

Ledbury Town Council: Thursday 7th March 2013

Item 8: Herefordshire Councillors' Reports – Elizabeth Harvey

Pot Holes

Some have been filled.

Knapp Lane

Still closed. Presently best estimates give ~14 weeks to reopening – which takes us to the end of June. I and other ward members continue to work with Amey and others to minimise the detrimental impact of this extended closure on the people living in Knapp lane, and Bank and Homend Crescents.

The proliferation of on-street parking continues to exacerbate the problem.

Herefordshire Council Budget 2013-14

Budget was approved by 32 for - 11 against with 11 abstentions in February and council tax will be set at full council on 8th March. The budget is undeliverable and dangerously risky. I voted against.

My comment on the detail of the budget can be found at the following link:

<http://councillorharvey.wordpress.com/2013/02/22/budget-2013-14-2/>

Youth Provision in Ledbury

I append a note summarising options for youth provision in Ledbury which was circulated to the members attending the County Task Group prior to its winding up when funds for 2013-14 were taken as a budget savings measure.

Please will Chairman E&L consider making contact with Ross & Bromyard Councillors to investigate opportunities for joint working and sharing of youth workers across market towns.

LDF & CIL Consultation

The Local development Framework & Community Infrastructure Levy consultations are both underway until 22nd April. This council will need to have considered and constructed its response in time for it to be approved at full council on 11th April, unless an extraordinary council meeting is to be called.

Only one copy of the draft core strategy documentation will be issued to the council and all supporting documentation is online.

I suggest this council considers setting up a group to fully research the documentation relevant to Ledbury and to draft a response for consideration at the Neighbourhood Planning WP meeting on 19th March or at the Planning Committee on 21st March.

I append some initial personal comments on the documentation in an appendix to this report for your information.

Councillor Liz Harvey

It's Our County – Ledbury Ward Member

6th March 2012

Agenda Items for Committees (submitted as Liz Harvey – Town Councillor as agreed with Clerk)

1. Please will Chairman E&L consider making contact with Ross & Bromyard Councillors to investigate opportunities for joint working and sharing of youth workers across market towns.
2. This council considers recommending the immediate set-up a group to fully research the documentation relevant to Ledbury and to draft a response for consideration at the Neighbourhood Planning WP meeting on 19th March or at the Planning Committee on 21st March.

Appendices

Youth provision in Ledbury – some thoughts ...

Having attended a number of meetings to discuss how to spend ~£13k budgeted to provide support to youth provision for the Ledbury Locality in FY2013 I write now to summarise my thinking and to seek comment from others.

Some principles ...

Support what exists: Whatever we do should not attempt to create something new with the money. The funds are only available for one year and we need to hit the ground running. So monies would be better spent supporting and enhancing existing service providers, with some effort expended to encourage providers to extend the enhancements beyond the funding period.

Balance between town and country: It's not all about Ledbury. We need to look at both providing services in the villages and also giving rural youth better access to the town. We might also be able to work with other market towns to share resources or buy-in support more cost effectively.

Not everything needs money: Some of the things we could achieve need time and effort to plan and coordinate rather than money to achieve improvements. Also we need to be considering how to ensure that volunteer-supported activities don't lose their impetus over time or over-burden a few key people.

Don't 'bury the talents': We should be looking to add to the funds available from other sources – town council, local businesses, charities, community funds (Coop, etc.). Setting up charity or society of mutual interest (coop) may enable other funding routes to be accessed.

Local experience AND New thinking: Replicating what we have or re-purposing the current building is a very expensive and potentially wasteful. But – we have experience of previous youth provision (Saturday discos, Grind Bar, Stanier’s Barn) and access to models which have worked elsewhere which are helpful (Pop-up provision, Teen Cinema,)

What have we got?

We have some useful ‘cards’ that we have been dealt in Ledbury, and some more on the table we can access.

- **Organised uniformed groups:** Scouts, guides, and cadets ... require subs to be paid and that kids are open to being organised and moderately disciplined in their behaviour.
- **Organised social/interest groups:** Sports clubs, dancing, Young Farmers, ... require subs/fee to be paid and that kids are open to being organised and moderately disciplined in their behaviour.
- **Free-form provision:** We really only have the Wyldlyfe 11-14 youth club and ‘The Point’ Caravan both run by Pastor Steve Taylor and supported across the churches in town ... has a Christian mission dimension, no subs/fees and less structure and accepting of more random behaviour. There’s also MYLO (Mobile Youth-Led Opportunities) out in the villages – or at least some of them.
- **Community facilities:**
 - A number of existing community buildings available for hire – Community Centre, St Katherine’s Hall, Burgage Hall;
 - Also some private spaces – Masonic Hall at the Royal Oak, Church Rooms and the Baptist Chapel, Function Room at British Legion ... some of which have bar/drinks facilities.
 - Other useful things - Community Transport, Market House Theatre, Heineken/Your Square Mile community project initiative, Town Plan, empty shops in town, Portas ‘Town Team’ initiative, ...

What do kids want?

- Somewhere to hang out that’s relaxed with some games/pool, drinks & snacks available, may be different in winter from in summer.
- Somewhere to go for advice and a listening/non-judging adult ear.
- Stuff to do that’s free/cheap and fun.
- Some way of finding out about what’s happening that’s easy to use and fits with their lifestyle.

The above could be provided all in the same place, or in different locations in different ways – and some, even on-line.

What could we do?

1. Encourage a monthly/fortnightly under-18’s disco/club night at Masonic Hall run by Royal Oak (no alcohol/mocktails). Community Transport service in and out from key villages ... or one/two particular villages on a rota basis – may need subsidising.

Re-creates the old Saturday disco’s but in underused venue and run by others. Use support from Town Council to promote in the locality and through High School.

2. Encourage trial of a Teen Film Night at Market Theatre once a month on a Friday with soft drinks and snacks. Also possibly a Family Film afternoon on a Sunday – similar format.

Uses existing facility and format but aims at attracting a new audience. Try quirky, edgy film catalogue rather than complete with cinemas offering current releases

3. Have youth drop-in 18-21:00 once a week somewhere central. Run by volunteers but with additional bought-in youth worker support (every other week?) for advice on relationships/sexual health/careers/life skills.

NOTE: Heineken/YSM project is going to be looking at supporting a Youth Drop-In project which could overlap nicely. Royal British Legion is centrally located, and may have function room where youth centre pool table, seating and soft drinks can be accommodated.

Gears off existing provision and providers, but changes venue and adds expert advisers. Yes, if RBL used it's a pseudo-pub setting, but location, opening hrs and general facilities are otherwise quite a good match.

Town Council has set up supporting Task Group on youth provision and may be able to assist with alternative venue if 'social club/pub' a problem. Pip Powell's old cycle shop in the Homend is currently vacant and would make a good drop-in – but would need running more than one night a week.

4. Provide encouragement and some seed funding to sponsor young people to attend scouts/guides/etc. NOTE: There are some charity funds administered by the church which could be approached to contribute to this sort of activity.

Gives a more structured alternative where funding or 'try before you buy' is an issue.

5. Share provision of a youth worker with neighbour market towns NOTE: Steve Taylor already works in Ledbury and Bromyard; and Ross have a community group which have taken on an ex-Herefordshire Council youth worker and they may be open to sharing his costs/hours.

Provides qualified person on the ground to organise activities in existing facilities and shares cost/risk; Ross option provides a 'try before you buy' possibility.

What else?

- Having said it's not all about Ledbury – I'm not well placed to comment on how to augment what's going on (if anything) in the villages.
 - **Carl/Tony** – does anything go on for young people in Colwall/Bosbury/Cradley/Mathon/W-Heath which would benefit from involvement from the MYLO project?
 - **Patricia/John** – what about The Fromes/Tarrington? MLYO? Also – do you think a mini-bus into Ledbury for a film or a disco/club night be of interest?
- We also need advice on using funding to get more monies – grants, bidding, coop/charity business models. **Can Herefordshire Council/Communities First help with this?**

Please feel free to knock this about – but I feel we should be looking at some concrete options now as time is moving on.

Councillor Liz Harvey

It's Our County – Ledbury Ward Member

October 2012

Initial Comments on LDF & CIL Consultation (06-03-13)

Herefordshire Council is conducting the consultation almost entirely on the internet – which has issues regarding inclusion (not) for the low paid, unemployed, and elderly. Even though they are accepting letters and hard copy questionnaires – all the documentation and policies are held online: <https://beta.herefordshire.gov.uk/local-plan/> ... and the questionnaire structured in such a way as to require that you have accessed and read the documentation in order to make informed comment.

CIL **WILL NOT** replace Developer contributions (Section 106) – it is a new development 'tax' which will be introduced in Herefordshire in 2014 based on internal floor area of new developments and extensions to existing developments over a certain size. The provisional draft charging scheme is given in this document from Cabinet last week.

<http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/documents/s50011699/Appendix%20C%20Preliminary%20draft%20charging%20schedule%20amended%20for%20Cabinet%2019%20February%202013.pdf>

Ledbury is in the area proposed to have the highest charging rate of £140/m² on residential properties. There are also charges levied on other development types.

DCLG final guidance issued in Dec 2012

(https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/36743/Community_Infrastructure_Levy_guidance_Final.pdf) states that parishes with a Parish Plan will retain 15% of the CIL on developments in their area and parishes with a Neighbourhood Plan which is positive towards development (who knows what that means?!?) will retain 25% of their CIL. Statement from Minister Nick Bowles: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/communities-to-receive-cash-boost-for-choosing-development>

My scrutiny task and finish group on CIL recommended that virtually all the money raised from development (apart from that going to the owning parish) should be retained in the Locality – to ensure that people could see the link between local development and investment in local infrastructure. See page 9

<http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/documents/s50009864/CIL%20TF%20Group%20report%20to%20GOSC%2010.12.12.pdf>

General Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting on Monday 4th March considered the Executive response to the CIL report. It is unclear from their response to Recommendation 6 whether they intend to allow CIL funds to be retained locally. See page 4

<http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/documents/s50011628/3%20-%20Appendix%20A%20executive%20response%20action%20sheet.pdf>

Given Herefordshire Council's executive response to the scrutiny report I consider it likely that, bar the parish share, the bulk of the CIL money raised is likely to go into a pot at county level to pay for what's termed 'strategic infrastructure'.

On Monday 4th March Herefordshire Council commence a 7 week period of public consultation on their Core Strategy (20-year plan for the county) and in parallel a consultation on the implementation of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL - new development tax). I have significant concerns about what the county plans contain w.r.t. their impact on Ledbury and its future.

This core strategy will become a rigid structure within which Ledbury's Neighbourhood Plan must fit – so attempting to influence its shape NOW is key to what we do on the Neighbourhood Plan.

CIL is compulsory and non-negotiable once implemented – so the consultation now on the proposed rates is important to ensure the rates aren't set at a level which inhibits development taking place. If this is the case it won't mean that development doesn't happen ... it will mean that planners will trade away in negotiations with developers the elements of the planning process which ARE negotiable – these are our affordable housing (targeted at being 40% of any development); and our continued section 106 developer contributions – which pay for local infrastructure directly impacted on or demanded by the development.

The Core Strategy consultation proposes that much of what had been termed 'strategic infrastructure', like our new primary school on the proposed viaduct site, is now supposed to be paid for by developer contributions under S106. See rows 130-141, column I

https://beta.herefordshire.gov.uk/media/5784828/jdp_spreadsheet_march_2013.xls

Meanwhile Ledbury is expected to be a location where development happens sooner rather than later – because we are judged advantaged by our proximity to road and rail links and our house prices are the highest in the county; and development here will not worsen the poor water quality in the River Wye SAC – so developers will see us as a more attractive place to begin building than elsewhere, since building costs (excluding land prices) are the same for them everywhere.

The core strategy proposes 800 additional houses in Ledbury between 2011 & 2031, 700 of which are supposed to be built on our currently designated employment land north of the viaduct. The planners have assessed a number of development sites around Ledbury and consider the viaduct site to be the best placed to come forward – despite it sitting in a narrow band of land sandwiched between a ribbon of industrial development along the Bromyard Road and the flood plain of the Leadon. I am concerned that the flood plain is under scoped, given the number of poly-tunnels up-river from Ledbury and their likely contribution to flash flooding, especially during the summer months. I do not think that the viaduct site is a good location for residential houses and question why some of the other sites around the town have been dismissed so early in the strategy development process. See pages 123-125

https://beta.herefordshire.gov.uk/media/5388761/Appendix_11.Oct2011.pdf

- Here is a map of the sites considered:

https://beta.herefordshire.gov.uk/media/5389066/Ledbury_SHLAA_map.pdf

- Here are the site assessments in detail:

<https://beta.herefordshire.gov.uk/media/5389071/LedburySiteSchedules.pdf>

The road access to the viaduct site needs sorting and access under the viaduct remains likely to be a major stumbling block due to network rail concerns over possible damage. The junction with the Bromyard Road at the station bridge isn't suitable for the level of traffic generated by housing and a new school – even should a roundabout be built there; and any housing for the elderly built on the site will be fairly isolated and will make shopping trips into town difficult without a vehicle.

I am also concerned that whilst lots of thought and effort has gone into plans for residential development, little seems to have been spent thinking about replacement employment land, job creation and organic growth of the retail core of the town.

The whole Lawnside Road area is given no mention in the plans, despite it being the continued epicentre of rumour and speculation. Information on the proposed level of our future sports facility provision is not yet available on the consultation website :

<https://beta.herefordshire.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-plan-evidence-base/sports-facilities-framework/>

... but is rumoured to include new junior football and cricket facilities as part of the viaduct site development via developer contributions – the same developer contributions which are assumed to be seeming to be paying for everything else that's needed – and that, by developing 700 houses at a density of up to 50 houses per hectare. This despite this density of housing not even having been modelled by consultants advising on development viability as part of the evidence base underpinning the proposed CIL charges. Chart 3.1 P18:

https://beta.herefordshire.gov.uk/media/5688108/economic_viability_assessment_2013_draft_report_draft_hcc_final_13_02_16_lc.pdf

... while the same consultant's report uses development land prices for Ledbury of £800k-£1m per hectare in its modelling – while local agents cite the current average as being almost double that.

Earlier consultations on the core strategy considered a range of smaller development sites around the town – and these options obtained the best support from local people responding to the consultations. I think some of the sites which have been dismissed should be considered more carefully and the viaduct site possibly retained as employment land. I want to see 21st century high energy efficiency houses built on these developments, particularly focussing on smaller houses for young and old which are affordable to live in as well as to buy. I'd like to see a proper retail strategy as part of the core strategy – one which clearly identifies where the extension to our retail core is to be and thinks about how access to our shops is to be enabled by all modes of transport.

I want our investment in culture and sport to be seen as contributing to the health of our community in its broadest sense, and appropriate investment and encouragement made to ensure the facilities provided are fit to meet the needs of our community as it grows. I want the emphasis to be on growing jobs ahead of building houses. I'd like to see a net influx of people commuting to work each day in Ledbury and for the jobs on offer to be skilled and satisfying. Herefordshire should be making more of itself as a 'lifestyle choice' and targeting the creative industries – and that includes science, engineering and IT as well as art, craft and design. Ledbury is about to get BT OpenReach broadband

and we should be making more of the opportunities this offers for internet-based or –enabled businesses to locate themselves here. Especially in Ledbury with our excellent road and rail links to the South East/West, Midlands and Wales.

I am still working through the mountain of evidence and background information to pull together a summary of the issues for Ledbury and so the above is just a rather jumbled mash-up of what I'm carrying in my head presently. I am keen to ensure that the facts are clearly communicated so that people aren't confused – the whole issue is complicated enough as it is without muddling it further!!!

Councillor Liz Harvey

It's Our County – Ledbury Ward Member

March 2013