

Ledbury Town Council: Thursday 1st August 2013

Herefordshire Councillors' Reports – Elizabeth Harvey

In this report I will concentrate upon the progress of the Core Strategy through scrutiny and full council and the key messages from a scrutiny report on implementing the Community Infrastructure Levy in Herefordshire. These two subjects are closely linked and have serious implications for Ledbury along with the rest of the county.

Core Strategy

The council obtained 1,428 responses to the consultation, but has so far refused to provide an analysis of the results for the local policies which shows how people affected by the policies responded on a town-by-town basis. However three times as many people disagreed with the Ledbury policies as agreed with them.

A number of minor amendments were made to the Ledbury policies under the Core Strategy following analysis of the responses received from the March-April public consultation. These included:

LB1 – general Ledbury policies

- The policies still refer to employment land being 'new' as opposed to 'replacement'.
- They flag an additional 3 hectares of employment land now proposed as a B1 use buffer on the viaduct site between housing and the existing employment ribbon; and lose reference to this aligning with the spatial strategy (something to check).
- Strengthening links between residential areas and the town trail is more explicitly noted, and overt requirement now for developers to consult with community and town council – Hooray!

LB2 – the strategic housing site north of the viaduct

- I question whether without taking all policy and infrastructure costs into account in modelling CIL that the development can be judged viable, sustainable, deliverable.
- Housing on viaduct site down to 625 with B1 business units in buffer zone. This is good news and provides scope for a small high-tech business park close to the station.
- Weasel words inserted on now only having a 'target' of 40% affordable housing – rather than 'minimum'; and breaking of link to tenure nature in housing policy. Neither of these changes were discussed with ward members, and I am concerned that this is a weakening of the policy from its earlier version.
- Wording inserted to provide option to expand existing primary school creates some negotiating room on density and mix of housing on viaduct site. This is good news.
- Requirement for primary access to the site to be from the Hereford Road roundabout is now clearly stated. This is good news – but may impact on the financial viability of the development.
- The siting of accommodation for older people on the viaduct site remains – which is not appropriate and should be changed. I have challenged this, but officers refuse to revise the wording.
- Cycle and footpath links under the viaduct are now explicitly stated; and overt requirement for flash and normal flood risks are now stated. Both of these are good news.

Text changes

- Development phased to match provision of local infrastructure

- Better connectivity of LMR employment site to town and explicit mention of the existing sports pitches to take them out of possible development area.
- Possibility of additional employment sites to be identified through NP process not injected.
- Requirement to improve station road junction now explicit
- Possible underground car park to north of railway station providing pedestrian access to the London/Birmingham platform is now included.
- One big play area for the viaduct site rather than several little ones, and new outdoor sports facilities stated
- Reinstatement of further canal section has been linked to NP
- Viaduct no longer stated as being an 'ancient monument' – HaHaHa
- 'Ledbury: From Field to Fork Initiative' has been mis-stated as 'Field to Food'
- Stronger wording for replacement of swimming pool are included and words indicating that development of the Lawnside Road area is not a proposal in the Core Strategy have been added. Also words stating that community facilities should be replaced ahead of existing being removed. Specific requirements for additional retail have been pointed to NP.
- More wording regarding flood protection and mitigation measures
- Allocation of outstanding ~135 dwellings of the 800 allocated to the town (after taking account of existing windfalls) to be determined through Neighbourhood Planning – as is the allocation of any further employment land.

Rural Housing Policy

Since consulting upon the Core Strategy some significant changes have been made to the rural housing policies which now impose firm housing quotas on villages already targeted for general growth. The implications of these changes for villages across Herefordshire are outlined in the press release attached as an annex to this report.

Community Infrastructure Levy

I submitted a report to scrutiny on 16th July summarising the latest phase of an investigation into the evolving policy on implementing a Community Infrastructure Levy in Herefordshire. The detail of the report can be found here:

In summary, there are significant concerns that the viability modelling undertaken for the Core Strategy has not adequately accounted for the total costs imposed on the development of strategic housing sites around the county, resulting in a significant overestimation of the CIL charges which may be applied to housing development. This will put both local infrastructure and affordable housing targets at risk, while syphoning off developer monies to fund county level road building and infrastructure projects.

In Ledbury the costs of building a new/extended primary school, flood alleviation, access under the viaduct to the housing site, new sports facilities, improved and extended public open space are all left out of the financial modelling and are consequently at risk.

Full Council – 19th July

At the extraordinary meeting called to consider the Core Strategy Scrutiny recommended that:

The decision to approve the Core Strategy be deferred to allow:

1. *Meaningful discussions on areas of concern with the city and market town parish councils;*

2. *The representation of consultation responses from local communities to the place shaping policies;*
3. *Revisions to be made to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and additional financial viability modelling to be undertaken.*

I voted for this recommendation but the recommendation was rejected:

- For: 20 (9 Independent, 8 It's Our County, 3 Liberal)
- Against: 31 (27 Conservative, 3 Independent, 1 Labour)
- Abst'n: 0

It's Our County proposed an additional recommendation to the Core Strategy proposal:

That full council receive and approve the revised Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Economic Viability Assessment prior to these key evidence base documents being released to the planning inspector for Examination in Public.

I voted for this recommendation but the recommendation was rejected:

- For: 18 (9 Independent, 7 It's Our County, 2 Liberal)
- Against: 30 (27 Conservative, 1 Independent, 1 Labour, 1 Liberal)
- Abst'n: 2 (2 Independent)

Council then voted on whether or not to approve the Core Strategy. I voted against this recommendation, but the strategy was approved:

- For: 31 (26 Conservative, 3 Independent, 1 Labour, 1 Liberal)
- Against: 14 (7 Independent, 7 It's Our County)
- Abst'n: 5 (1 Conservative, 2 Independent, 2 Liberal)

To be clear on this – Council has now rejected scrutiny's recommendation to delay approval of the Core Strategy. Council has rejected a recommendation that it see and be satisfied that the evidence supports the plan as being viable, sustainable and deliverable. Council has rejected the proposal to dialogue with concerned parishes.

The Core strategy will be advertised in the press over the autumn as canvassing final comments and registration of objections to be heard at Examination in Public; and examination should take place early in 2014.

More Cuts and Consultations

Meanwhile, elsewhere in the council the cuts continue. Since my last report the council has initiated a number of consultations on aspects of its cuts programme – links to these are provided below:

Making it Real: In 2011 Herefordshire introduced Personalisation as its way of delivering adult social care services. This means that following assessment people receive an individualised Personal Budget to meet their eligible social care needs. Personalisation (also called self-directed support) is intended to give people more choice and control over their support. Now, the Council want to know how well Herefordshire is doing with Personalisation and how it has affected people's quality of life. To do this it has signed up to a project backed by the Department of Health called "Making it Real" and it is asking a select audience to complete a questionnaire to get their views. The Council is also hosting an event for people who use Adult Social Care services on Tuesday 20th August 10 - 1 p.m. in the Town Hall, Hereford. This will give people an opportunity to discuss responses to the questionnaire in more detail. Consultation closes 23rd August.

<http://consult.herefordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti/MIRReal/consultationHome>

Libraries and Customer Service Centres: Due to the significant budget challenges faced by the Council, the Council has previously consulted on proposals for libraries and customer service centres. To explore all possible options, the Council would like to understand the impact on residents if it were to bring together customer services centres, libraries and other facilities, close some facilities, or reduce opening hours. Surveys may be filled in during visits to local libraries or customer service centres so that the needs of active service users can be captured on site. The survey is open to all users of these facilities. Consultation closes 8th August.

http://consult.herefordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti/Assessing_the_Impact/consultationHome

There is a meeting on the future of libraries in Ross and Ledbury which is being held in Ross at 13:30 on 1st August. I only found out about this on 31st July at 14:00. I shall endeavour to attend.

LEP Business Survey: The Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (Herefordshire, Shropshire, and Telford & Wrekin) have very recently been (provisionally) allocated £98m from the European Union towards the area's key growth priorities (£27m for Herefordshire). An element of this finance can be used between 2014 and 2020 to support business development and growth. The Marches LEP and local councils are coordinating an Investment Strategy which will demonstrate to the EU and the British Government our key priorities and what growth support we intend to provide to businesses throughout the Marches. The Herefordshire Business Board are asking businesses of all sizes, sectors, and locations, questions which will help identify current constraints, future opportunities and shape the support that is delivered to the Marches business community. Consultation closes 9th August. <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/J5SWRN2>

In addition to these surveys decisions have been taken relating to the cuts programme, the details of which can be found here:

<http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mgDelegatedDecisions.aspx?XXR=0&&ACT=Find&RP=0&K=0&V=1&DM=0&HD=0&DS=0&Next=true&META=mgdelegateddecisions&>

I highlight a number of decisions which are likely to affect local people:

- **Major Investment in Highway Infrastructure Assets** - A £20m up-front investment in road repairs at the front-end of the new Street Scene contract with Balfour-Beatty. This will bring many of the county's roads up to a standard from which it will be cheaper for BB to deliver on-going maintenance providing an overall saving during the lifetime of the contract.
- **CCTV Sustainability Plan** - outlining the options for a future model of CCTV in the context of reduced council funding, and proposing a way forward.
- **Amending Entitlement for Free Mainstream Education Transport** - outlining proposed changes to the Council's policy on home to school transport such that it meets only the statutory requirements or gives a service on a full cost recovery basis
- **Charging Proposals for Post 16 SEN School Transport** – recommending that a full consultation be undertaken on options relating to the reduction in subsidy currently provided for non-statutory Post 16 SEN (Special Educational Needs) transport.
- **Halo Prudential Borrowing for Purchase of Air Handling Units for Ledbury Swimming Pool** - To approve the allocation of Capital Expenditure funded by prudential borrowing for the purchase of Air Handling Units for Ledbury Swimming Pool.

- **Housing Allocation Policy for Herefordshire** - it is proposed that, to qualify for registration on the housing list, all applicants must have:
 1. a local connection (with the exception of armed forces, those fleeing domestic violence, or subject to witness or public protection, and those with care plans that require residency in the county)
 2. must not have sufficient financial resource (income, savings and/or capital assets) to resolve their own housing needs, and;
 3. must be able to demonstrate a housing need by having a reasonable preference.

Councillor Liz Harvey

It's Our County – Ledbury Ward Member
31st July 2013

IT'S OUR COUNTRY

PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: 10th July 2013

Title: Housing development quotas imposed on Herefordshire villages

After analysing the responses to its most recent consultation on the 20-year plan for Herefordshire, Cabinet took less than an hour to rubber stamp the Council's revised Core Strategy on 4th July.

The revisions to the strategy resulting from councillor lobbying and residents' concerns have been minor, and It's Our County remains concerned about a number of the fundamental elements of the proposals – not the least of which are the lack of evidence supporting the argument for the Relief Road and the administration's refusal to take all the relevant policy costs into account when commissioning viability testing of the plan. But that's not what today's press release is about ...

One change which was neither discussed in Cabinet nor driven by comments received during the consultation, is the administration's changes to the rural housing policies. These now include the imposition of minimum development quotas on villages across Herefordshire. Previously a number of villages had been targeted for growth, but the extent of that development was left to the communities to determine for themselves in due course.

Well, not any more it isn't.

Fearful that this community-driven approach would not pass muster at inspection, the administration is now requiring these 'growth villages' to take a minimum quota and volunteer for more housing on top of that. In addition any 'sensitive' sites will need to be defined up-front if they are to be protected from development. The changed policies require that villages do this either by developing expensive and time-consuming Neighbourhood Plans, or by undertaking further public consultation with the Council to agree the locations of their housing quota as part of a Locality or Area Plan owned by the county.

The detail of what these quotas mean isn't openly stated in the revised Core Strategy, the changed policies just indicate the mechanism by which the housing allocations will be calculated. It's Our County can reveal that more than 120 villages across Herefordshire will be told how many houses they must plan to receive, with unplanned windfall development being treated as additional to these figures.

Residents in Credenhill top the development league-table with 131 houses to be built in the village over the next 20 years; Colwall (in Council Leader Tony Johnson's 'Hope End' ward) follows swiftly in second place with a quota of 119 homes while Bartestree-Lugwardine come a close third with 117. With ¾ of the villages to receive housing quotas sitting in Conservative wards, many represented by Cabinet Members, it's not surprising that this change in approach to rural housing policy has been kept quiet.

Councillor Anthony Powers said "This change in policy is denying local communities the right to consciously commit to local development and imposing unasked-for housing targets on our Herefordshire villages, in exactly the same way that the disproportionately large strategic housing sites have been imposed on our city and market towns."

Councillor Liz Harvey commented "This is even more worrying when you realise that even with these quotas there remains a target of nearly 2,500 houses still to be located in our most rural areas. This means that the housing

growth rates in our countryside will exceed even those being imposed on the villages – exactly the opposite of what the Core Strategy purports to be wanting to achieve.”

Councillor Mark Hubbard concluded “In *It’s Our County* we care about the future of the whole county: city, town, village and rural areas. It’s a real shame rural residents are being thoroughly let down by their councillors. Whether it’s through laziness, disinterest, self-interest or incompetence – councillors’ failure to do their homework, engage with the implications of these complex policies and communicate effectively means their electorate are kept in the dark until it’s too late.”

Notes for Editors

For information we provide a table containing our calculations for all the growth quotas on the following page.

A link to the revised Core Strategy draft sections from 4th July Cabinet papers, and a link specifically to the Place Shaping section containing the geographically specific policies are provided below. The documents have ‘track changes’ enabled, so you can see where alterations and additions have been made.

<http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=251&MId=4888&Ver=4>

<http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/documents/s50013261/5Place-Shaping.%20version%204.2.13.pdf>

Rural area policies RA1 & RA2 in the Place Shaping section – page 107 onwards.

Although none of these figures are actually given in the document, the mechanism by which they are to be derived is described and the data for the calculations is found in the two reports linked below:

https://beta.herefordshire.gov.uk/media/5749300/Rural_Housing_Background_Paper_March_2013.pdf

[https://beta.herefordshire.gov.uk/media/5358051/Rural_Settlement_Hierarchy_Paper_November_2010\(3\).pdf](https://beta.herefordshire.gov.uk/media/5358051/Rural_Settlement_Hierarchy_Paper_November_2010(3).pdf)

Parishes will be required to identify exactly where these houses are to be sited either through conducting Neighbourhood Planning or by consultation with the County Council. Also any sensitive sites in the villages will need to be clearly designated and identified in the plans to ensure they are not considered available for windfall development. For clarification - windfall development will be counted as separate and additional to the quotas.

The General Overview & Scrutiny meeting on 16th July will be the only place where it is possible to debate both Community Infrastructure Levy (and, by association the viability of the Core Strategy) and the Core Strategy itself in any council forum, ahead of the CS going to council on 19th July.

It’s Our County is the largest opposition political party in Herefordshire. It has nine Councillors plus one Green member in its political group in the Council. Although we mainly represent urban wards we continue to do the work to ensure that residents in rural areas have a voice in Council.

It’s Our County stands for independence, openness, accountability, fairness and sustainability. While recognising Herefordshire is part of a global economy it rejects fashions in national politics and works on local solutions for local problems. For more information go to www.itsourcounty.org

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Rural HMA Housing Target 5,300	Approximate number of residential dwellings within the main village envelope	Housing growth target = growth target*residences	Housing Market Area	Councillor 1	Councillor 2	Councillor 3
Credenhill	728	131	Hereford	RI Matthews		
Colwall	848	119	Ledbury	CNH Attwood	AW Johnson	
Bartestree / Lugwardine	652	117	Hereford	DW Greenow		
Marden	484	87	Hereford	KS Guthrie		
Clehonger	448	81	Hereford	DC Taylor		
Fownhope	406	73	Hereford	J Hardwick		
Madley	376	68	Hereford	DC Taylor		
Withington	352	63	Hereford	DW Greenow		
Kingstone	440	62	Ross	JF Knipe		
Weobley	437	61	Leominster	MJK Cooper		
Moreton on Lugg	337	61	Hereford	KS Guthrie		
Cradley	418	59	Ledbury	CNH Attwood	AW Johnson	
Ewyas Harold	460	55	Golden Valley	GJ Powell		
Sutton St Nicholas	287	52	Hereford	KS Guthrie		
Wellington	261	47	Hereford	AJM Blackshaw		
Burghill	250	45	Hereford	SJ Robertson		
Kingsland	312	44	Leominster	WLS Bowen		
Peterchurch	341	41	Golden Valley	PD Price		
Orleton	291	41	Leominster	WLS Bowen		
Bodenham Moor	270	41	Bromyard	JW Millar		
Wigmore	283	40	Leominster	LO Barnett		
Brimfield	252	35	Leominster	J Stone		
Leintwardine	243	34	Leominster	LO Barnett		
Whitchurch	239	33	Ross	JG Jarvis		
Walford (Coughton)	224	31	Ross	JG Jarvis		
Lea	218	31	Ross	H Bramer		
Shobdon	253	30	Kington	RJ Phillips		
Llangrove	211	30	Ross	JA Hyde		
Eardisley	242	29	Kington	JW Hope		
Bridstow	201	28	Ross	JA Hyde		
Pembridge	227	27	Kington	RJ Phillips		
Goodrich	187	26	Ross	JG Jarvis		
Gorsley	184	26	Ross	H Bramer		
Kingsthorpe	183	26	Ross	RB Hamilton		
Tarrington	140	25	Hereford	J Hardwick		
Luston	179	25	Leominster	J Stone		
Wellington Heath	168	24	Ledbury	CNH Attwood	AW Johnson	
Little Dewchurch	130	23	Hereford	P Sinclair-Knipe		

Swainshill	128	23	Hereford	RI Matthews		
Bishops Frome	163	23	Ledbury	PM Morgan		
Much Birch	162	23	Ross	RB Hamilton		
Hampton Bishop	121	22	Hereford	J Hardwick		
Weston under Penyard	155	22	Ross	H Bramer		
Holme Lacy	117	21	Hereford	P Sinclair-Knipe		
Canon Pyon	117	21	Hereford	AJM Blackshaw		
Bosbury	143	20	Ledbury	CNH Attwood	AW Johnson	
Eardisland	142	20	Leominster	MJK Cooper		
Tillington Common	110	20	Hereford	SJ Robertson		
Breinton	102	18	Hereford	RI Matthews		
Wormelow	131	18	Ross	RB Hamilton		
Peterstow	130	18	Ross	JA Hyde		
Upton Bishop & Crow Hill	124	17	Ross	BA Durkin		
Hope under Dinmore	115	17	Bromyard	JW Millar		
Dilwyn	123	17	Leominster	MJK Cooper		
Yarpole	123	17	Leominster	WLS Bowen		
Whitbourne	109	16	Bromyard	GR Swinford		
Wilton	114	16	Ross	JA Hyde		
Pipe and Lyde	88	16	Hereford	SJ Robertson		
Eaton Bishop	88	16	Hereford	DC Taylor		
Almeley	129	15	Kington	JW Hope		
Linton (South)	110	15	Ross	H Bramer		
Staunton on Wye	128	15	Kington	JW Hope		□
Brampton Abbots	109	15	Ross	BA Durkin		
Much Marcle	106	15	Ross	BA Durkin		
Westhope	81	15	Hereford	PJ McCaull	RC Hunt	
Much Dewchurch	104	15	Ross	JF Knipe		
Bishopstone	80	14	Hereford	AJM Blackshaw		
Stretton Sugwas	79	14	Hereford	RI Matthews		
Little Birch	101	14	Ross	RB Hamilton		
Pencombe	89	13	Bromyard	A Seldon	JG Lester	
Cusop	110	13	Golden Valley	PD Price		
Lyonshall	110	13	Kington	RJ Phillips		
Mordiford	72	13	Hereford	J Hardwick		
Longtown	106	13	Golden Valley	GJ Powell		
Bircher	90	13	Leominster	WLS Bowen		
Kimbolton	90	13	Leominster	J Stone		
Pontshill	88	12	Ross	H Bramer		
Linton (North)	82	12	Bromyard	A Seldon	JG Lester	
Kings Caple	84	12	Ross	BA Durkin		
Dorstone	97	12	Golden Valley	PD Price		
Hoarwithy	83	12	Ross	RB Hamilton		
Garway	83	12	Ross	RB Hamilton		
Bredenbury	76	11	Bromyard	GR Swinford		

Fromes Hill	81	11	Ledbury	PM Morgan		
Bringsty / Bringsty Common	75	11	Bromyard	GR Swinford		
Richard's Castle	79	11	Leominster	WLS Bowen		
Stoke Prior	71	11	Bromyard	JW Millar		
Bodenham	69	10	Bromyard	JW Millar		
Bromsash	68	10	Ross	H Bramer		
Risbury	63	9	Bromyard	JW Millar		
Woolhope	67	9	Ross	BA Durkin		
Pontrilas	66	9	Ross	RB Hamilton		
Stoke Cross / Stoke Lacy	61	9	Bromyard	A Seldon	JG Lester	
Putley	63	9	Ledbury	PM Morgan		
Ashperton	62	9	Ledbury	PM Morgan		
Orcop Hill	61	9	Ross	RB Hamilton		
Winforton	71	9	Kington	PD Price		
Lower Eggleton/Newtown Cross	58	8	Ledbury	PM Morgan		
Wormbridge	58	8	Ross	JF Knipe		
Bush Bank	57	8	Leominster	AJM Blackshaw		
Winnal	56	8	Ross	JF Knipe		
Burley Gate	52	8	Bromyard	A Seldon	JG Lester	
Preston on Wye	61	7	Golden Valley	PD Price		
Brampton Bryan	51	7	Leominster	LO Barnett		
Shirlheath	50	7	Leominster	WLS Bowen		
Hergest	58	7	Kington	TM James		
Adforton	49	7	Leominster	LO Barnett		
Leysters	48	7	Leominster	J Stone		
Vowchurch	56	7	Golden Valley	GJ Powell		
Monkland	46	6	Leominster	MJK Cooper		
Lucton	45	6	Leominster	WLS Bowen		
Lingen	42	6	Leominster	LO Barnett		
Titley	49	6	Kington	RJ Phillips		
Eastnor	37	5	Ledbury	EPJHarvey	P Bettington	P Watts
Moccas	43	5	Golden Valley	PD Price		
Clifford	41	5	Golden Valley	PD Price		
Bredwardine	39	5	Golden Valley	PD Price		
St Weonards	30	4	Ross	RB Hamilton		
Brilley	31	4	Kington	JW Hope		
Norton Canon	30	4	Kington	JW Hope		
Michaelchurch Escley	29	3	Golden Valley	GJ Powell		
Whitney on Wye	26	3	Kington	JW Hope		
		2,879				

Remainder of housing target yet to be allocated

2,421