

Ross on Wye Investment Plan 2021



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

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

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Market Town Investment Plans

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

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

The Vision for Ross-on-Wye

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

The Main Challenges facing the town

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

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

The Town's Assets and Strengths

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

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

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

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

Issues in Ross-on-Wye

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

Project summary

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

Development of **employment** opportunities:

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

Improvements to support the visitor economy:

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

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

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

BACKGROUND

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

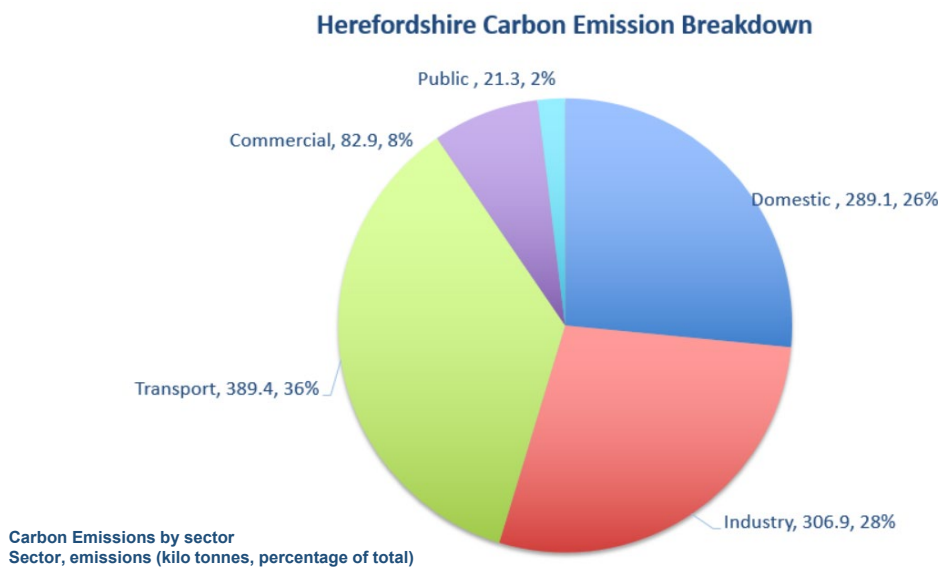
The market town investment plans identify a long term vision for the growth of the towns and a programme of potential projects to enable sustainable economic development to deliver the vision. The market town investment plans will also play a key role in the development of a new long term county wide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

Climate and Ecological Emergency

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

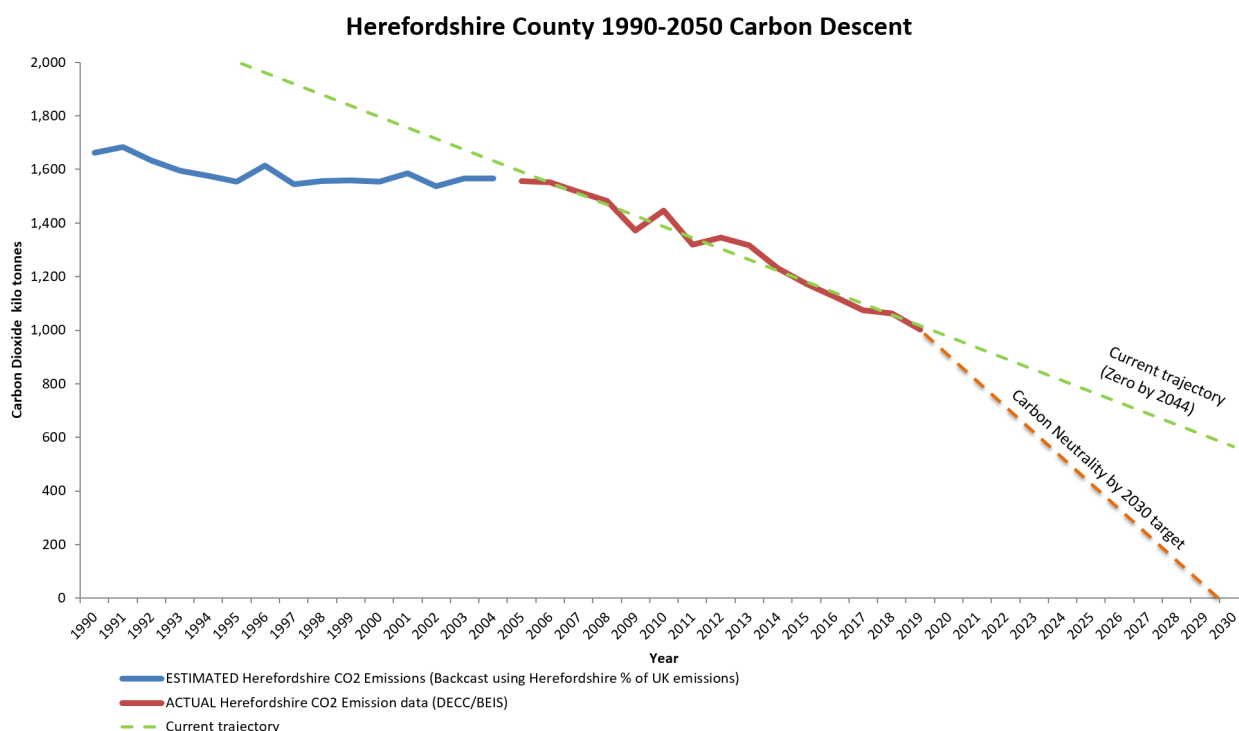
Further to these declarations the council approved the ambitious new target to become zero carbon and nature rich by 2030.

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



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

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



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

Community Including the Impact of Covid-19

The damage to the economy and to health from Covid-19 has been felt across Herefordshire. During 2020 and the early part of 2021, the pandemic reached all corners of the county and has had an impact on every community. During 2020, the UK economy contracted by 9.9% (office of National Statistics¹). It remains to be seen what the long-term impact of the pandemic will be, but within many sectors we are likely to see a shift to working, learning and engaging in commerce remotely on digital platforms.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Economy

Herefordshire faces a number long term economic challenges such as the lowest level of productivity of any county in England², a low wage economy (19% below the national average³), a deficit of higher level skills (41.4% of the population has NVQ level 4 national average of 43.1%⁴), an aging population (25% over 65 compared to a 18% nationally), and a significant shortage of labour (2.9% claiming unemployment benefits⁵).

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

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

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

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

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

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

³ [Understanding Herefordshire ONS data 2019](#)

⁴ [ONS Population Survey 2020](#)

⁵ [ONS claimant count October 2021](#)

CONTEXT

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

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

All 5 towns and Hereford work as an economic system as shown by transport origin and destination data: 20,000 of the 29,000 people who work and live in Herefordshire in the context of these settlements work in Hereford⁶. The economic development of these towns as a group is the best way of underpinning the overall economic development of the county.

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

Ross Town Investment Plan – relationship to the Neighbourhood Development Plan

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

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

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

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

THE VISION FOR ROSS-ON-WYE

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

Objectives

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

⁶ ONS: commuting 2011 census

To achieve this we will:

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

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

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

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

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

THE MAIN CHALLENGES FACING THE TOWN

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

- Is less deprived than the England average on all measures.
- Is the second largest market town in Herefordshire with a population of 11,309; with 8% more over 65s than the national average⁷
- Has fewer jobs per head than the Herefordshire average although relatively higher than all other market towns in the county.
- Experienced an increase in benefit claimants in the early stages of the pandemic (April to September 2020) from 300 to 350 (17%)
- Experienced the loss of 65 jobs (1.3% of the total) between 2015-18.
- Overall highest number of jobs across all 5 towns. Distinctive sectors: manufacturing, wholesale/retail, transport, accommodation and food, real estate, services.
- Has fewer low value and more high value properties than the national average.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

English Indices of Deprivation 2019

Ross on Wye



Domains of Deprivation

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

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

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

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

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

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

Regional Economic and Industrial Strategy

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

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

The draft LIS identifies major growth opportunities around:

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

The challenges facing Ross are similarly reflected across the wider marches region. The Marches Strategic Economic Plan⁸ characterises these challenges in terms of ‘market failures’ as follows:

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

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

THE TOWN'S ASSETS AND STRENGTHS

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

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

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

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

The Ross Development Trust

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

The Ross Community Housing Trust

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

SPATIAL CONTEXT

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

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

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

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

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

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

THEORY OF CHANGE

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

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

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

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

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

PROJECTS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Investment Proposal Form

Project Name: Model Farm – Ross Enterprise Park

<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism & the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town & Civic amenities</i>		
			<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
<p><i>Description</i> Ross Enterprise Park - The Ross Enterprise Park site is owned by Herefordshire Council and it has been a long standing employment land allocation. The gross site area is 15 hectares / 37 acres and has outline planning consent for 29,400 m² for B1, B2 and B8 floor space and full consent for access off the A40. The site is contiguous to land that is currently allocated housing land with extant permissions. This land is in the ownership separately of Herefordshire Council, a private landowner and the MOD with advanced discussions on development and an agreement that is currently in abeyance and not formally constituted. This agreement includes the potential for servicing the Model Farm site as part of a wider housing scheme that requires easements over the Model Farm site for drainage purposes.</p>					
Demand Analysis	<p>Engagement with agents and businesses through the development of the Plan has identified significant local demand for employment land. There is a need for public sector intervention in delivery via both its current 2 separate landholdings and co-ordinating the interests of the parties involved.</p>		£20M (est)	5 years	<p>The gross site area is 15 hectares / 37 acres and has outline planning consent for 29,400 m² for B1, B2 and B8 floor space and full consent for access off the A40. The site is contiguous to land that is currently allocated housing land with extant permissions.</p>
Potential funding sources	<p>Model Farm development could be brought forward on a phased basis by Herefordshire Council including the potential for housing which could attract support of Homes England. Planning risks for the employment plan are largely mitigated through extant consents.</p>				
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	<p>The development will generate capital receipts and rent for the Council</p>				

Investment Proposal Form

Project Name: Ross Sports Centre

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

Investment Proposal Form

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

Investment Proposal Form

Project Name: Broadmeadow & Tanyard Lane Development

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

Investment Proposal Form

Project Name: Riverside Canoe Bunkhouse & Pontoons

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

Investment Proposal Form

Project Name: Museum Without Walls

<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism & the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town & Civic amenities</i>		
<p>This project would provide an augmented reality cultural trail at sites across Ross on Wye with the potential to become a significant tourist attraction. Funding is required to facilitate an additional 9 attractions (3 already created with funding from ACE and Hidden Gems) rendered in 3D and accessible via a dedicated free App. Each exhibit will capture either a lost aspect of the town's cultural past or imagine what the future may hold. The three exhibits currently operating that provide proof of concept are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Lost Fountain (The Prospect) • Underhill (Market House) • River boats from the Wye Tour (Riverside) 			<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
			Demand Analysis	Initial elements of this project have been delivered via grant funding and provide the proof of concept. Launch of these elements in May 2021 will further prove viability in the technical execution of the project. Tourism is a key economic driver for the town and requires investment in both physical and virtual infrastructure to meet market demand and expectation and to increase both the volume and value of visits to the town (higher per visitor spend, longer visitor stays).	£200k (est)
Potential funding sources	A range of funding options exist through national funding streams				
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	The project would seek to be self-funding through subscription services, advertising and sponsorship, operated and Managed by Create Ross.				

Investment Proposal Form

Project Name: Brampton and Sellack Cycleway - Backney picnic area

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

Investment Proposal Form

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

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

Investment Proposal Form

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

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

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

Investment Proposal Form

Project Name: Ross Shop/ building frontage grant scheme

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

Market House & Market Apron Revitalisation

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

Next Steps

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

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

OBC's have been developed and submitted for:

- Ross Enterprise Park

Project Mandates have been developed and submitted for:

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

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

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

APPENDIX 1 – STRATEGIC CONTEXT SUMMARY

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

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

APPENDIX 2 – PROJECT PRIORITISATION

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

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

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

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Brampton & Sellack Cycleway/Cycle network development - Ross on Wye	Green Infrastructure	This is a joint project proposed with neighbouring Parishes including Brampton Abbots and Sellack Parishes It involves the restoration of a pedestrian/cycle bridge at Backney and utilising the disused Ross to Hereford railway line. This would open up a range of circular walks and access to a picnic site that provides access on to Backney Common. Ross Town Council could make available an area of car parking for cycle hire and other facilities. This project could in time link in to the National Cycling Network through the refurbishment of the disused rail line leading into and out of the town and linked to Hereford city centre with a continuation of the old railway route with a subsequent river crossing at Baysham and Pen-alt linking into Holme Lacy	£650	5	3	2	2	3	4	4	62.50%
Market House and Apron Plaza	Public Realm/Commercial Development	Creation of a café and renovation of 17th Century Market House and land terracing	£1,500	5	4	4	2	2	2	2	62.50%
Museum Without Walls - Ross	Tourism	This project would provide an augmented reality cultural trail at sites across Ross on Wye with the potential to become a significant tourist attraction. Funding is required to facilitate an additional 9 attractions (3 already created with funding from ACE and Hidden Gems) rendered in 3D and accessible via a dedicated free App. Each exhibit will capture either a lost aspect of the town's cultural past or imagine what the future may hold. The three exhibits currently operating that provide proof of concept are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Lost Fountain (The Prospect) • Underhill (Market House) • River boats from the Wye Tour (Riverside) 	£200	5	3	3	2	2	2	2	60.00%
High St Pedestrianisation	Public Realm	Tourism and Visitor Economy	£100	4	3	3	2	2	3	3	60.00%

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Skate Park - Ross	Community Space	This project aims to improve the existing Ross skate park to a higher 'national' standard and to provide additional facilities within the existing site to include a 5-aside football/basketball court concrete table tennis, a Football wall with holes to score goals.	£350	3	2	2	2	4	4	4	55.00%
Shop Front Grant Scheme - Ross	Commercial Development	Financial support to encourage businesses based in Ross to revitalise their shop front.	£200	3	2	3	0	2	2	3	42.50%