

Appendix 1



Leominster Town Economic Investment Plan



Leominster Town Economic Investment Plan Statement 2021

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

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

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

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Market Town Investment Plans

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

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

The Vision for Leominster

The key strategic objectives are for Leominster to:

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

The Main Challenges facing the town

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

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

The Town's Assets and Strengths

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

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

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

Issues in Leominster

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

Project summary

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

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

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

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

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

Skills Development and projects aimed at young people

- The Skills Foundry

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

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

BACKGROUND

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

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

Community Including the Impact of Covid-19

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

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

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

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

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

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

Climate and Ecological Emergency

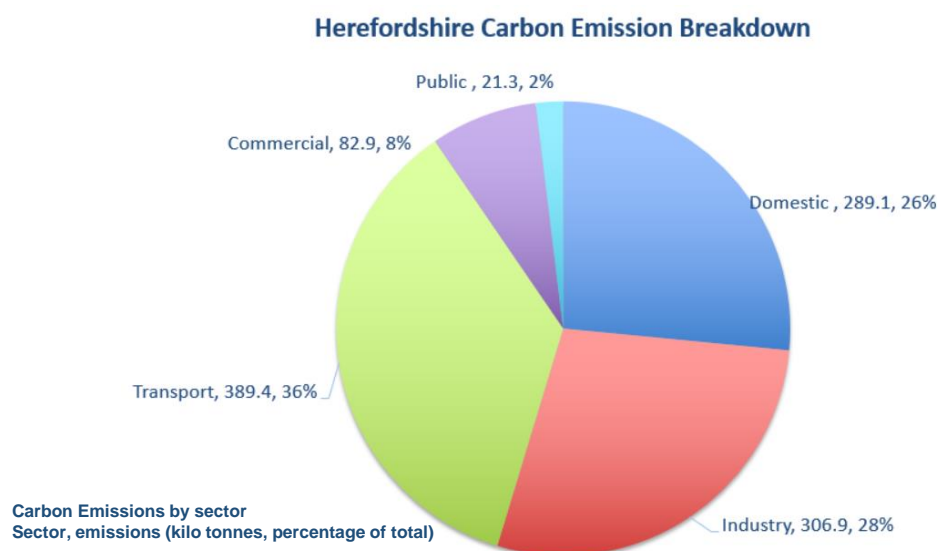
On 8 March 2019 Herefordshire Council declared a Climate Emergency following unanimous support for a climate emergency resolution at full council. This declaration was subsequently

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

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

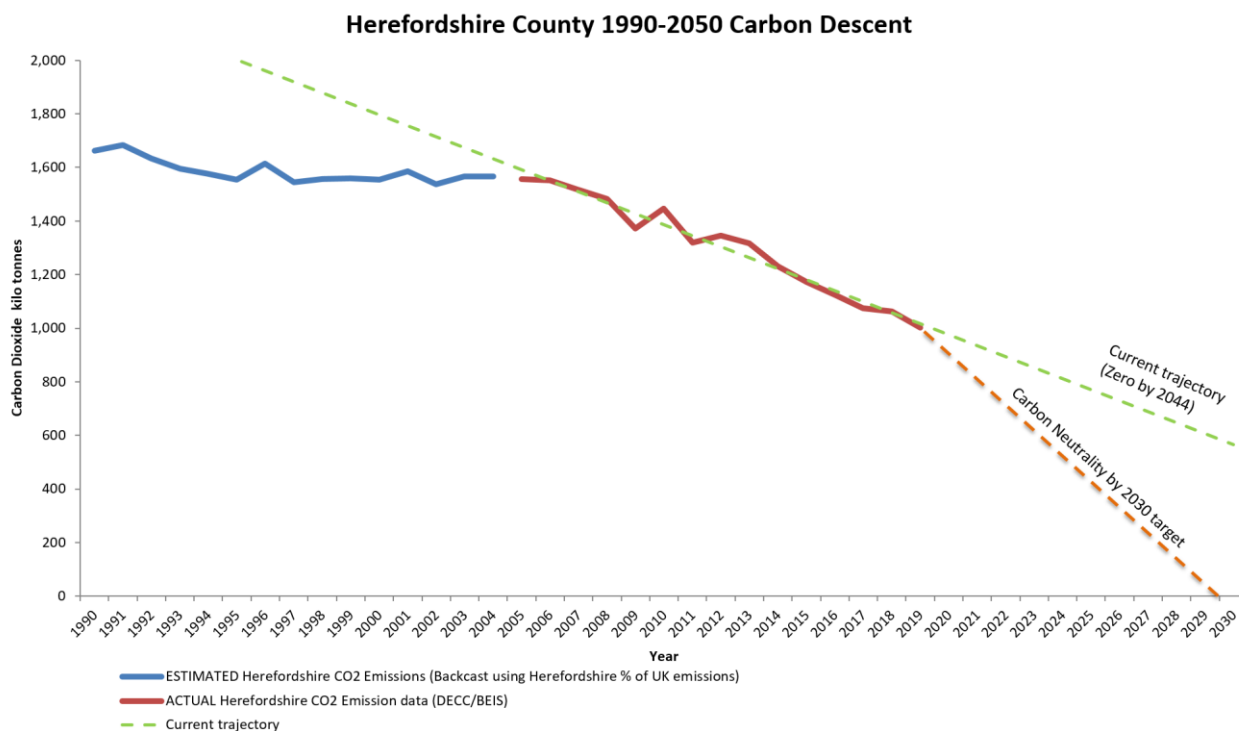
Further to these declarations the council approved the ambitious new target to become zero carbon and nature rich by 2030.

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



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

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



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

Economy

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

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

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

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

³ [Understanding Herefordshire ONS data 2019](#)

⁴ [ONS Population Survey 2020](#)

⁵ [ONS claimant count October 2021](#)

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

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

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

Tourism and the Visitor Economy

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

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

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

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

Tourism projects and the Market Town Investment Plans

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

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

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

The local economy, manufacturing and other sectors

Leominster has a strong manufacturing tradition and skilled manual base. In common with the rest of the county the economy is characterised by high rates of self-employment and a large number of micro businesses with some 90% of businesses employing nine people or less⁶ and has better than average survival rates for new start-ups. Like the rest of Herefordshire, the town has relatively low levels of unemployment, but low productivity and lower average earnings are persistent challenges and a factor in poor social mobility and young people leaving the county to seek career opportunities elsewhere. Three of Leominster's LSOA's Leominster Ridgemoor, Grange and Gateway are within the 25% most deprived in the country in relation to employment and income deprivation.

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

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

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

Digital Connectivity

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

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

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

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

⁶ [Economy & place - Understanding Herefordshire](#)

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

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

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

Leominster

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

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

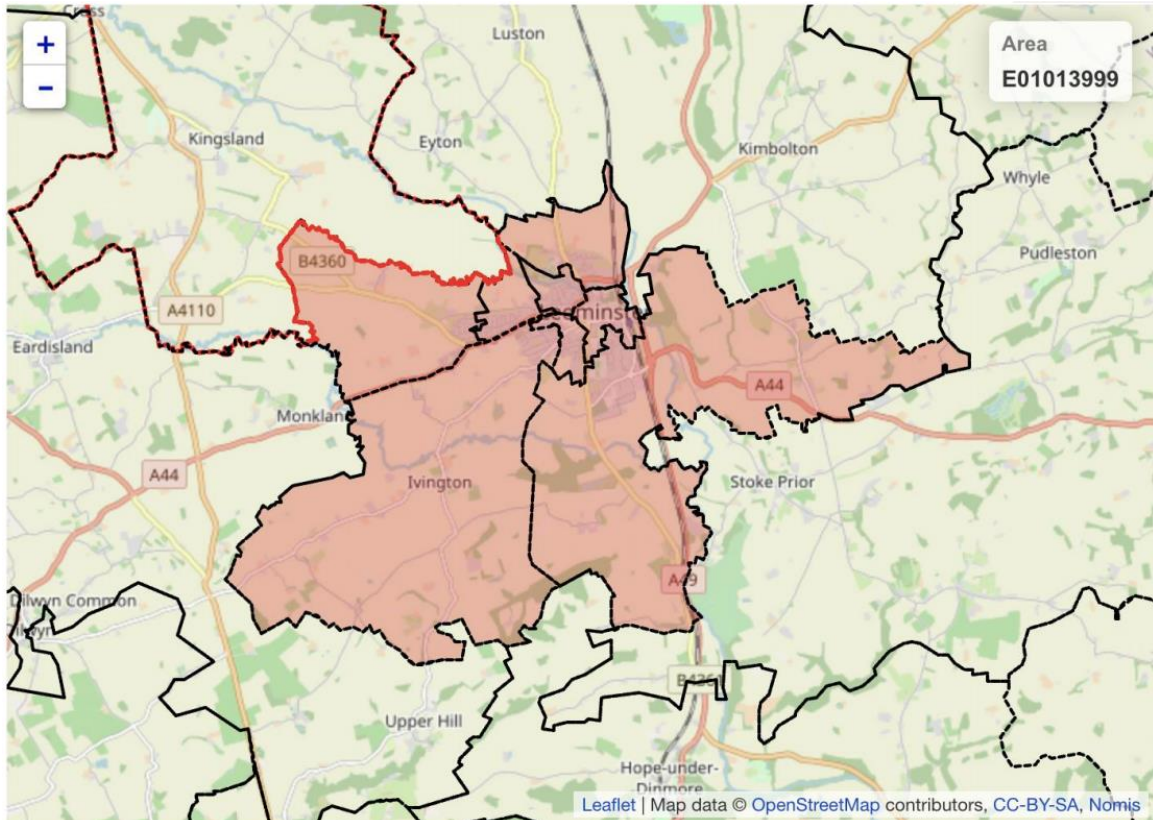
The town is bisected by the A44 which was formerly a trunk road and still provides an important cross regional route for long distance freight, commercial and tourist traffic from mid Wales to the West Midlands.

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

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

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

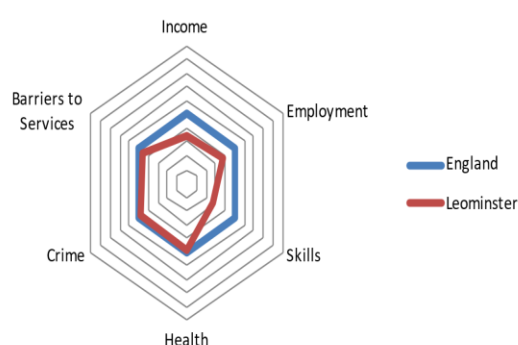
For the purpose of this work, Leominster's town boundaries are those based on the Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA's) for Leominster we have used to inform the data analysis based on the 2019 Indices of Deprivation. The work has also been cognisant of the boundaries set out in the Leominster Neighbourhood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



English Indices of Deprivation 2019

Leominster

Domains of Deprivation



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

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

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

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

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

THE VISION FOR LEOMINSTER

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

Our key strategic objectives include making Leominster a place that:

Shares our heritage and welcomes visitors

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

Commits to sustainable growth

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

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

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

THE MAIN CHALLENGES FACING THE TOWN

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

The main challenges facing Leominster:

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

THE TOWN'S ASSETS AND STRENGTHS

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

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

SPATIAL CONTEXT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

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

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

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

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

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

THEORY OF CHANGE

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

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

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

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

PROJECTS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strategically Significant Projects

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Investment Proposal Form				
Project Name: Worcester Bromyard Leominster Greenway				
<i>Intervention Framework</i>	<i>Economy and business</i>	<i>Tourism & the Visitor Economy</i>	<i>Town & Civic amenities</i>	
<p><i>Description:</i> The Worcester Bromyard Leominster Greenway project (wblgreenway.org.uk) is a key potential development in the context of developing Leominster's tourism offer. It aims to create a 16 km walking, cycling and horse-riding track along, or as near as possible to, the course of the Leominster section of the original Worcester Bromyard Leominster railway.</p> <p>The Leominster section of the Greenway's development envisages three phases:</p> <p>Phase 1: creation of a multi-user track for walkers, cyclists, equestrians and people with limited mobility from Leominster Town Centre to Steens Bridge via Stoke Prior (6km). Precise route to be determined but should directly benefit town centre businesses with increased footfall and could link to proposed Leominster Green Infrastructure Corridor³. Providing gateway to WBL Greenway, and other trails thereby creating sustainable communities through tourism and reducing isolation⁴</p> <p>Phase 2: creation of a similar multi-user track from Steens Bridge to Fencote (6km) creating sustainable communities through tourism and reducing isolation⁴</p> <p>Phase 3: creation of a similar multi-user track from Fencote to Rowden (4km)</p> <p>Work on the Worcester to Bromyard Section will be underway in a phased approach at the same time with the final phase to link the towns together.</p>		<i>Cost</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Outputs</i>
		<p>Projected costs for the Leominster section of the WBL Greenway are approximately £2.5 million (based on Sustrans estimates of £150k per km),</p>	2021-28	<p>Additional annual spend in town based on 16 km trail = £586k</p> <p>1.6 jobs (direct, indirect and induced) are supported or sustained for every km of route constructed.</p> <p>Bike hire and cycle / walking supplies shop</p>
Demand Analysis	Part of next stage feasibility			
Exit (Sustainability) Strategy	Feasibility into longer term business case required			

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

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

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

Next Steps

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

APPENDIX 1 STRATEGIC CONTEXT SUMMARY

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

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

APPENDIX 2 – PROJECT PRIORITISATION

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

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

APPENDIX 3 - KEY EMPLOYMENT SECTORS

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

Business: Location Quotient & Job Change

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