragement will be given to the provision of a wide range of small scale and unique accommodation experiences whether yurts, Hobbit Holes, bivouacs, or high end camping.

To ensure a diverse and unique visitor experience this accommodation will be offered alongside market towns each with a specific specialisation – antiques in Leominster, walking in Kington, Poetry in Ledbury for example – and a range of small scale, distinctive events and festivals celebrating the best that the county has to offer.

As expected Hereford has the most diverse visitor offer and acts as a compelling base from which to explore the rest of the county, in addition to traditional features such as the Cathedral, Courtyard Theatre and Cider Museum it has a modern offer through a multi-screen cinema, vast range of restaurants and bars, and other leisure activities.

The city could benefit from more diversity to its offer and there is opportunity to consider developing the role of the river in the visitor economy.



Projects

The emerging visit projects include:

1. Enhance the retail offer of Hereford city centre through an expanded independent and niche offer establishing a more rounded and diverse retail and leisure environment;
2. Developing a "river quarter" within Hereford to open up access to river and provide a focal point for the county's outdoor pursuits offer;
3. Assisting local communities and organisations to create a series of distinctive and sustainable festivals and events to be run throughout the year;
4. Working with landowners and accommodation providers to significantly diversify the accommodation provision and better coordinate the promotion of the sector;
5. Develop a calendar of outdoor pursuits based around a number of sporting and outdoor activities;
6. Continue to support the localised food and drink sector in particular in the enhancement of their visitor offer and experience and in the development of their product range and production facilities.

A Great Environment

The quality of the Herefordshire environment and landscape is perhaps the county's single biggest asset. It serves to attract young and old alike, for a variety of purposes and reasons, and provides a fantastic backdrop whether people live, work or visit the county.

Rather than act as an inhibitor to growth the Herefordshire environment and landscape can help facilitate it, both directly and indirectly.

Developing a series of projects designed to enhance the living and natural landscape has the potential to both attract visitors to specific sites where conservation or ecology enhancement projects are in place, and for activities that follow particular routes or trails and cover a larger element of the county.

The landscape design will attract visitors, businesses and residents alike, furthering the aim of making the county into a great place to live whilst maintaining and enhancing its natural capital by increasing its resilience to flooding, climate change, loss of pollinators that service agriculture, etc.

The Rivers Wye and Lugg are both Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), designated under the EU Habitats Directive, however the Lugg is failing the phosphate quality standard and the upper Wye is in danger of failing. Without the implementation of the nutrient management plan to address this, this poses a risk to future development in the county. Implementation of the nutrient management plan will

lead to Improvements to the water quality across the county through appropriate mitigation, investment and sensitive development, which in turn will enable a number of strategic sites to reach their full potential. Equally the implementation of a number of landscape and habitat projects may assist in managing strategic flood risk with the consequential beneficial impacts on the county's infrastructure, communities, and business base.

There are a number of opportunities to capitalise on the expertise within the county that exists in the environmental technologies sector with Herefordshire having seen substantially higher local deployment of solar pv and seen the development of numerous community owned projects.

Elements of the city centre and in particular the Urban Village will be served by a new district heating system that reduces reliance on fossil fuels and offers sustainable heating costs for this new and sustainable community. Villages and communities elsewhere across the county will be encouraged to explore measures that could lead to energy self-sustainability or where local energy schemes could be created that allow revenues to be shared among local communities.

Projects

1. Delivering the nutrient management plan to reduced phosphate levels to improve water quality and unlocking future development land.
2. Implementing a range of localised energy schemes that contribute to energy self-sufficiency delivering secure, low carbon and affordable energy.
3. Delivery of the Lugg Living Landscape project restoring habitats and ecology across the river valley with accompanying access improvements and associated visitor and tourism facilities.
4. Implementing with partners a range of other Living Landscape projects across the county in appropriate locations.
5. Developing Herefordshire's strong environmental technologies sector and providing support to the refit of energy efficient measures within business, community and public buildings.
6. Constructing a district energy scheme for the Herefordshire Urban Village development.

Great movement and accessibility

We aim to unlock the potential of the county as a great place to do business, to live in and to visit, with Hereford at its centre as a prosperous, healthy and accessible city. Developing the economy – through delivering the houses, education, training and jobs – requires an integrated and resilient network (both physical infrastructure and services) that is fit for purpose. Importantly:

- People who choose to live in, visit and work in Herefordshire need to have confidence that there are transport options that meet their lifestyle needs
- Business enterprises require a transport network that:
 - Quickly and reliably connects the major employment centres with markets
 - Enables businesses to collaborate and develop supply chain and customer relationships
 - Enables people to access a wide selection of job/training/education opportunities
 - Is resilient to disruption by providing a genuine choice of routes and modes.

Herefordshire needs to offer the right conditions for high levels of employment and quality of life to attract and retain workers and their families. To achieve this we will deliver a transport system that improves our towns' and city's environment and economic performance by achieving freedom of movement for all modes of travel particularly to the retail core, University, Enterprise Zone and new housing developments.

Central to this vision is the delivery of a Hereford bypass to take traffic out of the city centre, particularly heavy trucks. It cannot be understated that the Hereford bypass is critical to the growth of the city and the enablement of a wider package of measures that will aim to reduce the numbers of short distance car journeys made in the city – each day there are some 30,000 car journeys in the peak periods that never leave the city.

The presence of these vehicles deters many potential active mode users from choosing to walk or cycle; and its increasing levels of walking and cycling that will make Hereford the clean, prosperous and healthy city we want. Being able not just to walk and cycle to work, school, college or the shops but also to make leisure trips around our city is fundamental to creating the conditions to attract and retain the workers and visitors we need to take our economy forward.

The implementation of the bypass will enable movement options within Hereford city centre itself, with expansion of the current traffic measures and road treatment in place along Newmarket Street a possibility along sections of the A49. Severance between the residential areas to the west of the city centre could be reduced with this treatment and complementary measures such as improved crossing points and the removal of underpasses.

Street scape and active travel improvements in the city centre will be supported by the development of new, multi storey car parks that are situated on the major arterial routes into the city and which look to capture commuter and visitor traffic before it reaches the city centre. Having fewer, but larger, car parking sites will allow for improved signage and accessibility making it easier for visitors to navigate around the city centre.

Rural Herefordshire is characterised by high quality landscapes and townscapes, a large agricultural presence, a very low population density and an extensive road network. For most people the car or van is and will remain the main mode of transport. With increasing numbers of vehicles passing through our rural villages and hamlets partnerships will develop with local stakeholders to reduce the impacts of those vehicles with 'village gateways' and similar projects. The council will continue to work with the health sector, schools and bus and taxi operators to make the best use of their services to provide transport for those without access to a car.

The plans for road maintenance are no less ambitious to ensure our transport system is maintained in a condition that offers the safest travelling conditions we can deliver for the funding available.



Projects

- Hereford bypass transport package including bus and active mode measures and behavioural change projects
- South Wye Transport Package including southern link and active mode measures
- Hereford City centre transport package including City Centre link road and public realm, bus and active mode measures on Commercial Street, Blueschool Street and Newmarket street and a transport hub at the rail station.
- Hightown refurbishment and on – street parking management
- St Owens street contraflow cycle way.
- £100m+ on road maintenance over the next 10 years.
- Development of new multi storey car parking to serve the city centre
- Continue the shared surface treatment from New Market Street along the A49 through the city.



6. Expanding Our Vision

Investing in a Difference

This Economic Plan describes a county full of opportunity and investment potential. It is a Plan that will secure a first class business environment supported by state of the art infrastructure, deliver a complete package of work, leisure, and home life balance, attract inward investment and build on firm foundations.

As an Economic Plan it is a collaboration of ideas, projects, and opportunities that can generate private sector investment and inspire confidence within the business community, in recognition that Herefordshire is poised to become a sought after investment location.

The Economic Plan builds upon the councils Core Strategy and that documents targets of building 16,500 new houses by 2031. Insert some job and growth predictions.

Herefordshire should be recognised for its locational advantages. It is strategically placed to serve the urban centres of both Greater Birmingham and South Wales whilst offering opportunity to extend its catchment area across the whole of mid wales.

People power, public sector ambition and private sector confidence are uniting to create an unrivalled economic success story, attracting and keeping multinational companies, the most exciting entrepreneurs and the cream of the graduate crop here.

Herefordshire may be small in population but is big on ideas, opportunity and ambition. This series of projects presents x VIP's from across the county, worth a combined £x and have the potential to help create X jobs.

The next 15 years will transform a rurally based economy into a modern, diverse, well connected business location, offering a first class supportive framework for undertaking business, combined with an aspiring entrepreneurial population. The commercial opportunities available to businesses and investors alike will be unrivalled in the UK.

The council recognise that investment is built on confidence and investing in the Economic Plan is the best method to provide that confidence. The council is investing in a range of capital projects that will provide a great environment whether for business, leisure, or living, forming a comprehensive programme of public sector investment with the aim of enabling growth and building Herefordshire as a significant business location.

Integral to the delivery of the Plan, together these projects form the infrastructure that will enable the delivery of the wider investment opportunities and VIP's.

Map of projects

7. Investment Opportunities

Delivering the 2020 vision and beyond

1. The Enterprise Zone
2. Delivering Superfast Broadband
3. Investing in a vibrant City Centre
4. Hereford Bypass

A Strong Hereford for a Strong Herefordshire

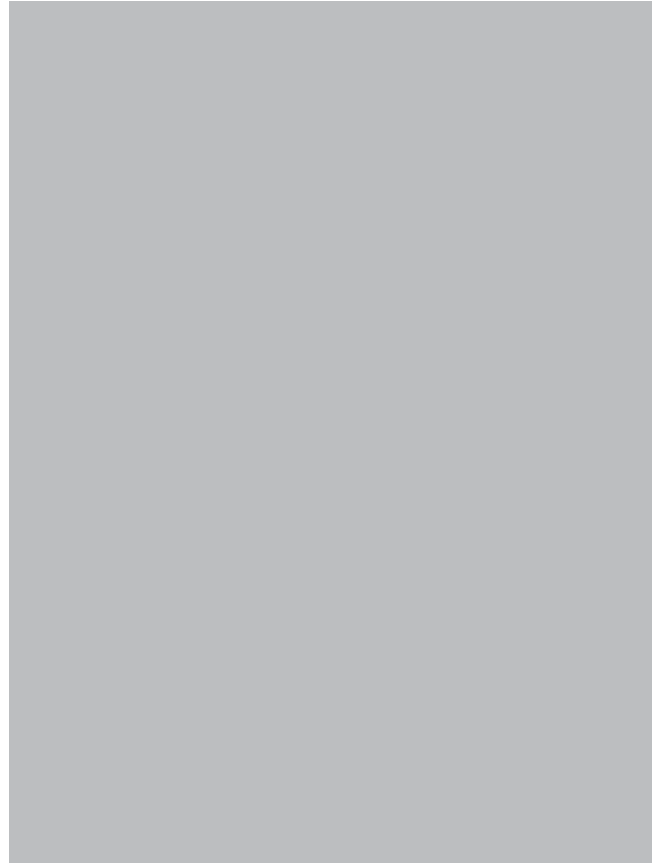
6. River Quarter
7. Berrington Street regeneration area
8. Edgar Street regeneration area (Football Ground)
9. Movement, car parking and street scene
10. NMiTE
11. The Racecourse
12. Hereford Business Quarter
13. City of Culture
14. The Lower Lugg leisure landscape
15. Hereford Housing sites

Countywide Ambition

16. Business Incubation programme
17. Model Farm enterprise park
18. Leominster Railway Station
19. A Market Towns Support Package
20. Ross on Wye Rowing Club
21. Rural employment and service centres
22. Market Towns housing sites

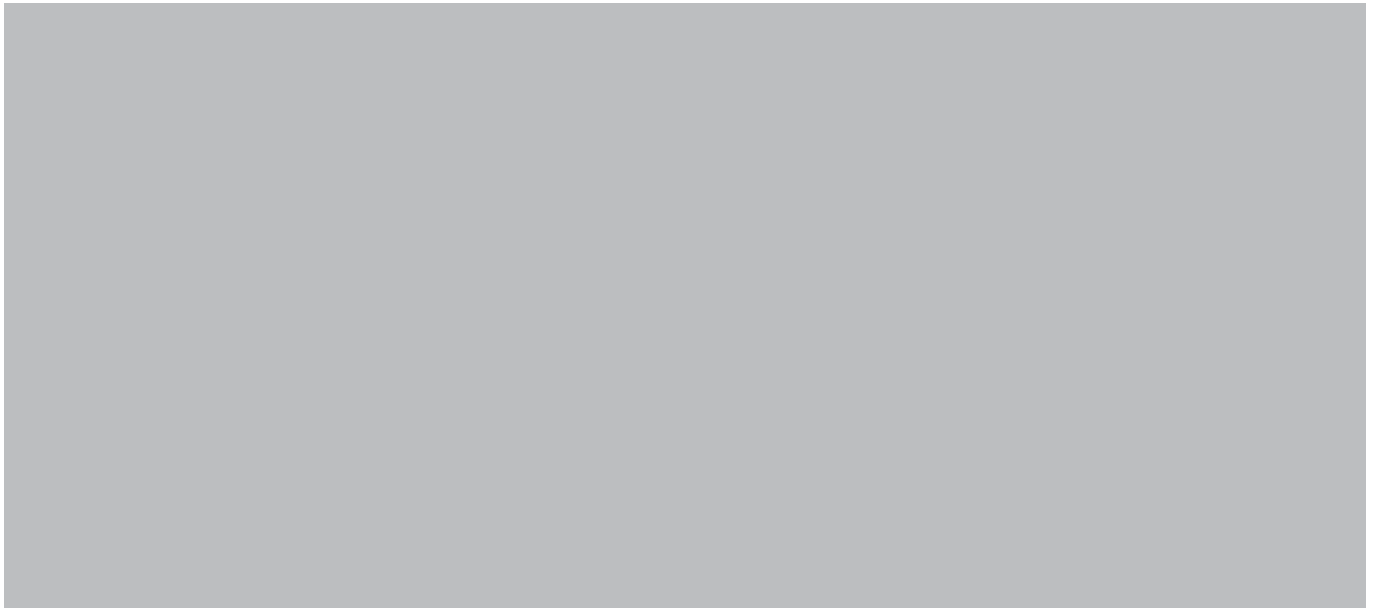
Developing a distinctive identity

23. A supportive business landscape
24. Inspiring an entrepreneurial generation
25. Dare to win – an outdoor lifestyle



Creating an Investment Ready Landscape

**PIC to
follow**



Skylon Park - The Hereford Enterprise Zone

Our vision for Skylon Park is to create high quality business space and a vibrant, dynamic business community in an attractive historic setting. A positive market perspective of Skylon Park as a place to invest, develop and work is heavily influenced by the design and planning of the park both in the attractiveness of the buildings and the high quality, well maintained soft landscape.

The Zone will attract investment from established companies overseas, across Britain and locally, as well as encouraging new and start-up companies, by offering them a simplified approach to planning, business rate discount and superfast and ultrafast broadband connectivity.

At Skylon Park we have land available to buy for immediate development, and also small units available to rent. The council has invested over £20m in recent years providing new access roads, remediating brownfield sites, and bringing all the necessary services to the plots. 9 acres have already been sold and new facilities are either already occupied or under development, a further 38 acres of land is available to buy for immediate development.

Initial estimates suggest that around 110 new businesses could be accommodated at the Zone, leading to the creation of around 4200 new jobs by 2022. These projected jobs would be delivered alongside more than 134,000 sq metres of new work space.



Quick Facts	Hereford Enterprise Zone
Sponsor	Herefordshire Council Goodwin Trust
Scale (£)	£100m
Type	Commercial property development
Location	Hereford Enterprise Zone, Rotherwas, Hereford
Investment Type	Development Finance Co Investment
Programme	Ongoing up to 2037



Superfast Broadband for all

Fastershire is a partnership between Gloucestershire County Council and Herefordshire Council to bring faster broadband to the two counties, with funding from central government's Broadband Delivery UK matched by the local authorities.

- Phase 1 of the project, in partnership with BT, will see around 90% of Gloucestershire and Herefordshire having access to fibre broadband, with all premises in the project area being able to access a minimum of 2Mbps.
- Phase 2 of the project will extend fibre coverage further across the county. The Cotswolds is the first area to move into phase 2, with a contract awarded to Gigaclear which will make ultrafast speeds available to over 6,500 of the most difficult to reach rural homes and businesses.

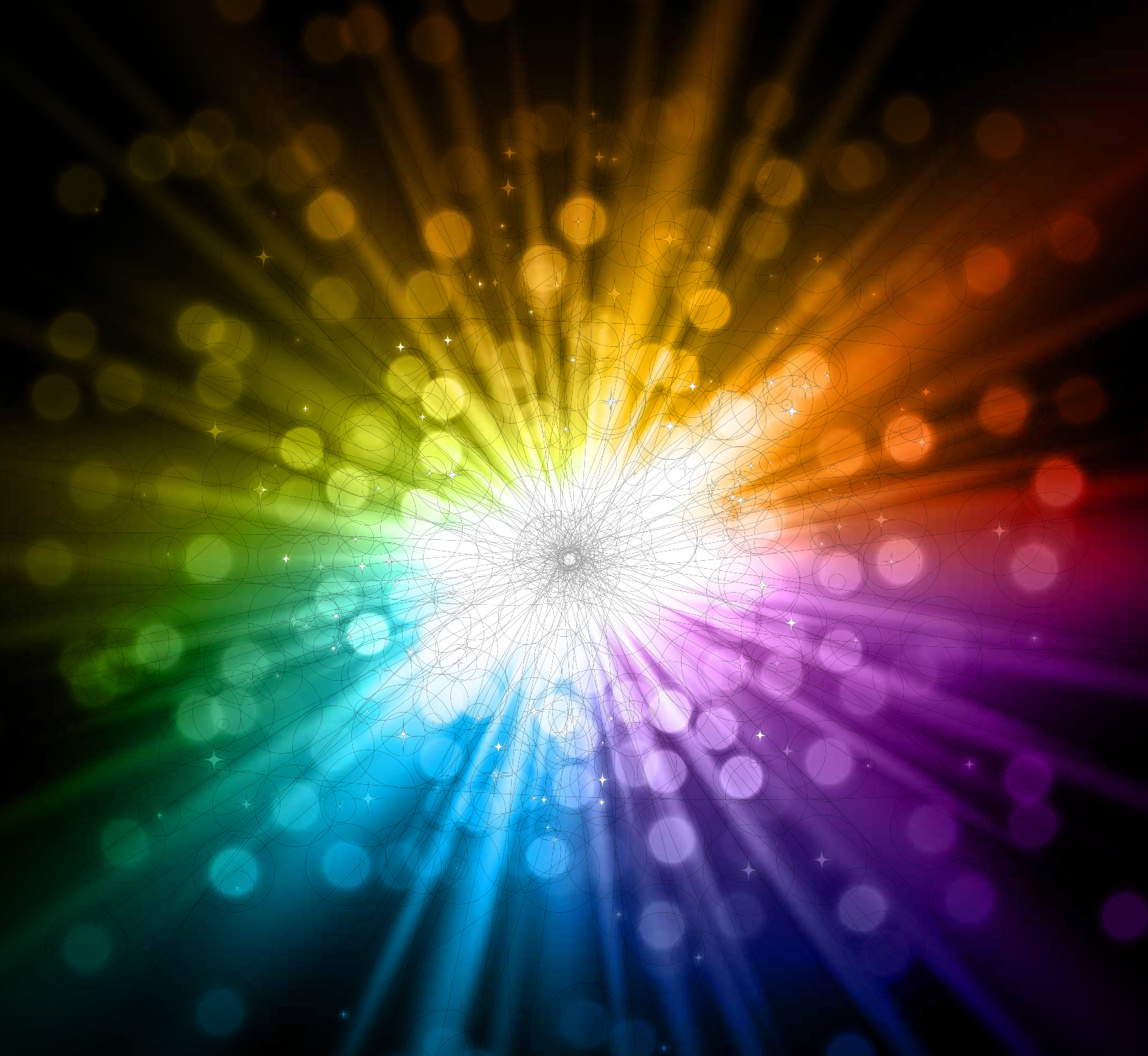
The ultimate aim is that by 2018 there will be access to fast broadband for all who need it. More information on the rollout can be found in our broadband strategy, please [click here](#).

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. In fact, it is expected that Fastershire will help to boost the local economy by £420m over the next ten years.

Fastershire will revolutionise the way that people of all ages across Herefordshire and Gloucestershire work, learn and play, and will benefit generations to come.

Quick Facts

Sponsor	Herefordshire Council
Scale (£) Type	Communications infrastructure investment
Location	Herefordshire
Investment Type	Herefordshire Council capital programme and Central Government Funding
Programme	2016 -



City centre living

The recent development of the Old Market leisure complex has enabled land in the city centre to be developed as an 'urban village,'.

This urban village will help address the county's housing needs and help make Herefordshire a more attractive place to live, work and visit. To allow for this much-needed housing, a 'City Link Road' is required so that developers and residents can access the site. Around a third of the development will be affordable housing to help attract younger people to Hereford city. The space will also allow for a proposed new Emergency Services Headquarters.

The city link road will help channel traffic out of the centre of Hereford and make it easier and more pleasurable to walk around Hereford city. It will also make it easier to access by foot the new transport hub - a combined train and bus station.

The road will be built as part of the £16m 'Hereford city centre transport package' with funding being negotiated with the Local Enterprise Partnership.

The High Town scheme is part of an emerging master-plan for Hereford city. The refurbishment scheme will create an attractive vibrant city centre to help support existing businesses and create new opportunities to encourage more visitors and retailers to the city centre. It will create an excellent space for pedestrians and cyclists and will ensure a clean, modern and clutter free city centre.

The scheme will support economic growth of the city centre by providing a more spacious and pleasurable environment and it will also address maintenance issues in the High Town area.

The refurbished city centre will contribute to providing an attractive connection from the Old Market development into the historic city centre allowing it to look like one city centre.

The scheme has been developed in accordance with best practice and follows recommendations made in the Hereford Streetscape Strategy. The refurbished part of Widemarsh Street has been used as a benchmark due to the high quality design it has provided making it a lively and vibrant street.

The Old Market development has improved the leisure and shopping experience in Hereford and has brought more people to Hereford city since it opened in May 2014. The refurbishment of Widemarsh Street in 2010 created a popular and attractive link between the old and new parts of the city and the High Town refurbishment will extend this area. The revamped Butter Market will provide a diverse space with a variety of businesses alongside retailers.

Arriving in Hereford by bus or train, you are likely to walk from the station along Blueschool Street, Commercial Road and Newmarket Street. The refurbishment of these areas will make the walk or cycle into Hereford city centre more pleasurable, helping people lead healthier and more active lives. It will also be easier for visitors and residents to use buses and trains at a new 'transport hub.'



Quick Facts

Hereford City Centre Improvements

Sponsor	Herefordshire Council
Scale (£)	£1.6m in 2016/2017 up to £6m over a number of financial years (subject to funding and priorities)
Type	Regeneration
Location	Hereford City Centre
Investment Type	Local Transport Plan Capital programme
Programme	2016-2020 (?)



Hereford Bypass

The forecast growth in Hereford requires an appropriate investment to increase the city's transport capacity, the proposed solution comprises a package containing the Hereford Bypass and active travel measures (ATMs).

Once constructed the bypass, along with the Southern Link Road, will create a full north/south circumnavigation of Hereford from the A49 back to the A49. In addition to addressing existing and historically high levels of delay, journey time unreliability, poor connectivity and poor economic performance, the Bypass will also provide an alternative route for the A49 trunk road around Hereford and reinforce its importance as a strategic route – via the A465 - between South Wales and the Midlands. It will support the delivery of 6500 houses and 6059 jobs, a new University and expansion of the Hereford Enterprise Zone.

The Bypass will be complemented by and enable a range of public realm improvement schemes and Active Travel Measures (ATMs) - which will increase levels of walking, cycling and bus use in the city, particularly for short distance 'intra-city' journeys. These schemes are likely to include enhanced public realm schemes such as on-road cycle schemes, shared space schemes and better bus stops and information on the other main radial routes. Without the Bypass many of the ATMs would be undeliverable given their impact on traffic capacity.

Collectively the ATMs will establish a transport environment where active mode travel becomes the default mode for short distance intra-city journeys toward the end of the Master Plan period.

As a significant piece of transport infrastructure the Hereford bypass is linked to the delivery of social progress (by supporting housing needs), economic prosperity (by supporting new jobs, area regeneration, and business growth), and environmental quality (lessening the harmful impacts of traffic growth, providing an alternative route for the movement of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs), and freeing up space for pedestrians and cyclists).

Hereford has also been identified as part of an 'intensive growth corridor' linking Birmingham with Worcester, Hereford, and South Wales. Significant investment has already been made by the Welsh Government in delivering the Heads of the Valley A465 dualling project. Herefordshire Council, as part of the Midlands Connect partnership across the Midlands, is highlighting the constraints on economic growth of slow connectivity on the rail network and slow journeys on the road network, and making the case for investment in infrastructure on the basis of wider economic benefits to the Midlands regions.

In addition to the benefits associated with economic and housing growth, the scheme will enable a more reliable and safer route for traffic currently using the A49 through Hereford and the wider region. It will:

- Significantly improve currently extended and unreliable journey times for traffic on the A49 trunk road through Hereford.
- Replace a section of the A49 which has a poor safety record with a route built to current design standards and so reduce accident costs to Highways England.
- Provide enhanced network resilience - one main river crossing carrying 45,000 vehicles per day currently leads to low network resilience with the result that extensive queues develop following an incident anywhere on the strategic network.

Quick Facts

Hereford Bypass

Sponsor	Herefordshire Council / Marches LEP
Scale (£)	£156m
Type	Transport / Regeneration
Location	Hereford
Investment Type Programme	Growth Fund / Local Transport Plan Capital Programme / Other 2016- 2027



Hereford River Quarter

Overview

Hereford is built on the banks of one of the UK's great rivers, the Wye has always had a reputation for great fishing and is increasingly becoming known as the premier destination for canoeing and other water related activity. The natural advantage provided by the Wye is not currently capitalised upon, with access to the river restricted as it enters the city centre, for many visitors the location and opportunities provided by the river remain an unknown attraction.

This project will redevelop the 300 m stretch of riverbank, and beyond, between the Great Western Way and A49. Hereford Rowing Club will be given the opportunity to redevelop their boathouse and riverside access facilities.

The focus of the site will be on outdoor events, riverside and water based leisure activities, and a small scale food, drink and retail offer, accompanying a residential presence. Enhanced access will be provided to the riverside via Greyfriars Ave for vehicles, and for cyclists and pedestrians via connections directly onto the Great Western Way.

Leisure activities will be aimed at developing the site for two primary purposes, firstly as a focal point for water based activities, including canoeing and kayaking, open water swimming, and rowing, and secondly as a city centre based outdoor events space that is adaptable for a range of cultural events such as festivals, theatre performances, or music events.

As the project develops, improvements to the linkages to the city centre will be made with enhancements to pedestrian crossing points of the A49 made at the

Barton Road junction. Pedestrian and cycle linkages will be incorporated within the site to create looped trails travelling across the river, along the southern bank to the Bishop Meadows and back via the cathedral and city centre, thereby ensuring the project site can be successfully incorporated within the wider city.

In time the project will become one of a number of natural hubs within the city aimed at pulling in tourists and visitors to sites across the city, linked with the retail and cultural experiences available at the Old Market and city core.

Opportunity

There is scope for a comprehensive redevelopment of this x acre riverside site adjacent to Hereford city centre. The project will require a range of innovative and flexible uses to maximise the developable area and mitigate the impacts of river flooding, support from a range of government initiatives will be sought to assist in the development of these mitigating measures.

The riverbank within this project will be served directly by a number of new build restaurants and cafés, supported by small scale retail opportunities aimed at leisure niche and/or localised producers.

Behind the riverfront development will be residential properties, the potential to use innovative flood defence methods will be explored to maximise the developable area. Part of the existing playing fields will be converted into a semi-permanent festival facility with grass banked amphitheatre, camping washroom facilities, and electrical points to facilitate city centre camping.



Quick Facts

Sponsor	Herefordshire Council
Scale	£15m
Type	Mixed use riverside regeneration
Location	Hereford City Centre
Investment Type	Equity co-investment and development finance
Programme	2019-2022

Hereford Football Club

Overview

Edgar Street is a football ground with a long and special history. Past glories and bitter defeats have played out within and around the ground, none more so than the 2014/15 season when Hereford United were put into liquidation.

Since then the club has risen from the ashes of financial oblivion with a new name and a new identity. After all the turmoil, a fresh start beckoned. Hereford United Supporters Club with the backing of local benefactors have set about starting a new club and their first season as a phoenix club has been a remarkable tale of success and redemption.

League and cup success led to promotion and a trip to Wembley, the feel good factor had returned to Edgar Street. Importantly this impact has not been confined to the stadium. Located opposite the Old Market retail development and with Waitrose the immediate neighbour, the football club regularly attracts attendances of over 4,000, many of whom use the city centre either before or after games. Rising up the leagues brings greater competition but also the prospect of greater attendances, particularly from away supporters.

There is an opportunity for the club, and the ground, to make even more of a contribution towards the vitality of Hereford City, the Edgar Street ground itself should become a focus at the heart of the city of which the club, its supporters, and the city itself should feel proud. The location of the ground brings a special vibrancy to the city on match days something that the ground

itself fails to either visually live up to or commercially capitalise upon.

There is significant scope for a partial redevelopment of the ground, with the football club remaining in situ, which will improve the in-ground facilities without impacting on the ongoing use for footballing purposes. Whilst redevelopment of the ground will bring a greater quality of match day experience, an enhanced commercial opportunity, and rejuvenate the tired elements of the stadium, there is the potential to go one step further and consider exploring the prospect of a ground share arrangement between Hereford Rugby Club and Hereford FC.

It is recognised that there are numerous examples, particularly in northern England, of intersport ground sharing with notable examples including Coventry City FC and Wasps RFC sharing the Ricoh Arena, Hull AFC (Football) and Hull FC (Rugby League) sharing the KC Stadium, and Swansea City FC and Ospreys RFC sharing the Liberty stadium.

For such a venture to be successful this would require the “buy in” of both clubs boards and supporters whilst also requiring an investment in the playing surface as well as the stadium facilities, but conceivably there is the opportunity to develop a genuine, city centre, sporting and leisure facility that brings a wider profile for both clubs as well as commercial advantage to all.

Opportunity

Redevelopment of the Edgar Street ground would require significant involvement of the club and its supporters, however the potential exists to constructed new, or redevelop the existing stands alongside a variety of ancillary facilities as well as non-related uses. The ground, and Hereford Football Club, could benefit from on-site gym and training facilities, enhanced conferencing and hospitality amenities, and increased match day sales units – food, drink and club merchandise.

These sporting orientated changes could be supplemented by, more commercially focused, small scale retail uses, in particular on the Blackfriars Street frontage mirroring the Old Market development, or residential or hotel units above or behind the stands, benefiting from the existing building massing in the area and the neighbouring urban village development.

Quick Facts

Sponsor	Herefordshire Council / Hereford Football Club
Scale (£)	£10m
Type	Stadium redevelopment with ancillary leisure and retail uses.
Location	Hereford City Centre
Investment Type Programme	Developer and development funder 2018-2021

Movement and Street Scene

Overview

The Herefordshire transport network converges on Hereford and it includes access to local and long distance rail services making it the most accessible location for the majority of county residents. The challenges that exist on the existing network – congestion, lack of resilience, Strategic long distance traffic routed through the city centre – will be addressed by the construction of the Hereford bypass and the accompanying package of sustainable measures.

The current A49 places a significant severance between the city core, the urban village development sites, the Old Market development, and the residential areas to the west, and in particular the courtyard theatre and proposed riverside developments. The completion of the bypass will create opportunity to better manage the existing road network in Hereford, and offers solutions to address the severance issue.

Significant streetscape improvements have been implemented along Newmarket Street, with a wide, tree lined boulevard now fronting the Old Market development, this style will be continued along Blueschool Street and around to Commercial Road joining with the new city link road and railway station.

Following the creation of the bypass upgrades will be made to both Edgar Street and Victoria Street to bring them up to the same standard as Newmarket Street. This will include at grade crossing points at the Barton Road and Eign Street junctions (including the removal of the underpass at the latter junction) and at the Courtyard theatre.

The councils parking strategy looks to move the current supply which is located mainly at the edge of the historic core to an edge of centre location. A number of sites on the principal commuter routes will be identified as new MSCP sites to intercept traffic before it reaches the city centre. Chosen for their accessibility from the key road network, sites will be clearly signposted and provide a supply for both commuter and visitor parking.

Opportunity

The review of car parking identifies that Hereford has an appropriate number of car parking spaces just not in the right location and spread over too many sites. This leads to an uncoordinated and un-strategic level of parking supply.

Two or three edge of centre sites will be identified as the replacement for the current supply. Built as MSCP's the sites will represent an opportunity to manage the movement of vehicles into the city centre and capture both visitor and commuter parking demand.

The sites to be considered are the county bus station on commercial road, St Martins Street/Asda Supermarket, Eign Street, and Friar Street. Other appropriate sites would be considered if they came forward. Combined there is a requirement to accommodate x car parking spaces.

Quick Facts

Sponsor	Herefordshire Council
Scale (£)	£25m
Type	Car parking facilities
Location	Hereford City Centre
Investment Type	Developer and development funder
Programme	2018-2025



NMITE

Overview

Crucial to our future plans is the planned creation of a new engineering university for the UK, based in Hereford - the New Model in Technology & Engineering (NMITE). This exciting project to create a new, independent, not-for-profit world class teaching university will have a game-changing impact on the city, county and UK plc.

NMITE is scheduled to be a new independent, not-for-profit, world-class teaching university, based in Hereford that will address the skills shortage for graduate engineers in Marches and British businesses in advanced manufacturing, agri-engineering, data, defence, resources security and sustainable/smart living technology sectors.

The curriculum will be targeted at the needs of engineering and technology employers to produce employment-ready, productive, industry relevant, innovative, economically and financially literate graduates who will be able communicators and project managers.

With a new approach to learning – based on real-world problem solving and the blending of high quality engineering and design with communication and employability skills targeted at the growth sectors of the future, the NMITE project is projecting a student population of 5,000 by 2031.

NMITE are committed to the construction of a state of the art 21st century teaching and innovation campus in the centre of Hereford, developed on the latest 'agile' principles involving the construction/or refurbishment of teaching and administrative facilities. Linked to the city centre facilities will be laboratories and workshops and the NMITE Application & Development centre on the Enterprise Zone.

The first phase of the project will see over 1000 students taking courses by 2021, rising to 5,000 by 2031. The current rental market within Hereford is not geared to meet this level of demand so students will predominately be housed within dedicated accommodation in various units across the city.

The project has made rapid progress over the course of 18 months with the private sector promoters building a management team, developing a curriculum and sourcing academic institutional partners and business contributions. To establish itself, NMITE is seeking Government funding, with the Council willing to invest in, and take shared risk, on the provision of student accommodation.

Quick Facts

Sponsor	Herefordshire Tertiary Education Trust
Scale	£80m
Type	Education and Student Accommodation
Location	Hereford City Centre
Investment Type	Equity investor, developer and development funder
Programme	2018-2025

Opportunity

Current accommodation plans envisage three sites each of 350 units all located within easy walking distance of the University's academic buildings, the residences will provide a superb environment for living and studying with generous en-suite bedrooms, including hard wired and Wi-Fi internet access.

NMITE are looking for private sector partners who can match their expectations for accommodation of a very high quality design providing all the modern facilities expected by the students of tomorrow.

As a city centre based University there will be significant opportunity for the student population to be integrated with the local population and in particular to use the service, culture and leisure facilities available within Hereford. There will be opportunities to provide a range of services, which aren't currently available (or only available to a limited extent), aimed directly or partially at the student market.

With the expectation that redundant shops will be turned into seminar spaces and old offices with the right floor plans converted into studio/worklabs for 20-30 students – no lecture halls, no mass classroom settings – there will be significant investment opportunities for private sector partners.

Berrington Street Regeneration Area

Overview

The historic core of Hereford city is contained within the old city walls and as an area it encompasses the majority of the cities retail and cultural offer, with attractions such as the cathedral and High Town prominent features. However there are significant areas of underutilised land existing in close proximity to the retail and historic core.

These locations present an opportunity to undertake a comprehensive regeneration and establish higher value uses combined with activities that add a wider economic, commercial and cultural value to the city centre. On a sustainable basis these development sites are well located in terms of their proximity to employment, retail and leisure facilities in addition to being well served by public transport.

Whilst there are number of small scale sites across the city that could benefit from redevelopment, there is a large site located between the A49, West Street, Broad Street and Kings Street/St Nicholas Street that presents an opportunity to regenerate a currently underutilised area of Hereford city centre.

The x acre site is currently in a variety of ownerships, partnerships would be encouraged between landowners and development partners to assemble the site and undertake a comprehensive master planning of the area which looks to incorporate appropriate existing uses.

Indicative opportunities that could be incorporated into regeneration schemes for the area include student accommodation to address the demand created by the NMITE project, small scale/niche retailing, A1 café, bars and food outlets, live/work units, and pure residential elements.

The vision for the area is to create a sense of traditional city centre living with a densely populated development which is aimed at a young market demographic. Dominated by flats and starter units the development will encourage movement away from car borne transport with access to units through interconnecting courtyards and pedestrian walkways.

Local facilities will include small scale retail and employment units in a similar manner to Shad Thames catering for those who live within the city but also becoming a tourist attraction in its own right, offering a local food, drink and retailing offer.



Opportunity

Proposals are welcomed for genuine mixed use schemes which offer a comprehensive redevelopment of the area. A high density of residential units is expected and encouraged, particularly where the predominant use is for smaller and starter units.

A high quality of public realm landscape and street scene are essential for this area to enable the site to act as a destination in its own right and to act as an additional visitor and leisure attraction that complements the rest of the city centre, and in particular the regard to the proximity to the historic cathedral quarter. Developments that feature high levels of pedestrian permeability with varied and interesting street patterns incorporating courtyards, cut-through's, and pedestrianised streets will particularly encouraged.

Small scale retail, food outlets and B1 office accommodation should feature as an integral element of any scheme to ensure that development has a vibrancy, footfall, and activity adding an element of self-sufficiency and offering a range of attractions with which to entice visitors.

Quick Facts

Sponsor	tbc
Scale	£100m
Type	Residential and mixed use city centre redevelopment
Location	Hereford City Centre
Investment Type	Equity investor, developer and development funder
Programme	2020-2025

The Racecourse

Overview

Equestrian sports, and National Hunt racing in particular, has a long and prestigious history in Herefordshire, it's a county that can boast top trainers, Grand National winners, and the 2016 Champion jockey, Richard Johnson. The centre of that association should be Hereford racecourse, which has staged racing since 1771, however in recent times the course has struggled to maintain its position within the annual racing calendar due to falling attendances and a lack of alternative commercial activity.

Racing is important for the city, not only does it attract a few thousand visitors every race meeting but it brings commercial awareness to the city and exposure to a national audience. With approximately a dozen National Hunt race meets each year, the course has significant potential to expand its range of activities and events to become a year round facility.

There is a good range of current on site facilities backed by land and services that could accommodate a range of other activities. Additionally there are a number of locations neighbouring the course that also provide opportunities to accommodate an enhanced sporting and leisure provision.

Located close enough to the city to benefit from the range of services on offer and the regeneration proposals being brought forward, the course, adjoining locations, and in particular the grandstands and associated buildings are ideally placed to offer an expanded leisure orientated facility.

There is significant local demand from the business community for a high class business hotel and conference facility. With an expanding national and international client base, locally based businesses are stressing the need for modern, well presented facilities that match their client expectations and that can stand alongside those provided in competing towns and cities across the country.

With the views across the city and towards the Black Mountains there is considerable potential for the location to provide Hereford with an expanded high class sports and leisure facility that can cater for a range of outdoor and indoor sports and activities, alongside a commercial presence that offers high quality hotel accommodation, conferencing facilities, and a wraparound offer.



Opportunity

The priority for the racecourse site is that it continues to provide a continued programme of National Hunt, and other, racing, that supports the local racing community and can provide trainers and jockeys with opportunities to develop their talent.

To ensure this priority is met there is a realisation that the racecourse site needs to be a commercial success and maximising the year round, 356 day income potential is the best way of achieving this success. Diversification of the site for a range of commercial and leisure activities would be encouraged particularly as a mechanism for achieving an enhanced commercial operation.

In addition to the highly commercialised aspects of this opportunity Hereford has ambition to host a number of national level sporting tournaments or championships to bring recognition and profile, particularly being targeted from an indoor sport perspective are sports such as fencing, table tennis, indoor climbing, badminton, weightlifting, and various martial arts. As a longer term aspiration this will bring greater demand for the provision of these sports and the required facilities.

The physical racecourse has a number of linked and neighbouring occupiers which are equally positioned to be able to provide this diversification of offer and leisure experience and there is the potential for a number of separate locations around the racecourse to contribute towards the enablement of this project as well as making an active contribution into the wider expansion of the Herefordshire based regeneration.

Quick Facts

Sponsor	Herefordshire Council / Northern Racing
Scale	£50m - £80m
Type	Hotel accommodation, conferencing facilities with associated sporting and leisure facilities
Location	Hereford
Investment Type	Development Finance Co Investment
Programme	2020-2025

Hereford Business Quarter

Overview

Hereford City has a tradition of serving a large catchment area, for a range of employment, entertainment, transport connections, and health purposes. The city provides a range of services and employment that draws in a working population from across the county and beyond.

Just as the Old Market retail and leisure development has enabled Hereford to recapture some of the lost retail spend, with the growth of the city and an emerging service sector there exists opportunity for the city to reassert its place as the principle supplier of service sector jobs and facilities to the rest of the county, to south Shropshire and into mid wales.

Current demand for new office space is outstripping supply, the Enterprise Zone is looking to meet some of this demand by providing targeted sectors with new office space and developments such as Skylon Court have achieved rental levels above expectations.

Hereford City centre remains the location of choice for professional service firms with a cluster of accountants, solicitors, architects and property agents all based within the city centre. Additionally it is recognised that there are a growing number of firms requiring an office presence to serve a wider business. These businesses help provide a vibrancy to the city by supporting many of the retail and food and drink outlets through their staff and customers linked trips.

In addition to the established professional services market it is acknowledged that there are a number of young, vibrant businesses emerging within Herefordshire, in the defence, security, and food and drink sectors. The growth of these businesses will provide additional demand for office space to serve the requirement for back office accommodation to support the wider business.

In common with many historical cities the office market largely consists of small scale, converted former residential properties, providing adequate but not purpose build accommodation. There is a definitive opportunity to allocate space to serve this growing market and plan for new business accommodation that can provide for modern working practises and customer expectations.

A newly allocated business quarter should look to capitalise on the proximity of the railway station and numerous bus routes, whilst also linking into the wider retail and leisure offer provided across Hereford city centre.

It is anticipated that Bath Street and Gaol Street will become the focus for this business quarter, with nearby facilities such as the Magistrates Court, Crown Court, and emerging proposals for the new University providing complementary assets to the professional services sector.

Quick Facts

Sponsor	tbc
Scale	Sqm x £1800
Type	B1 office development
Location	Hereford City Centre
Investment Type	Equity co-investment and development finance
Programme	2020 -2031

Opportunity

The core of the opportunity will centre around the current West Mercia Police station and its car park, the neighbouring public car park fronting Bath Street, and the council owned car park opposite on Gaol Street. Taken together this forms a site of approx. x ha.

Current buildings along Bath Street rise to five storeys and similar massing could be accommodated on this frontage. Any development off Goal Street would need to sensitively interact with the buildings fronting onto St Owen Street, a number of which are Listed, but multi storey development could be achieved fronting onto Goal Street.

In total it is envisaged that approx. x sqm of B1 office floor space could be created in a city centre development site, ideally located for the railway station, existing retail and leisure offer, and a range of government, legal, and other supportive assets.

Herefordshire – County of Culture

Text to be follow

Quick Facts

Sponsor

Scale

Type

Location

Investment Type

Programme

Opportunity

The Lugg Living Landscape: Hereford's Green

Overview

Being a rural city, Hereford is surrounded by a fertile, living, working, landscape which offers an opportunity to “get away from it all”. However access to the network of walks and byways can be restrictive even for those living in and around the city. Frequently there is a lack of car parking facilities, routes can be poorly signed or maintained, and access for those with mobility constraints can be varied.

Hereford's situation on the banks of the River Wye is well known, what is less well appreciated is the city's interaction and relationship with the River Lugg, a significant tributary of the Wye which flows to the east of the city.

The Lugg river valley stretches throughout the north of the county from the Welsh Border to its confluence with the Wye to the south east of Hereford. The section of river valley between Bodenham and Hereford features lush meadows, working farm landscapes, and a series of artificial lakes formed from mineral extraction.

The landscape of this section of the Lugg Valley is generally flat, of varied use, and offers significant potential for an enhancement to the natural and ecological environment. The mineral extraction sites at Wellington and Lugg Bridge provide opportunity for a variety of future ecological and leisure uses. Working with the private sector including the extractive industry is, therefore, going to be crucial.

Habitat restoration is considered the primary long term use for these extraction sites but this does not preclude complementary uses. It is anticipated that the length of the Lugg Valley between Hereford and Bodenham is opened up for sensitively designed public access with as appropriate to the specific context: enhancements to existing and construction of new footpaths, river access points, wildlife viewing points, car parking locations, and wildlife habitats.

The project will have a number of additional benefits, firstly by providing opportunities to deliver a range of health and wellbeing benefits, improving phosphate levels and building in flood resilience within the River Lugg; and increasing attractiveness of the area by boosting its wildlife offer.

Furthermore, by working with landowners the project will help sustainable agricultural practices, conserving valuable Herefordshire soils and building resilience within the important farming industry.



Corridor

Quick Facts

Sponsor	Herefordshire Nature Trust
Scale	£5m
Type	Habitat restoration and linked visitor attractions
Location	Lugg River Valley north east Hereford
Investment Type	Construction and business opportunities
Programme	2018-2028

Opportunity

Queenswood already attracts 450,000 visitations per year, many from the wider region. The aim is to boost this number and increase the value derived from and to visitors and residents alike by making the wider Lugg living landscape into a better place for people and wildlife. Work has already been planned to enhance Bodenham Lake from both perspectives.

A number of facilities will be constructed or improved to provide better visitor infrastructure. Limited eco-friendly housing might even be possible off the back of the restoration of the natural environment. Activities will range from the passive – bird and wildlife watch hides and trails, to the active – water based recreation, pond dipping, nature trails. The landscape design will attract visitors businesses and residents alike, furthering the aim of making the county into a great place to live whilst maintaining and enhancing its natural capital by increasing its resilience to flooding, climate change, loss of pollinators that service agriculture, etc.

Opportunities will exist to provide supplementary services such as café's, souvenir shops, equipment hire and activity booking as well as accommodation provision. This type of project has even more economic potential in other more rural areas of the county such as the north west where there are huge opportunities for nature based tourism through landscape and wildlife enhancements.

Countywide ambition

Business Incubator Programme

Overview

There is an amazingly diverse and inventive range of businesses operating across Herefordshire, of which a significant proportion (State figure) are micro enterprises – businesses employing less than 10 people. Taken together these businesses employ x percent of the Herefordshire workforce.

Herefordshire has always been a county which supports its own and where small, family based businesses have grown to become nationally and internationally recognised brands. Tyrells Crisps, Bulmers, Westons Cider, M&M Sports, PGL Leisure, have grown and prospered within the county.

With the right environment and support other businesses could follow these trailblazers, if growth companies were identified targeted packages of support could be developed that would aim to further increase growth and employment prospects.

Vibrant, growing, innovative companies exist across the county. There is no particular geography where these businesses are located, Hereford as the largest settlement clearly has the largest number of companies but not the monopoly on fantastic businesses. The market towns and the rural areas also have their fair share of innovators and, importantly, are able to serve different markets and take advantage of wider opportunities.

To promote and provide a focus for this support it is proposed to develop a series of business incubation centres which provide flexible, affordable, workspace, accompanied with a wraparound offer of meeting rooms, reception facilities, postal and ICT services.

The suite of incubation centres will be anchored by a large incubation centre on the Enterprise Zone in Hereford, this building is to be housed in a refurbished building financed by Herefordshire Council, ERDF funding and government sources. Other centres will be either newly built or created in existing council buildings across the market towns. The rollout of this programme will be dictated by the provision and availability of suitably located and specified buildings, however the key market towns will be prioritised, in particular where is a shortage of business accommodation or known demand exists.

An accompanying range of business support services will be coordinated across the suite of centres by the Marches Growth Hub and Herefordshire Council working closely with partners such as Wolverhampton University.

This business support will include access to funding and grants, provision of workshops, seminars, and business support. A range of advice will be given to businesses looking to grow, taking on staff, or thinking of starting a new venture, this will be supported by a series of sector specific networks, and business mentors passing on their experience and knowledge to those starting their business journey.

Quick Facts

Sponsor	tbc
Scale	£8m
Type	B1 office and light industrial incubation accommodation
Location	Herefordshire Market Towns
Investment Type	Equity co-investment and development finance, developers and construction partners
Programme	2019-2025

Opportunity

The council are undertaking to construct the first, and probably largest, Incubation Hub by refurbishing a building on the Enterprise Zone to be opened in 2018. A number of potential locations across the market towns are being explored in the search for sites for similar, if smaller, buildings.

To bring forward the project the council will be investigating a number of delivery options, whether direct development of new build premises, refurbishment or conversion of existing buildings, or placing council land into a development agreement with a third party provider.

There are potential partnering opportunities for office developers and operators of incubation space in addition to the construction opportunities involved with the development of a suite of centres. This is over and above the benefits that will accrue to the tenants of these centres, which will provide accommodation to house growing companies and facilitate new employment creation.

Model Farm Enterprise Park

Overview

The Model Farm Enterprise Park project is a unique proposition that will support the economic viability of southern Herefordshire. It will deliver a strategic employment site located on the M50 motorway and will unlock £32m of private sector investment (7:1 private to public ratio), 10ha of employment land, 1000 jobs/£31 m per annum GVA uplift and 29,000m² of industrial internal floor space to meet an evidenced need.

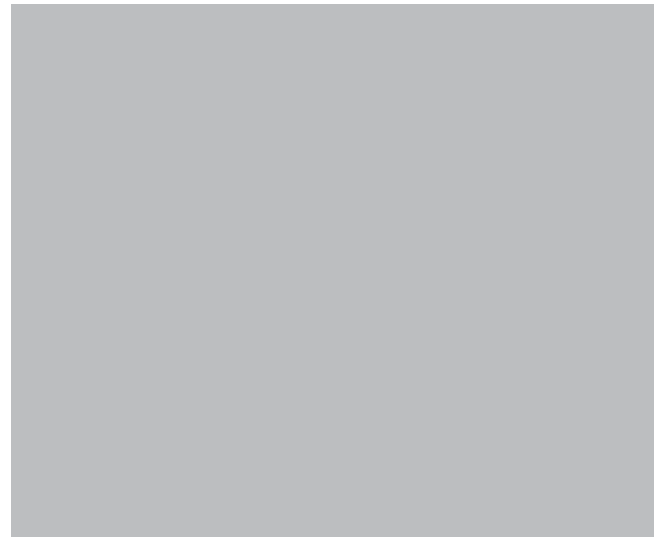
Planning permission for the scheme is in place and the site is wholly owned by the council. The council proposes to develop the infrastructure on the site then directly sell plots to developers or owner occupiers.

Model Farm is the gateway to markets in the Midlands, Wales, the West and the Republic of Ireland due to excellent transport links that include direct access to the M50 to the Midlands/South West/M5, the A40 (linking to the M4 corridor) to the South West/Wales/Bristol and the A49 to Hereford and the spine of the Marches.

Model Farm has the flexibility to provide land/premises to meet the requirements of a range of business uses and sizes with plots available from a ½ acre to the entire 20 acre site. There has been a significant amount of initial interest in the development due to the current under supply within south Herefordshire and neighbouring authorities.

With its excellent motorway and other transport links, the site is a key gateway between the Marches/ Midlands, the west of England, Wales and the Irish export market. The wider area provides an outstanding business environment with a strong, loyal and proactive private sector and an excellent track record of delivering new housing, jobs and businesses.

Model Farm is situated within a sustainable urban extension to the market town of Ross on Wye that will deliver over 600 homes. These new houses will provide homes for workers and on the site with the development of the enterprise park providing developers confidence and a greater certainty for a timely delivery of the allocations.



Quick Facts

Sponsor	Herefordshire Council
Scale	£1m to £45m
Type	Commercial business part development. Small scale residential and leisure / retail uses.
Location	Ross-on-Wye, south Herefordshire. Development finance
Investment Type	Co-investment
Programme	2018-2028

Opportunity

Following the installation of the site infrastructure plots will be offered to the business and development market. Given the close proximity to the motorway network and lack of localised competing commercial floor space the site will be attractive to investors and owner occupiers alike. Plots can be configured to accommodate a wide variety of end users and size requirements ranging from a half acre to 8 acres. Purchase of the entire estate as a development opportunity will be considered.

Particular regard will be given to speculative B1 developments that offer modern, attractive architecture that sets a high quality precedent for the park. As with any large employment site it is recognised that there will be the opportunity to accommodate a certain element of a wraparound offer, whether leisure or food related. This element will be planned from the outset and particular sites will be offered for these purposes.

There is a limited opportunity for a partial development of the site buffer zone for a residential purpose, this would need to be sympathetic to both the neighbouring existing residential uses and the proposed commercial space on the site.

Redevelopment of Leominster Broad Street car

Overview

Leominster is the principle market town in the north of Herefordshire. With a population of 12,000 and a similarly sized catchment area the town provides a service and retail hub for a sizeable element of the county and beyond. Additionally the town is scheduled to accommodate considerable growth with an additional 2,300 houses proposed to be constructed within the Master Plan timescales.

The residential growth of the town requires support in terms of an enhanced service, employment, and retail offer. Whilst a large employment site is allocated to the south of the town there is a need to identify and bring forward suitable sites within the town centre that can accommodate retail and service provision.

With its connectivity to the existing retail core, the heritage offered by the nearby Leominster Priory, and waterside opportunities on the banks of the Kenwater river, the current Broad Street car park offers an ideal location for a range of potential end uses. Sequentially it is perhaps the best located site within the town to accommodate an enhanced retail provision, and given its size it could be redeveloped for a single or multiple occupier(s).

Opportunity

The site is approximately 3 acres in size (check), is flat, has direct access to the A44, links into an existing footpath network and is within a single, public, ownership.

Herefordshire Council as landowners are committed to undertaking a market valuation of the site and will be appointing agents tasked with managing the marketing of the land in the anticipation of receiving expressions of interest/bids from prospective purchasers/developers.

Uses that significantly upgrade or improve the current retail and service provision within the town will be particularly interesting to the council.



Quick Facts

Sponsor	Herefordshire Council
Scale	Dependant on end use
Type	Redevelopment site with potential for a variety of end uses
Location	Leominster
Investment Type	Development partner or purchaser
Programme	2017-2019

Leominster Railway Station Improvements

Overview

Located on the Cardiff to Manchester line, Leominster benefits from an hourly service in both directions, with typical journey times to Hereford of 16 minutes, or of approx. 40 minutes to reach Shrewsbury. Ordinarily this level of service would present significant commuting opportunities from the station both locally to Hereford, Ludlow and Shrewsbury but also more widely to Cardiff and Manchester.

Passenger numbers at the station are on the increase with the 2014/15 number of passengers rising by just over 25,000 on the 2013/14 figure to a total of just under 274,000 per annum. It is considered that passenger numbers could further increase if the facilities at the station were improved. Currently the station lacks for toilet facilities, refreshments, and an appropriately sized car park.

The current station accommodates approximately 15 car parking spaces with some additional disabled spaces. Given the relative distance from the town centre and other long term car parking options this lack of spaces significantly impacts on the attractiveness of the station from a commuter perspective.

Alternative car parking arrangements should be investigated, with a preference for a location to the east of the railway line and access direct from the A49 trunk road. Potential exists to construct new car parking facilities on land currently constrained for other uses due to the proximity to a flood plain, and the relative market unattractiveness due to being sandwiched between the A49 and the railway.

These facilities would provide easily accessible, highly visible, long term car parking that could equally serve the railway station and the wider, long stay, parking requirements for Leominster.

Opportunity

Potential exists to develop a surface car park on current agricultural land at a location between the A49 and Marches railway line to the east of the current railway station. An appropriate charging regime could be introduced commensurate with the car park serving long stay users and commuters.

Additional but ancillary commercial uses could be introduced where they serve the station users and provide a complementary service to the railway station and car parking. In particular it is noted that a number of basic services are currently not available at Leominster station and the addition of these, either as part of the car parking provision or within the existing station building, would be supported.



Quick Facts

Sponsor	TBC
Scale	£2m to £3m
Type	Car parking construction and potential ancillary activities
Location	Leominster
Investment Type	Development partner or purchaser
Programme	2019-2021

The Herefordshire Food and Rural Business Centre

Overview

The Herefordshire Food and Rural Business Centre will be a showcase for food, drink and creative and rural industries in Herefordshire with the aim of providing a high quality retail and leisure offer and for both local people and visitors.

It is expected that the Centre will be located in a semi-rural location and perhaps act as a farm diversification project which will secure the future of the farm business and enable other local businesses to be brought on as partners and tenants as the business opportunities grow.

Established early on as a farm shop using produce grown on the farm, complemented with other local food and drink suppliers the Herefordshire Centre will become a catalyst to develop the wholesale, catering and butchery side of the business and has the potential to diversify with tenant partners into craft, exhibition space, local services, café, office space and retail units and even allotments.

The Centre will provide an opportunity for rural businesses to meet their customers and create an exciting environment for them to grow their businesses in a flexible creative place.

Opportunity

In a new approach for Herefordshire we picture the Herefordshire Centre growing from a simple farm shop enterprise to become a collection of businesses which will become established as a vibrant working community in itself.

Choosing a location and structure suited to a variety of different business enterprises the Herefordshire Centre will create the opportunities to grow to include a wide offer of retail, leisure, crafts and even local services such as a post office making it a popular stop for both passing visitors and the local population.

Supporting Herefordshire and the Market Towns is key to the opportunity as is identifying a major site or site(s) in Herefordshire where the creation of a the Centre will add to the local offer without displacing existing local services.

The Centre will be located near major transport route, such as the A49, M50, A40 corridors, and located within a catchment area incorporating a market town and surrounding villages. More than one centre could be developed if there is appropriate demand.

The provision on site will complement existing offers in the area. However with carefully planned development and growth the Food Centre will be able to create jobs and opportunities for a variety of local businesses. A different planning approach to the project will allow for a variety of small businesses, starter units and flexibility of use to give opportunities for new businesses to start, grow and move on in a location with great facilities.

Successes in the county include the Hop Pocket and Oakchurch, and outside the county the Ludlow Food Centre, there is a real opportunity to repeat this success in other parts of the County.

Quick Facts

Sponsor	Private sector landowner or estate
Scale	£3m
Type	Herefordshire Food and Tourism Offer
Location	TBC
Investment Type	Equity investor, pump priming, DEFRA Growth Programme
Programme	2018-2025

Developing a distinctive identity

A supportive business landscape

Small and Medium sized enterprises (SME's) are the lifeblood of the Herefordshire economy. X% of all Herefordshire businesses can be considered an SME, and collectively they employ over y people. Supporting the growth of SME's is fundamental to the success of Herefordshire and the ambitions contained within this Master Plan.

Yet support needs to be targeted to have the most impact. The sharing of scarce financial and human resource will be most beneficial if allocated to those businesses most likely or willing to grow.

Fundamental to this approach is the utilisation of the Herefordshire Growth Hub. Part of a Marches wide support network the Growth Hub is both a virtual and physical resource. A website (www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk) acts as the access point for all public sector support available to businesses within the county, ranging across patent advice from the Intellectual Property Office to exporting support from UK Trade and Investment.

Supporting the website is the physical Growth Hub building located centrally in Rotherwas, Hereford. The Hub houses Herefordshire Council business facing staff alongside partners from the University of Wolverhampton, UKTI, the Chamber of Commerce, and a range of private sector organisations.

Since opening in January 2016 the Hub has hosted over 60 events for businesses with a combined audience of over 1200. Although a number of outreach events have been hosted in various market towns the Hub is the primary resource for engaging with businesses and the aim is to double the number of events and participants per annum, and achieve a 85% positive rating of the service.

Information, training and other advice is only one form of support to be made available to businesses. Research of the local business community has identified access to finance, the availability of suitable business accommodation, and networking and sector support as also being important to the local business base.

Utilising EU, national, and local funding a range of projects are being developed to address the above issues and provide support to those businesses looking to grow. Projects such as the Building Investment Grant, Business Growth Programme, and the Shell Store Incubation centre provide a locally delivered partner to a range of research and innovation projects being run through a variety of regional Universities.



Given the GVA imbalance that exists within the county there is a particular emphasis on improving productivity through these and other programmes. A leading component of this approach is the development, by the University of Wolverhampton, of a new Cyber Security centre of excellence. Once constructed the building will provide state of the art cyber security research facilities and enable direct business engagement into research projects, whether themselves or in partnership with the university.

Whilst the majority of the business base may consist of SME's, the largest 25 companies across the county employ a significant proportion of the total workforce. The retention of these businesses and a continued programme of investment, is crucial to maintaining a diverse business base, whilst also demonstrating that large, multinational companies are capable of operating from within the county.

Inspiring an entrepreneurial generation

Herefordshire has a proud record of developing and nurturing successful businesses. Household names such as Bulmer's, Tyrrells Crips, and Weston's Cider, are joined by less known but equally important firms such as PGL, Allpay, and Cargill, all have their origins as local firms come good. Given the competition for inward investment it is important for the county that the next generation of entrepreneurs are identified early and supported to grow their business within the county.

Young people within Herefordshire have amazing potential, and a fantastic opportunity. The county can boast leading colleges, and schools, institutions that compare favourably with the best the rest of the UK has to offer. However the academic life is not for every young person and there are likely to be a significant proportion of young people who would welcome a different path in life, one that can give a degree of independence, flexibility, reward, and huge satisfaction.

Consideration is being given to the development of a programme of support and enablement to encourage young people to harness their entrepreneurial skills and to begin life as their own boss. Already the Young enterprise initiative operates across x schools and last year had over y participants who started a business, developed the business plan, sold products and eventually closed the company down.

In addition to giving students direct experience of running a business the programme is a significant enabler of social and communication skills, contributing to young people's CV's and employability in a way that perfectly complements an academic education.

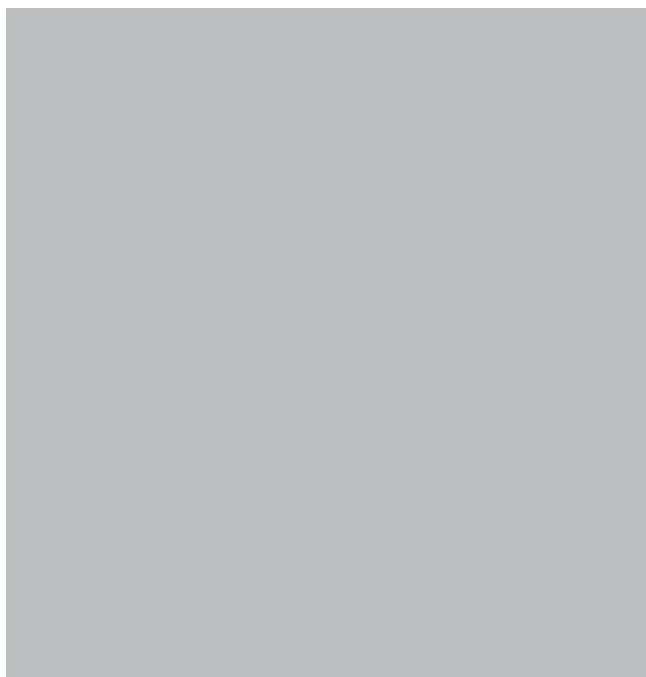
To foster entrepreneurship across the county a wider range of initiatives would need to be held and over a period of time where success and impact can be measured properly. Although the composition of any wider programme is in development it is feasible to assume that the following projects could play a part:

- Establishing a school alumni programme with former pupils running businesses acting as champions and ambassadors for the school and for enterprise.
- Subsidised start up space for young people fresh from college or school
- Targeted training events aimed specifically at young people
- A programme of talks and presentations from successful local business people
- A mentoring programme where successful businesses provide advice and guidance to new start ups.

The potential within Herefordshire's young people is a resource that should be harnessed for the good of the county. If becoming a business person was considered to be a viable route to work for even a small proportion of the counties school and college leavers there would be a significant increase in the local business base.

Whilst it is almost inevitable that a high proportion of these businesses may fail, that itself is part of the learning experience. Dealing with customers, suppliers, and work colleagues will generate confidence, initiative, and resilience.

This has the potential to deliver additional benefits could be felt across the social care and benefits system as young people find the inspiration and drive to make their business a success.



Dare to Win

Overview

With its varied landscape and considerable natural features, Herefordshire is an ideal location for a wide variety of outdoor pursuits and active leisure interests, whether as a part of an organised event or an individual pursuit. Whilst there is a considerable number of businesses who offer formalised activities, and clubs who provide planned and organised events, there is still considerable scope for a greater coordination and integration of a host of sporting and recreational activities.

Within the UK there is a growing appetite and market for outdoor and “alternative” sporting activities. In Herefordshire the established local outdoor activity scene features the established sports of canoeing and mountain biking alongside less mainstream activities such as mountain boarding, extreme assault courses, and zorbing.

The potential exists to become a lead provider for these alternative sporting activities by providing specialist facilities for particular activities, increased marketing of activity locations and specific companies, and by hosting regional and national level events or competitions. The generation of a suite of seasonal activities and improving the coordination between providers and clubs/organisations would help develop a year round programme of events that are delivered via a small number of specific sites with appropriate supporting facilities.

It is recognised that these alternative sporting activities are self directed and are able to fit around a participants other life commitments. Unlike the more traditional, team based activities, people can pick and choose the level of personal commitment to attach to these activities without any impact on a wider team or group. It is also apparent that the main participants of alternative sports are of a certain demographic, often fairly young, socially mobile, and relatively financially well off. It is precisely this demographic group which Herefordshire is trying to attract to the county, either as employees or as new business owners.

Hosting competitions or events within the county will bring an associated level of profile within that sporting base. The size and scale of events will bring an appropriate level of exposure and profile. Herefordshire should aim to host at least three national level competitions on an annual basis. The specific sports to be hosted are to be determined.

8. A Pipeline of Projects

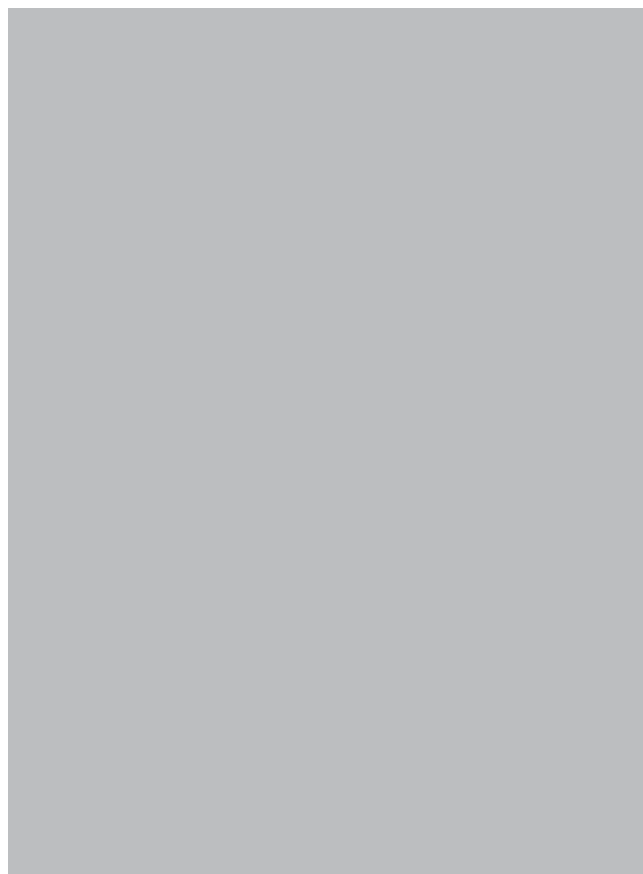
The stated VIP's within this version of the Master Plan represent the current proposals that will encourage economic growth. By no means is this list exhaustive and neither does it reflect all the opportunities within Herefordshire. A fundamental aspect of the master plan is that the document is a "living process", and that capacity exists for the projects and priorities within the plan to change over time.

It is envisaged that over the length of the plan period, projects will pass through the plan system, opportunities will become developed, proposals may change, or projects become implemented. In order to refresh the plan a pipeline of projects is required to replace those projects that pass through the plan.

To develop this pipeline of projects a clear process is required. A detailed set of criteria will be produced to give direction to organisations or individuals looking to gain master plan support for their project, for example projects will need to be of an appropriate scale, in conformity with the Core Strategy, and deliver economic growth to the county.

It is proposed that the plan will be reviewed on an annual basis and that an opportunity to include new projects within the plan will become an essential element of this review. Demonstrating that there is a forward process to include new projects will assist in generating confidence and local "buy-in" to the project in addition to enabling the plan to react to new opportunities or market demand.

The set of criteria to be used when considering new projects is being determined and will be published either in the final version of the plan or shortly after adoption.



9. Partnership and Delivery

The Master Plan will be built upon flexible partnership working, focused on specific areas of activity or project delivery. The challenges presented by the size, geography, and economy of Herefordshire make it virtually impossible to have a single partner for all projects. We have clear evidence of our success in delivering using this flexible strategy and believe strongly that it delivers real benefit to residents whilst also providing a better return on investment to our partners and government.

It is envisaged that the Master Plan can only be successfully delivered if this flexible partnership approach is continued, and preferably expanded. To deliver the projects required to drive our economic change we will need to draw resources from central government, public sector partners and, crucially, the private and investment sectors.

The council does however, have an important role in delivering an evidence base and being an advocate for the Master Plan. Through its governance and democratic processes the Council will initiate the formation of the Master Plan, this will include drafting the initial documentation and facilitating consultation events. Additionally to give momentum and value to the process the Council will formally approve the final Master Plan document through Full Council. (?) The Council has been promoting, over a number of years, a Local Development Framework which proactively allocates land for residential and industrial growth, whilst also identifying the required infrastructure to facilitate development.

Having gone through a significant period of public consultation and challenge (before finally receiving government approval) the adopted LDF informs the development of the Master Plan by setting out the broad (and sometimes specific) parameters for growth, where this should be located, what infrastructure is required to bring growth forward, and what quantum's are suitable.

The LDF therefore forms a building block within the Master Plan which shapes the context and determination of all other projects within the Master Plan structure. To make a contribution toward the Master Plan objectives projects will need to be in general conformity with the LDF and must play close regard to its place shaping policies.

The LDF should be seen as the strategic framework for the promotion of growth whereas the Master Plan will provide the specific projects and targets which will actually deliver the growth required to drive forward the Herefordshire economy.



The Local Plan growth aspirations and the Master Plan projects will become the catalyst for significant opportunities to attract private sector investment. The development of the Master Plan will signal a proactive approach towards the county's engagement with the investment community and the delivery of development opportunities, their location, size, scope, and design.

We are very conscious that the publication of the Master Plan document should signal the commencement, not finish, of the transformation of the Herefordshire economy. Delivery of projects is key to success. The Master Plan sets the objectives, priority projects, and targets but to deliver projects additional resource will need to be committed.

The delivery of the Master Plan, in terms of running specific projects, will be assigned to a range of partners depending on who is most appropriate as the lead. The lead partner may wish to involve others in the project delivery, in this case membership would not be proscribed but would be flexible and consist of relevant partners. This approach provides flexibility rather than rigidity, can take advantage of capacity and experience across partners, and, where appropriate, will be determined through competitive procurement exercises.

Growth through Partnership

It is clearly apparent that the public sector is both reducing in size and scale, and is not a generator of wealth within the Herefordshire economy. To deliver a higher value economy for the county and sustain economic growth, with its associated benefits, there will be a future reliance on private sector investment and businesses to take the lead.



However the public sector and the council in particular, is in the strong position of being able to influence the environment in which the county's businesses operate and can create the conditions that will best enable their growth and address our growth ambitions.

Equally the council has a role to play as the enabler of the Master Plan. Using its resources and democratic governance, the council, along with partners from across the public, private and voluntary sectors, will facilitate the evolution of the Master Plan to a point where it becomes established policy for the organisation, can be adopted by partners, and pitched to the investment community.

Whilst the Master Plan is aiming to create conditions for growth and bring forward a higher value economy it is acknowledged that only by working in partnership can the public, private, and educational sectors determine a set of projects that, in combination, will deliver on these optimum growth conditions.

Timescale

The Master Plan describes a step change for the Herefordshire economy. This is something that cannot be achieved overnight, in many cases projects will need to build a business case, attract funding, gain permissions, complete construction, all before delivery can commence. It is proposed that the Master Plan builds growth over a number of years both to ensure the enabling infrastructure is in place, and also because the various projects within the Master Plan will build upon each other in becoming successful. (For example?)

It is envisaged that the Master Plan will map out activity across Herefordshire over the next 15 years, activity will be broken down into three five year periods to reflect the short, medium and long term proposals. This time period both aligns with the Local Development Framework and provides a realistic timescale for projects to both be implemented and have an impact.

Individual project delivery timescales will depend on a host of decisions and therefore cannot be set with precision, but the Plan will set out, with reasonable expectations, the key timings and an expectation of increasing rates of development across the county as the projects progress.

The timescale for delivery of all projects will be regularly monitored and reviewed. Proposals for redevelopment in the longer term will be subject to sufficient progress being made on early and mid-term redevelopments and will be subject to appropriate impact tests.





Funding

The full range of funding mechanisms to support the delivery of the plan will be investigated, this will include government support, private sector investment, as well as the full suite of funding options available to Herefordshire Council including, but not limited to, Community Infrastructure Levy, Tax Increment Finance, and Business Improvement Districts.

These mechanisms can help support development but the Master Plan must generate self-sustaining investment by creating confidence in the future success and prosperity of the county amongst developers, investors and businesses. The Partners role will be to ensure that the Priority Projects within the Plan are deliverable, will deliver a contribution towards economic growth and/or a higher value economy, and to consider investment opportunities to enable delivery.

Moving Forwards

The role of the Plan is not to set a definitive blueprint but a framework of policies and projects which can be reviewed on a regular basis and as delivery commences can be assessed as to the impact that it being had on the economy of the County.

