



Ledbury Town Plan



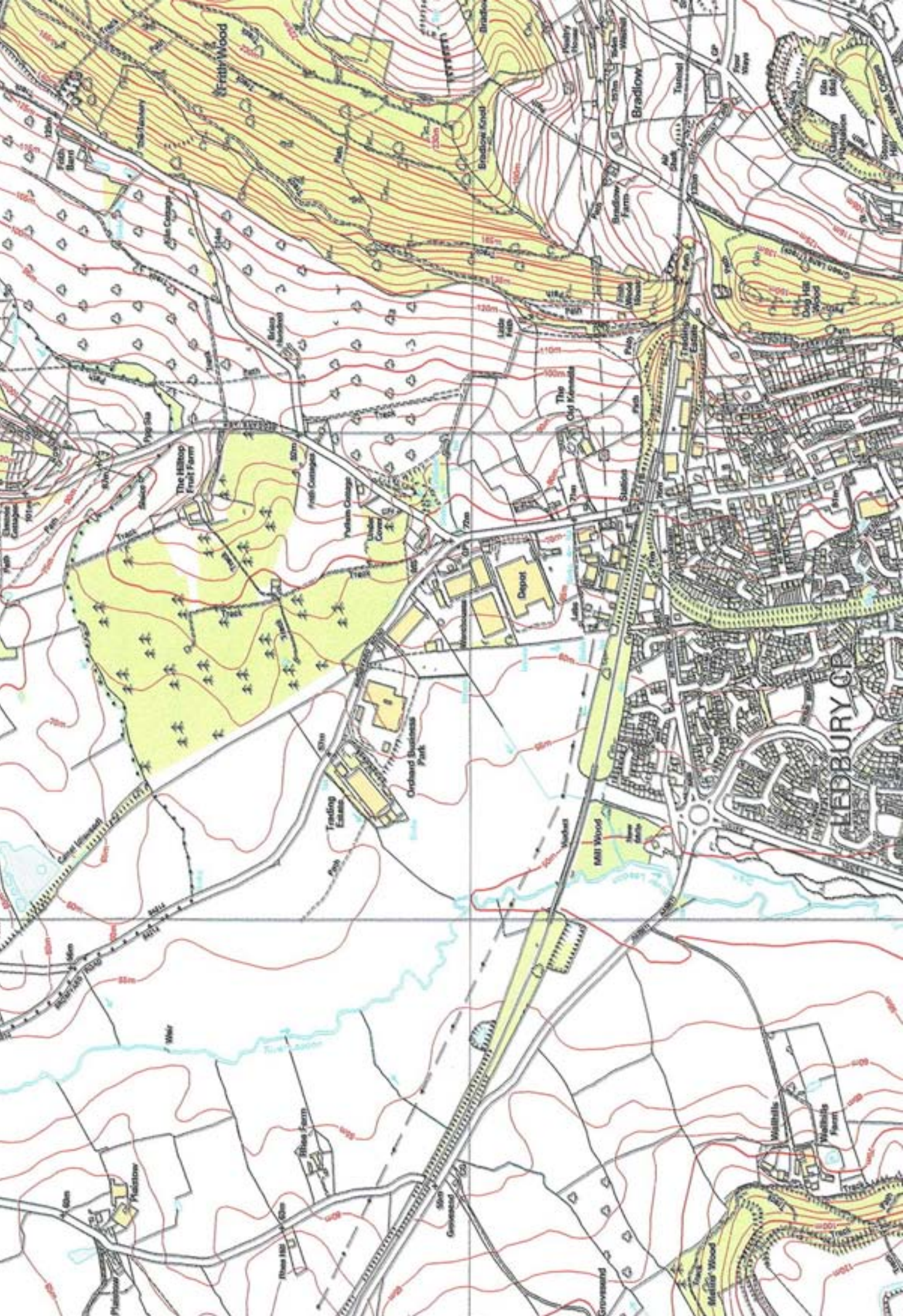
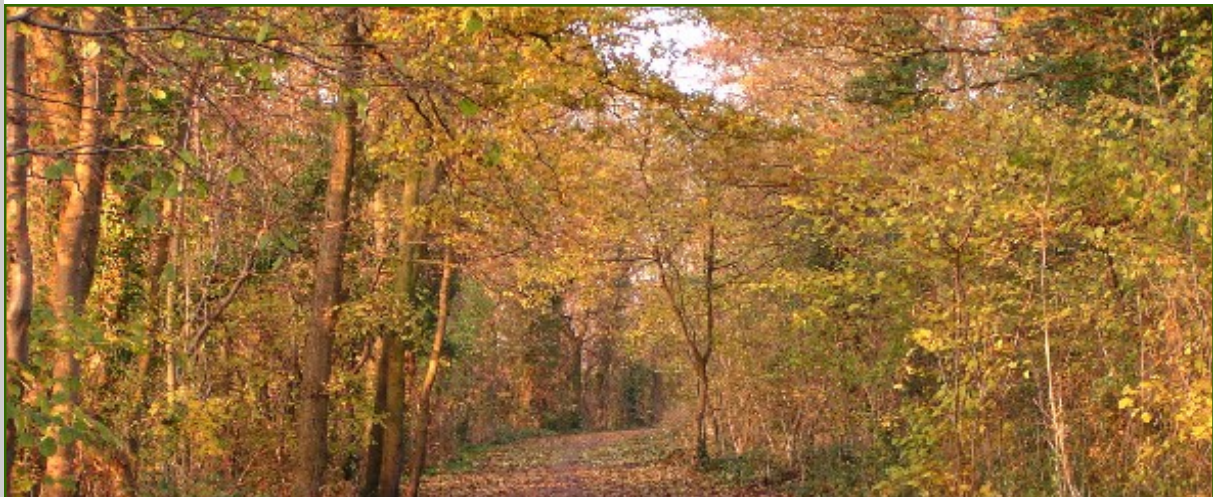
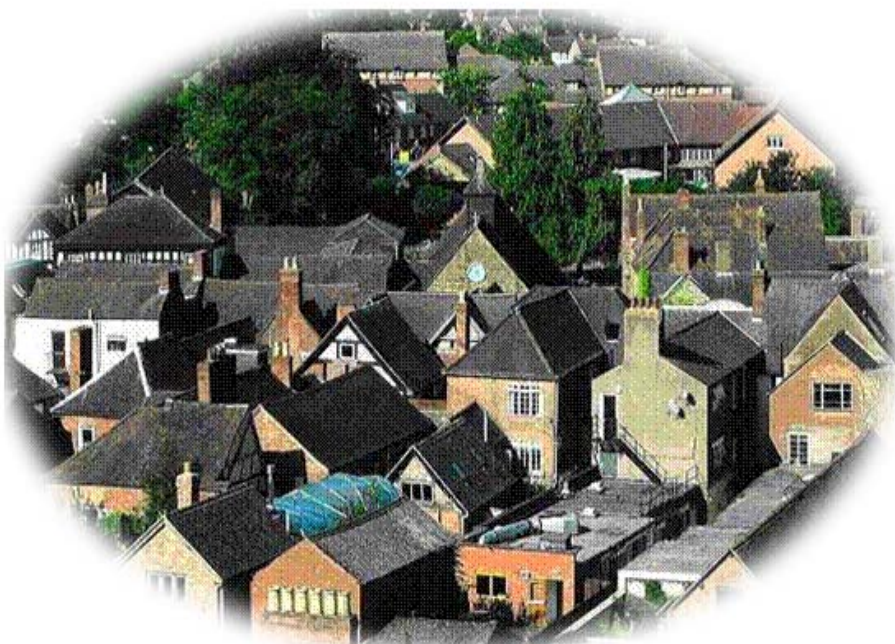


Table of Contents

1. The Town Plan.
2. Introduction and general objectives.
3. A vision for Ledbury: aims and objectives.
4. The consultation process and demography of the town.
5. History of the town.
6. Landscape, environment and pattern of development.
7. Housing.
8. The Conservation Area.
9. Recreation and leisure, including public open spaces, cycle routes & footpaths.
10. Infrastructure:
 - a. Main services.
 - b. Healthcare.
 - c. Education.
 - d. Youth provision.
 - e. Provision for the disabled.
 - f. Churches.
 - g. Transport, including parking facilities.
 - h. Voluntary Organisations.
11. Economy, industry and tourism.
12. Twinning, and link with HMS Ledbury.
13. Polytunnels.
14. Advertising.
15. Lighting and light pollution.
16. Summary of objectives identified through consultation.
17. List of appendices.
18. The Action Plan.





The Town Plan

The Government White Paper “Our Countryside: the Future” (2000), proposed that all rural communities should develop a Town, Village or Parish Plan. Each would be a statement of how the local community envisages its future development. Such plans would also enable local councils to achieve “Quality Council” status. Ledbury was the first of Herefordshire’s market towns to act on this initiative.

Following the advice of Linda Wilcox, (Chief Executive of Herefordshire Association of Local Councils), Ledbury Town Council arranged a meeting on 14th June 2004 to which members of all local societies and organisations were invited. The meeting was well-attended and names were taken of those interested in forming a working party. At the first meeting of this group, a Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary were elected.

The first stage in the process of consulting with residents was an Open Day, with a supporting exhibition. Those attending gave their views on a range of topics from planning and transport to the future of the redundant Cottage Hospital building. To ensure the widest possible level of consultation, the working party devised two questionnaires: one for residents and one for completion by local businesses. The topics included resulted from the Open Day consultation and from within the working-party. Great care had to be taken with the phraseology of the questions so as to make them neutral, and to avoid raising false expectations. The Research Unit at Hereford Council approved and praised the questionnaires and their suggested alterations were incorporated.

The Chief Executive of the Ledbury and Area Development Trust was consulted, to ensure that the Town Plan committee and the Trust work together for the benefit of the town, particularly with regard to the application for funding for any proposed major project. The costs of the preparation, distribution and subsequent analysis were kept to a minimum, thanks to the many hours of voluntary assistance so generously given. A grant from the Town Council covered other necessary expenditure.

The team responsible for the preparation of this plan comprised:

Chairman: Councillor Mary Cooper

Vice Chairman: Len Huff, Ledbury Independent Traders’ Association

Secretary: Mary Winfield, Ledbury and District Civic Society

Data Analyst: Councillor Amanda Nicoll

Councillor Peter Watts

Cyril Stone, Campaign to Protect Rural England

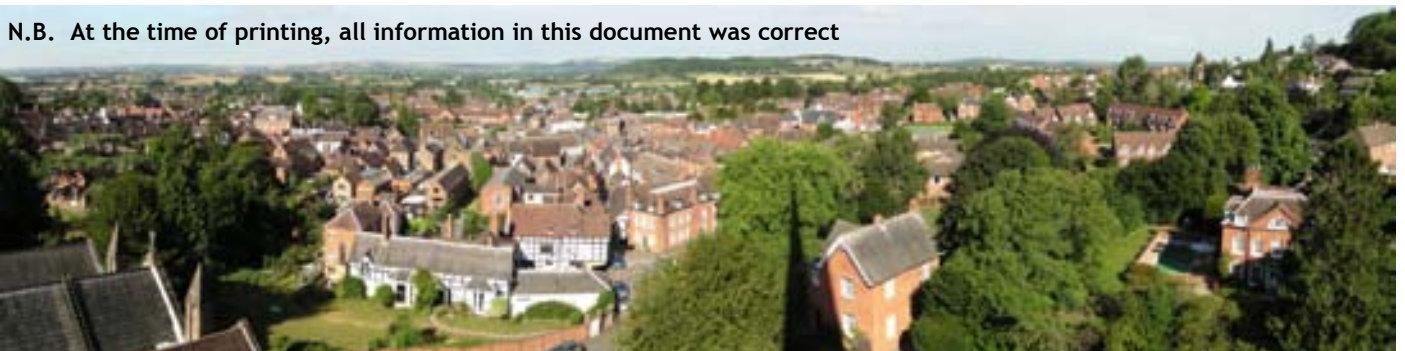
Prue Yorke, Ledbury Greenspaces Committee

Steve Glennie-Smith, Ledbury Cyclists Forum, who provided most of the photographs included in the plan.

(Part-way through the process, Len Huff moved away from the town and Cyril Stone replaced him as Vice-Chairman of the group.)

The team is grateful to all those who contributed in any way to the preparation of the plan. Without their help and co-operation, we could not have achieved our aim of producing a comprehensive and enduring plan for the future of our town. A list of acknowledgements appears on page 42.

N.B. At the time of printing, all information in this document was correct



Introduction to the Town Plan

Ledbury is a market town on the eastern boundary of Herefordshire, almost equidistant between the cities of Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester.

The Town Plan describes Ledbury as it is today, at the start of the 21st century. It highlights the qualities of its settlement and environs in an effort to define its local distinctiveness.

Its aim is to ensure that future development and change is based on an understanding of the town's past and present.

The Town Plan is intended to be a practical tool and will inform

- statutory bodies and public authorities
- planners, developers, builders, architects, designers and engineers
- local community groups
- households and businesses.

It is envisaged that the Town Plan will link local knowledge and opinion with the Unitary Development Plan and the plans of other statutory bodies. Sustaining and enhancing local distinctiveness of the built environment is an important part of Local, Unitary and Structure Plans, but not all features are protected by these plans. Factors which influence the character and distinctiveness of the townscape include housing density, garden layout, boundary walls and fences, colour of buildings, vernacular style, distance of dwellings from the highway, and planting traditions. Trees and other forms of vegetation play an important role in defining local distinctiveness, character and cultural heritage. Therefore, the underlying principles are:-

1. Sustainable development and management (which underpins all other themes).
2. Landscape conservation and enhancement.
3. The conservation of heritage and history.
4. Sustaining the quality of life by identifying priorities to be maintained for the environment, local community and local economics.
5. Social inclusion, enabling all in society to participate and have access to the same quality of life.
6. Local involvement in decision-making processes.

A vision for Ledbury

The Town Plan identifies all that is different and unique about the community in which we live and sets out a vision for its future. Its objectives are:-

1. To create a thriving and sustainable Market Town, which recognises the needs and aspirations of all who live in it.
2. To ensure that local character is taken into account when considering proposals for development.
3. To conserve the environment and enhance it for those who live in it, and to protect its heritage.
4. To strive to balance the needs of community, commercial, industrial, leisure and tourist interests.
5. To encourage local participation and to work in partnership with the Unitary Authority.
6. To produce and to continually review this Parish Plan, in order to manage change and achieve the above principles.

Consultation

The consultation process took place over an extended period and took the form of:

- Open Days on Friday 1st & Saturday 2nd October 2004.
- A survey of views of Primary School and High School pupils.
- A survey of Youth Provision, carried out by Ledbury Youth First.
- A questionnaire delivered to every household in the area.
- A questionnaire delivered to all businesses in the area.

The results of these processes were then analysed and presented in printed form. Major areas of concern have been included in the “Objectives” sections of the Parish Plan and are addressed in the Action Plan. Data published is from surveys conducted during 2004/5 and is available in Appendix 1.

Updating has been effected where necessary.

The full results of the consultation processes are printed in Appendix 1.

De-briefing was achieved through the medium of the local press and through the newsletter circulated to residents by the Town Council.

1. Planning for Real

There were 282 recorded comments from those attending and common topics raised were:-

Use of the redundant Cottage Hospital (now resolved)

The re-siting of the library.

The location of the Tourist Information Office.

Parking.

Traffic.

Access and facilities for the disabled.



2. Primary and High School views.

The views of the pupils attending the Primary School were obtained through the use of the Open Day project, which was taken into school for the children's participation.

The following issues were raised by the children:-

Recreation Ground:

- Pupils said that the introduction of CCTV cameras would give them a greater feeling of safety.
- A larger playground area, with “bouncy” tarmac under all the equipment would provide greater safety.
- Toilets on site, which would be of particular benefit to toddlers.
- A skate-park for children of Primary school age, as children feel intimidated by the teenagers using the present facility.
- A dirt-track area, for cycling and go-karting
- A picnic area, which would provide a quiet spot to sit.
- A games “club”, so that team games could be organized.
- A nature park, where children could watch and learn about local wildlife

Library:

- A larger section for children's books: the present one is very cramped.
- More chairs, as many children use the library for research as well as reading.
- Move the library to the Master's House and provide ramps for access for the disabled.
- The children value the library highly and do not wish to lose it.

Leisure Centre:

- Make the swimming pool more interesting for children, by providing a ramp and a wave-machine.
- Install a toddler pool.

Tourist Information Centre:

- This is very important to visitors and residents and is a valuable asset, so make sure that it doesn't close.

New Mills Estate:

- Keep the grass cut short on the play-areas.
- Provide goalposts, so that children can play games such as football.

High School: pupils were consulted using the residents' questionnaire.

3. Youth Provision

The survey carried out by Ledbury Youth First involved young people in Ledbury and also in the parishes of Colwall, Cradley, Much Marcle and Tarrington.

Its key aims were:

1. to ascertain respondents' views on living in the area.
2. to gain understanding of their needs and priorities
3. to identify ways in which young people can be involved in addressing these issues.
4. to enable young people to present their views to the wider community.

4. Residents' Questionnaire

1229 were completed: 519 by men; 670 by women; 77 by both together; 56 undeclared

Key issues identified are, in order:-

- the environment: **65%**
- public services: **58%**
- historic buildings: **55%**
- shopping: **52%**
- planning and development: **47%**
- transport: **42%**
- housing: **76%** (see appendix 1c)
- recreation: **33%**

Other issues included:

1. Landscape features: strong support (79%) for protecting these and 37% said they should be enhanced.
2. Social/Affordable Housing: a significant number cited the need for more social/affordable housing.

3. Car-parking: More than 60% saw this as a problem and stated an urgent need for more off-road parking areas.
4. Traffic: identified as a problem by 60%, with congestion caused by illegal parking, volume, and seasonal tourist traffic. Knapp Lane was identified by many as a severe traffic problem.
5. Development: a majority supports the provision of opportunities for small businesses, small industrial workshop units and independent retailers. There was little support for large residential developments, particularly outside the by-pass.
6. Facilities: the library is the most-used, with the theatre/cinema, town trails and swimming-pool well-supported. Major concern was expressed over the re-siting of the library, with overwhelming support for it to be included in redevelopment of the Master's House site. 34% of respondents believe it to be the most important facility and it featured heavily on the "Wish List"
7. Shopping: almost all who responded shop in Ledbury where possible.
93% use the two supermarkets, 72% use independent traders and 34% use the local market.
8. Public Toilets: more than 50% said facilities are inadequate.
9. Tourism: strong support for encouraging this.
10. Youth provision: a significant number believe this to be inadequate.
11. 72% believe community spirit to be good.



5. Business Questionnaire

Key issues identified by respondents are:-

1. Lack of adequate parking provision for shoppers. (71%)
2. Problems caused by traffic congestion.
3. Lack of availability of suitable premises.
4. Lack of organisation for community marketing.
5. Competition from mail-order companies.
6. Lack of available land for purchase.
7. Poor rail links with London.
8. Threat of introduction of further superstores.
9. Damage to premises from anti-social behaviour, particularly in the evenings.
10. Inadequate policing provision. (79%)

6. Demography

Ledbury has a current population of 9240. Response to the residents' questionnaire clearly reflected the weighting of age-groups in the area.

Of those responding:-

35% were aged 60 to 74 years

28% 75+

18% 30 to 44

15% 45 to 59

2% 25 to 29

1% 20 to 24

1% Under 16

0% 16 to 20

N.B. The views of those aged between sixteen and nineteen years age may well be included in the questionnaires filled in on a family basis.

This weighting by age is also reflected in the employment status of respondents:-

49% are retired.

21% work 30 or more hours per week.

11% work less than 30 hours per week.

9% are self-employed.

5% are looking after home and family.

3% are disabled.

1% are full-time students.

1% are unemployed.

Ledbury appears to be an area where people put down roots, as is shown in the survey of the duration of residency:-

27% over 25 years.

25% 11-25 years.

20% 2-5 years.

19% 6-10 years.

9% less than 2 years.

This marked tendency to stay in the area obviously influenced the level of importance that residents attached to certain issues. Personal experience over a sustained period adds weight to the concerns and values expressed. We were fortunate to have access to such quality of information in the preparation of our Town Plan.

The full results of all the consultation processes are published in Appendix 1a-i



History

Ledbury is a complete small market town with a good range of traditional shops and other services for residents of the town, for surrounding villages and for visitors. It has changed little over the centuries and is still as John Masefield described it “pleasant to the sight, fair and half-timbered houses in black and white”.

Ledbury is almost equidistant from the county towns of Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester and these cities provide amenities unavailable in a small town. It is possible to reach all three cities by public transport.

The name Ledbury means “fort by the River Leadon”. The suffix “-bury” was used by the Anglo-Saxons to denote a prehistoric or Roman fort. The iron-age hill fort of Wall Hills lies one and a half miles to the west. The “-bury” could also indicate the Celtic fortified religious site now occupied by St. Michael's Church.

The church was founded c720AD at an important road-junction, where the route from Gloucester to Bromyard crossed the Hereford to Worcester and Droitwich salt road.

In Anglo-Saxon times, a settlement grew up by the church and a market was held on the village green in Church Lane. In 1138, the market was granted a charter by King Stephen



who built some of the finest timber-framed houses in the county.

Ledbury has not always been a peaceful town. In 1644, it was the site of Civil War skirmishes and in 1738 most of the turnpikes were destroyed by mobs angered at the high tolls charged.

There was a revival of the cloth and leather-working trades in the late 16th century leading to a further growth of prestigious houses in and around Ledbury. Early in the 18th century, the wool trade declined and the commercial emphasis centred on agriculture.

The Hereford-Gloucester canal ran through Ledbury, but operated only briefly before being superseded by the railway in 1885. The railway provided links with Hereford, South Wales, Worcester, Birmingham and London. A branch line took passengers to Gloucester, but this line had closed by 1960.



In 1232, St Katharine's Hospital was founded by Hugh Foliot, Bishop of Hereford, to care for the sick, the aged, travellers and pilgrims.

The town was developed by the bishops, under whose direction burgage plots were laid out in the Homend and along

the High Street. The plots were generally 1/10 acre in size (i.e. 12 perches long by 1 ½ perches wide), but over the years, fractions of plots were bought and sold. However, there is still evidence of the original layout on the eastern side of the High Street.

After the Reformation, church lands were sold and civic affairs were conducted by merchants

The 20th century saw considerable residential development, taking the town's population from c2,500 in 1960 to over 9,000 today. Ledbury has a small amount of light and service-industry, but most of the working population travels to one of the larger conurbations.

Landscape, Environment and Pattern of Development

Ledbury lies between the River Leadon and a ridge of folded Silurian limestone. This line of wooded hills to the east comprises, (from north to south) The Frith, Dog Hill and The Conigree. Seen from the west the town has a distinctive setting, rising up against the hills. From the hills, facing west one looks across the roofs of Ledbury to the backdrop of Marcle Ridge about four miles (7 km.) distant, and to Wall Hills with its Iron-Age fort which lies a mile (1.5km) to the north-west.

The town has clearly-defined boundaries (see map on inside cover), formed by the line of hills to the east, by the bypass and the River Leadon and its floodplain to the south and west, and by the Victorian railway viaduct to the north.

The Malvern Hills AONB borders the town and includes Ledbury Park to the south and the Eastnor Castle estate, an extensive area of parkland and farmland, lying between the Dog Hill/Conigree ridge and the Malvern Hills.

Westwards, between the Marcle Ridge and the River Leadon, lies a stretch of open countryside, a patchwork of arable fields and pastures with low hedges, hedgerow trees and patches of woodland. Land south and west of the bypass is Grade 1 and 2 agricultural land.

There are good communication links with the national motorway network and by rail with Hereford, Birmingham and London.

The objectives listed below were identified by 79% of respondents to the residents' questionnaire.

Objectives

Within the framework of Herefordshire Council's Unitary Development Plan and Local Development Framework, the Plan will strive to :-

1. Protect the Frith, Dog Hill and Conigree woods, the railway viaduct, Ledbury Park and the farmland east of the River Leadon, which together provide the landscape setting for Ledbury.
2. Prevent the spread of development beyond the present built-up areas, apart from present commitments and land allocations.
3. Preserve and enhance Ledbury's remaining open spaces.
4. Protect the River Leadon's floodplain from development and enhance this wildlife corridor.
5. Protect and enhance Ledbury's unique character as an historic market town.



Ledbury Landscapes

Within its limited area, Ledbury parish has a rich variety of landscapes. The following descriptions rest upon Herefordshire Council's Landscape Character Assessment. Five main landscape types are identified: timbered farmlands; estate farmlands; riverside meadows; settled farmlands on river terrace, and wooded hills. These types are described in the Landscape Character Assessment as follows. A map appears on page 54.

TIMBERED FARMLANDS.

They occur in two areas: east of Frith Wood and south of the town.

These are rolling lowland landscapes with occasional steep-sided hills and low escarpments. They have a small-scale, wooded, agricultural appearance characterised by filtered views through scattered woodland trees. These are complex, in places intimate landscapes made up of small to medium-sizes fields, irregularly-shaped woodlands and winding lanes.

Objectives

- Conserve and restore the pattern and composition of the hedgerow matrix through appropriate management and re-planting.
- Conserve and restore tree cover along watercourses and stream-lines.
- Conserve all native broadleaved woods and copses and restore with locally occurring native species.
- Conserve the organic pattern and character of the lane networks.

SETTLED FARMLANDS ON RIVER TERRACE.

These occur along the River Leadon west and north of Ledbury town. They are areas defined by the light, fertile, free-draining, sandy-brown soils of the river terraces, which give rise to the predominantly horticultural cropping land use. Settlement here tends to be sparsely dispersed and is limited to small, discrete clusters. These areas have a small to medium-scale field pattern, with very sparse hedgerow tree cover and consequent open views.

Objective

- Encourage appropriate hedgerow restoration and management and appropriate management of streamside trees.

RIVERSIDE MEADOWS

These occur along the River Leadon. They are linear, riverside landscapes, associated with a flat, well-defined alluvial floodplain. They are secluded pastoral landscapes, characterised by meandering, tree-lined rivers and flanked by water-meadows, defined by hedge and tree boundaries. Settlement is typically absent. These are landscapes that accommodate a degree of annual flooding, a factor that has been reflected in the traditional patterns of land-development and the representation of species and habitats tolerant of such waterlogged conditions.

Objectives

- Conserve, restore and enhance continuous tree cover along hedge-lines, ditches and watercourses.
- Conserve and restore wetland habitats and seek opportunities for further wetland habitat creation. Conserve all permanent pasture.
- Seek to retain the strong linear form of the landscape.
- Discourage built development that would interrupt this linear unity of the landscape.

ESTATE FARMLANDS

These occur in the area north of the Hereford road and west of the Bromyard road.

The majority of this land has historically been in the ownership of a few landowning families, who have influenced the character of the landscape by laying it out in an ordered fashion. This is a mixed-farming, medium-scale landscape where the medium to large-sized fields are defined by hedgerows. The views are framed by tree groups associated with its planned character. These are often small, geometrically-shaped plantation woodlands, possibly used in the past for shooting purposes, together with the tree features associated with large country house estates and ornamental parklands.

Objectives

- Conserve the enclosure patterns of sub-regular hedged fields.
- Conserve and restore parklands and the tree-cover associated with country house estates.
- Conserve and enhance tree-cover along watercourses.
- Conserve the integrity of estate villages.

WOODED HILLS

These comprise the line of hills running north-south to the east of Ledbury (The Frith, Dog Hill and The Coneygree) and Wall Hills to the west.

They are upstanding, densely-wooded landscapes with a sloping topography. The intrinsic character is derived from the pronounced relief and dominant, flowing woodland cover, which provide a strong sense of unity and visual integration. These are landscapes of large, irregularly-shaped ancient woodlands and wooded stream-lines, which interlink with the surrounding hedged fields.

Objectives

- Conserve and restore the ancient broadleaf character of the woodland, in line with the Forestry Commission's stated policy.

VIEWS

There are many outstanding views into and out of Ledbury. Among the most significant are:

- 👁 looking west over rolling farmland patterned with hedges and hedgerow trees, towards nearby Wall Hills and the more distant Marcle Ridge. It is vital that these views are not obscured by development within the town or spoiled by inappropriate development in the farmland or on the hills;
- 👁 looking east towards the Frith, Dog Hill and Coneygree woods, which need to be conserved; along the Leadon, with its river-side park;
- 👁 from Kilbury Camp to the north-east of the town: the views west of the wooded hills, south over the Eastnor estate and east towards the Malvern Hills are outstanding;
- 👁 from the Frith, Dog Hill and Coneygree woods there are fine views of the town spread out below and of the farmland and hills beyond.



WOODLANDS

The Coneygree

This is an ancient woodland site of 56 hectares, rich in plant and insect life. There is evidence of prehistoric occupation, such as neolithic flints implements and, in more recent times, the sites of a water-mill and lime-kiln.

With its public footpath to the north, linking Ledbury with Eastnor, a bridleway to the south which passes up The Bullen and crosses to Eastnor, and its easy access from the town, this wood is popular with residents and visitors.

A Naturalists' Field Study in 2005 recorded 166 species of flowers along the edges of rides and in clearings, including primrose, cowslip, wood anemone, a range of violets, common spotted and early purple orchid and yellow figwort. Oak, ash, hazel, field maple, spindle and hornbeam are among 47 species of tree recorded.

Small-leaved lime and wild service trees indicate the woodland's ancient origins. Bird life included the green and greater-spotted woodpeckers, tree-creeper and goldcrest among the 28 species found. There was a wealth of butterflies and moths, including holly and common blues, painted lady, marbled white and small copper butterflies. There are badger setts, and grey squirrels and Muntjak deer have left their traces.

The Frith

The Frith is the northernmost of the line of hills to the end of the town, covering 80 hectares and with a rich and varied ecosystem. Like the Coneygree, it falls within the Malvern Hills AONB. With its easy access from Ledbury, the two footpaths running north/south and its several forestry paths, it is much used for recreation.

From the types of tree found, it is evident that this is an ancient woodland. There is evidence of farming in medieval times in the form of agricultural terraces. Subsequently the area reverted to woodland. Charcoal-burning continued until the 1920s. Because of past felling activity, there are few ancient trees, although old chestnut coppice survives.

The Ledbury Naturalists Field Club survey of 2002/3 found that the overgrown wood and the conifers excluded light and reduced plant variety. The owners, Forest Enterprise, have long-term plans to return the area to traditional mixed woodland, with areas of standard trees and new coppice. Their improvements are already showing benefit to wildlife.

The survey showed 154 species of plant, including some rarely seen in the county, such as the violet helleborine. There were common spotted and early purple orchids, and probably the best showing in the county of the spreading bellflower. There were 39 species of tree, 33 of bird (including goshawk, linnet, goldcrest, nuthatch and tawny owl) and 26 of butterfly and moth, including comma, gatekeeper, red admiral, peacock, orange-tip and holly blue.

Dog Hill

This small area of mixed woodland adjacent to the town provides attractive walks for residents. It is owned and managed by the Town Council.

Objective

- Results of the questionnaire showed strong support for protecting the landscape (79%) and 36% said its distinctive features should be enhanced.



Pattern of Development

The pattern of development of Ledbury is best described by dividing the town into areas roughly corresponding with the phases of its growth over many centuries. (See maps inside covers)

Town Centre

The well-preserved town centre is the oldest part, comprising High Street and the adjacent Church Lane, and those parts of The Southend, Homend, New Street and Bye Street nearest to the High Street. It has retained its "historic market town" character and is a Conservation Area. The medieval town grew around the intersection of the road from Gloucester to Bromyard with the Hereford to Worcester and Droitwich salt road and was characterised by its division into burgage plots.

The parish church of St. Michael and All Angels and St. Katharine's Hall are 13th century. The other buildings are largely late 16th and early 17th century. Important timber-framed buildings of this period include the Market House, Ledbury Park, The Feathers Hotel and the "house on stilts" in High Street, Abbey House in The Homend, The Steppes and The Talbot Hotel in New Street and Abbot's Lodge in Church Lane.

Some XVIIIth century buildings survive in this quarter, such as Shell House in The Homend. Early 19th century buildings include St. Katharine's almshouses in High Street and the former union workhouse, renamed Belle Orchard House



Victorian development

The town expanded in the Victorian period, when large houses west of The Homend and close to the railway station, and smaller houses between Lower Road, Bridge Street and Little Marcle Road were built. A separate settlement, (New Town) was built to the west, comprising Albert Road, Lower Road and Victoria Road (named for the Diamond Jubilee of 1897).

Twentieth century development

Ledbury has grown much larger in the past century and particularly since the Second World War. Building extended along New Street and is characterised by large dwellings in extensive plots. The area between the main town and the new settlement was filled in during the early part of the century. Development between the wars consisted mainly of council-owned property. Much of the building east of The Homend is post-war. The Langlands estate in The Homend was built in the '60s on the site of Old Kennel Meadow, the former rugby field. The quarter bounded by New Street, the Gloucester road and the bypass (called The Deer Park estate), has been filled in with well-spaced single- and two-storey houses.

Most recently, the New Mills estate, bounded by the bypass, the Hereford road and the disused Gloucester railway line comprises a development of high-density 2, 3, 4 and 5-bedroomed houses.



Industrial development

This type of development has been located largely in a few clearly-defined areas: i.e. Lower Road Industrial Estate, Homend Trading Estate, (re-development of the disused station yard), Bromyard Road Industrial Estate and the area south of the Ross Road roundabout.

North of the viaduct and west of the Bromyard road land has been retained to allow for extension of the bypass beneath the viaduct, linking with the Bromyard road and thus allowing for further development of this area. This proposal remains in the current Unitary Development Plan for Ledbury.

Objectives

- As the town has grown, well-defined areas with distinctive characteristics have emerged.

Any new development should, as far as possible, preserve the character of the area in which it is built, in terms of size, height, design and materials.

- Ledbury's remaining open spaces should be preserved.
- Development should not obtrude on the distinctive views of Ledbury from the roads into the town, from the hills and from the open countryside and from the town itself, with its backdrop of hills.
- Where development has left sufficient space between buildings to create an open, green effect, this character should be preserved.
- Care should be taken to avoid light pollution.





Housing

The UDP (DR1 Design) states:

“Where relevant to the proposal, all development will be required to:

1. Promote or reinforce the distinctive character and appearance of the locality in terms of layout, density, means of access and enclosure, scale, mass, height, design and materials.
2. Retain and where possible incorporate existing site features contributing to the quality of the local environment, including landscape, historic and natural elements such as wildlife habitats and species.
3. Respect the content of the site, taking into account townscape and landscape character and topography, including the impact of the proposal on urban vistas, longer distance views and ridgelines.
4. Include measures that address health and safety, the conservation of energy and water, and avoids nuisance and pollution; and
5. Submit a design statement with the application for planning permission which sets out how proposals relate to issues of design quality, environmental conservation and sustainability.

Development which does not adequately address design principles or is of poor design, including schemes which are out of scale or character with their surroundings will not be permitted.”

Objectives

This Parish Plan looks further forward than the current UDP.

- Any development must be dependent on the capacity of the infrastructure to accommodate it.
- Any pressure to build outside the by-pass must be resisted.
- Any infill development must incorporate footpath/cycleway provision, in order to encourage "green" modes of transport.
- Any significant development must include provision for general needs housing, and starter homes for allocation to first-time buyers.
- Development must incorporate adequate parking facilities and provision must be made for the secure accommodation of cycles, motorised wheelchairs/scooters etc.
- Looking to the future and taking into account the current limitations of the infrastructure, should further development take place it is essential that priority be given to affordable/social housing.



Provision

There are currently 468 units of general needs housing in the town and 119 units of sheltered accommodation. These are managed by the Elgar/Festival, Marches and Anchor Housing Associations.

1. For the elderly:

Elgar (Festival): Harling Court: 42

St. Michaels: 32

Turner Court: 19

All those above are warden-assisted.

2. Leadon Bank:

This new development by Shaw Homes provides 52 one or two-bedroom “Extra Care” apartments with an optional range of support services. 35 of these units will be Council-funded.

In addition, there is a ten-bed Re-enablement Unit.

3. For the active-retired, there are apartments in various areas of the town. These include

Upper Hall Close, Church Street

Furlong Court, Deer Park

Bethell Court, New Street

Dawes Court, The Homend

Born Court, New Street

Objectives.

- Whilst Ledbury housing provision is currently on a plateau of stability, having exceeded the targets set in the current UDP, it is important to ensure that the housing in existence is utilised to its maximum potential.
- Ledbury is an historic market town and in order to preserve its character any development in gardens and green open spaces should be resisted.
- Looking to the future and taking into account the current limitations of the infrastructure, should further development take place it is essential that priority be given to affordable/ social housing.

This objective was supported in the results of the questionnaire. Any development must address the need for additional social housing.



Conservation Area

Ledbury is a town of European importance and it is therefore essential that the Town Plan reflects this status in its objectives for the Conservation Area and in particular for the historic buildings that lie within its confines.

Objectives:

- To identify a balance between the requirements of conservation and the demands of development.
- To preserve and protect the Conservation Area, including the natural environment.
- To ensure that new development is sensitive and compatible with the historic fabric of the town.
- To protect listed buildings from demolition or unsympathetic works.
- To secure appropriate uses for listed buildings.
- To encourage the proper repair and maintenance of listed buildings.
- To preserve the setting of listed buildings.
- To set out requirements for shopfronts and advertising. To encourage the use of a pre-determined scheme of colours for decoration of buildings within the area. (See Appendix 16)
- To regulate the influx of signage in the Conservation Area and maintain a good standard of general tidiness throughout the town and its environs.

The results of the questionnaire clearly emphasised the need to conserve and enhance the area's historic buildings.



Recreation and Leisure

Outdoor sports facilities:

1. Rugby, soccer and cricket grounds
2. Tennis Courts
3. All-weather pitch at JMHS
4. Bowling Green
5. Recreation Ground with skateboard park

Indoor sports facilities:

1. Swimming pool
2. Two Leisure Centres, one at JMHS including squash courts, weight room etc.
3. Various venues housing courses in Keep Fit, Line Dancing, Ballet Dancing, Yoga, Pilates, Short-mat Bowls, etc.
4. Youth Centre

The arts:

1. Theatre: plays and films
2. Music: choirs and other groups
3. Reading groups
4. U3 A courses
5. Library

Ledbury is fortunate in having a wide range of interests represented locally. The annual Poetry Festival has become an event of national status and it's two-week programme in June/July attracts large attendances at its many and varied events. There is a flourishing arts society, which holds an annual exhibition of members' work. The WEA runs several courses as does the U3A and there are many other clubs and societies catering for a wide range of interests. The local Civic Society has a large membership and in addition to its work on Conservation and Environment, runs a small museum and presents a series of lectures by visiting speakers. In a lighter vein Eastnor Castle hosts The Big Chill music festival in early August and Ledbury has its own Carnival on August Bank Holiday. There is a seasonal apple fest held in Ledbury and the surrounding villages.

Respondents to the questionnaire wished to see an extension to the availability of schools' facilities for use by the general public, e.g. Evening Classes.



Objectives.

- Retain current level of provision.
- Encourage the introduction of further facilities, where appropriate.

Public Open Spaces and Cycle Routes

Open Spaces and Recreation Areas:

There are two “linear parks” within Ledbury: the Town Trail and the Riverside Walk. There are also a number of other public open spaces, including:

1. Queen's Walk, between Bridge Street and Orchard Lane.
2. Oatleys Meadow, off Victoria and Oatleys roads. (The Town Trail traverses both of these.)
3. Land between Villa Way and the cricket ground.
4. Dog Hill Wood and Green Lane.
5. Various parts of the Deer Park and New Mills estates.
6. The Recreation Ground.
7. The Walled Garden.



Most of these are owned by Herefordshire Council, but Dog Hill Wood belongs to Ledbury Town Council. The Ledbury Greenspaces Liaison Group (LGLG), consisting of representatives of interested local organisations, meets quarterly with a member of the Herefordshire Council Parks and Countryside Services team to discuss and find solutions to any problem associated with open spaces on Ledbury.

In response to public demand, Ledbury Town Council is trying to acquire land for allocation to allotments.

Cycle Routes and Public Footpaths

These are off-road, traffic-free routes within and near the town that cyclists, pedestrians and users of motorised and un-motorised wheelchairs may use. Some are former footpaths that have been widened and upgraded.

Routes within Ledbury are:-

1. The Town Trail, from the station to the picnic area by the Leadon at the Ross Road roundabout.
2. A short link from the above to the car park at the swimming pool, following the southern boundary of the Recreation Ground.
3. The path at the foot of the old Gloucester railway embankment, from Golding Way to the Primary School. (Route of footpath LI8) This has links to the Town Trail and the recent housing development in Orchard Rise.
4. Continuation of the above behind the Primary School, crossing Browning Road to link with New Mills Way.
5. Route alongside part of New Mills Way.
6. Route between the Primary School and Margaret Road, leading to Barnett Close. (Route of footpath L2). This is to be extended further along L2 to the Lower Road trading Estate.
7. Route from the tollhouse at the end of Mabel's Furlong to Biddulph Way, with a link to Ferndown Road.

Routes just out of town are:

1. Green Lane.
2. Riverside Walk (between the by-pass and the Leadon, from the Ross road to the Hereford road).

Town Trail

The Town Trail runs from Ledbury Station in the north to the Ross Road in the south and follows the route of the former Gloucester to Ledbury canal and subsequent railway. It is much used by walkers and cyclists. From the station to Bridge Street, the track mainly follows the old railway track along a high embankment shaded by tall trees and well-drained. From Bridge Street southwards, the track is more sheltered, with a mix of habitats, including a deep cutting and planted woodland.

Ledbury Naturalists Field Club carried out a survey from March to October 1999 and found a rich variety of wildlife, including 183 species of flowers, 35 of trees, 35 of birds (including blackcap, goldcrest and chiffchaff) and 15 types of butterfly. The club found a much greater range of flowers than in a previous survey of 1965. Sympathetic treatment will continue to be needed to encourage such biodiversity in this valuable asset to the town.

Riverside Walk

The riverside meadows include a walk from the Hereford Road to the Ross Road. A stretch of the River Leadon, from Dickinson's roundabout to just beyond the Little Marcle roundabout, was diverted during the construction of the by-pass. The Naturalists Field Club surveyed the walk in 1999 to ascertain how well this riverside habitat had been colonised by wildlife. The northern stretch of the meadows is formally maintained, with mown grass, gravel paths and groups of planted shrubs. The southern stretch (affected by diversion of the river) is more natural, with long grass and a track beside the river.

Because much of the riverside was new or disturbed, colonisation by wildlife was in its infancy, but nevertheless the diversity found included 154 species of flowers, 25 of trees (including 5 types of willow) 43 species of birds (including willow-warbler, common whitethroat, yellow-hammer, chiffchaff and other finches) and 18 types of butterfly. Biodiversity could further increase with good management, such as retention of the hay-meadow regime and tackling the invasion by Japanese Knotweed.

NB Green Lane is the only one of the above which is available to horse-riders.

All routes except the Town Trail and Riverside Walk are three or more metres wide, and some have a central segregation line to separate cyclists from pedestrians. The Town Trail and Riverside Walk are two metres wide, with a fine gravel surface to make them appear more rural. Weed encroachment reduces the width in places - a continuing problem monitored by LGLG.

Objectives

1. Preservation and maintenance of existing routes.
2. Extension and improvement, where practicable.
3. Monitoring of condition and use of facilities.

It was very clear from the consultation process that this extensive network of facilities is highly valued by residents and visitors alike.



Infrastructure

1. Main services:

- Water
- Gas
- Electricity
- Communications: telephone, broadband, cable TV, etc.
- Sewerage
- Police
- Fire Service

2. Healthcare:

- Community Health Centre, incorporating: Hospital, Outpatients, Brain Injury unit,
- Physiotherapy, Clinics, NHS Dentist, Residential Home (private) 2 G.P. Surgeries
- Patient Liaison Group
- Ambulance Station, including a Rapid Response vehicle
- NHS Residential Home

3. Education:

- State and private nursery and pre-school groups
- Ledbury County Primary School
- John Masefield High School
- Children's Unit offering family support.

4. Youth provision

5. Churches

6. Transport:

- Road
- Public Transport: Rail network
Buses



Main Services

Ledbury Sewage Treatment Works

This serves a mixture of domestic and trade premises with population figures as shown below: -

1998 - 6862

2000 - 8443

2006 - 9000+

Severn Trent has recently spent £8 million on improvements to Ledbury's sewage plant, in order to meet new Environment Agency standards. The improvements are designed to meet environmental standards for at least the next twenty years. The plant makes use of the latest activated sludge process, instead of the less effective system of bacteria beds. Treatment waste water is separated from the sludge and dispersed, in this case into the River Leadon. The remaining sludge still has to be taken away by tanker, as has long been the case at the Ledbury plant. Two new "oxidation ditches" used in the activated sludge process have been built on the site of the old bacteria beds. Using the latest technology, the water passes through various processes to leave it cleaner than the river itself. The works are a total refurbishment and it is very important, with a growing population, to have a modern, up-to-date treatment centre.

The plant was built to serve a population equivalent of 12,000 and the company allows for normal growth for the next five years. The footprint of the new works is much smaller than the old plant and so there is plenty of land available for expansion, if necessary. However, Severn Trent would plan to utilise to capacity the existing plant before considering further expansion.

Welsh Water

The majority of water-pipes in Ledbury and the surrounding area are set to be replaced or relined in a massive programme being undertaken by Welsh Water and commenced in April 2005. More than 16km of mains are due to be replaced because of their age and there will be extensive work in Ledbury during the later phases. Much of the work is long overdue and will improve supply and quality to all areas of the town's residential and business areas. Also included in the upgrading is the town centre, within Ledbury's historic heart. These works, which started in January 2008, are part of a five-year rolling plan.

Gas and Electricity

Gas and electricity services are provided to all areas of the town and are of sufficient and sustainable capacity. Updating of provision takes place when necessary.

Communications

BT telephone service is available throughout the area. Other services using the BT infrastructure are also provided. Broadband is widely available. There is cable television provision in a limited area.



Police

Current Provision

One Local Police Sergeant, responsible for the management of the Police Station.

Policing and Staffing.

Response: 4 shifts each staffed by 2 officers, covering the South Area, which includes Ross-on-Wye. The Sergeant at Ross covers all 4 shifts from there.

Ledbury: One Local Police Officer covers the town centre, assisted by one Community Support Officer.
One LPO covers the rural area, supported by one CSO.
Two further CSOs are employed, one covering the town and one the rural area.

Future provision: employment of an additional CSO.

Several areas of the town operate a Neighbourhood Watch scheme, supported by local police officers.

Ledbury Police Station:

Open for public access and manned by Police Staff:

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday: 9a.m. – 1p.m. and 4p.m. – 8p.m.

Tuesday: 9a.m. – 1p.m.

Saturday: 9a.m. – 1p.m. and 4p.m. – 7p.m.

Sunday: 9a.m. – 11a.m.

Objectives:

- To support the police service so that it remains based in the town.
- To resist any pressure to reduce coverage below the current levels.
- To provide additional resources for events requiring an increased presence in the town, e.g. Carnival Day and other major events in the area.

Fire Service

This is a retained service, based at the Fire Station in Bye Street. The town is reliant on the willingness of local employers to release officers for duty at short notice. There are two fire appliances and eighteen officers.

The officers have weekly training sessions and attend regular courses at their HQ in Droitwich. Annual call-outs average 200+.

The station operates in the same way as a fully-manned one, providing advice on fire safety in the home and undertaking school visits.

The area covered is approximately 65 square miles, from the Malvern Hills to the Marcle Ridge and from the M50 to the A4103 Hereford/ Worcester road. There are no plans to change the current provision.

Objectives:

- To support the Fire Service and to ensure that it is retained in Ledbury and maintained at its current successful level.
- To increase coverage if and when there is a significant increase in population. The population of Ledbury currently stands at 9,240.

Healthcare

Ambulance Service

This service is now part of the West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust, formed on 1st July, 2006.

Provision at the Ledbury station:

2 vehicles:

- An emergency ambulance, crewed by a paramedic and a technician and on duty for ten hours per day, seven days a week from 8.30a.m. to 6.30p.m.
- A marked response car, crewed by a Team Leader for sixteen hours per day, seven days a week, running in two eight-hour shifts and covering the period from 8a.m.to midnight.

3 Team Leaders: these are paramedics who have additional managerial responsibilities.

2 Paramedics, who can administer drugs and can carry out invasive procedures. They undertake further training.

3 Technicians: these attend 999 calls and are trained in emergency driving and ambulance aid.

Although these resources are Ledbury-based, they may be called on to respond to incidents anywhere within the Trust's boundaries, and also "over the border", a reciprocal arrangement with adjacent services.

From April 2005 to April 2006, Ledbury (anywhere with a Ledbury postcode) had 975 calls, comprising 999 calls and those referred by a doctor. As their demanding performance-criteria change, the service is continually examining ways to respond more quickly and to be equipped to provide the latest methods of treatment.

Objective

- To support the Ledbury Ambulance Service and to ensure that it remains based in Ledbury and is maintained at least at its current level of provision.

Ledbury General Practitioners' Practices.

Market Surgery

Number of patients:4314

Area covered: Ledbury town, all areas within the by-pass and Wellington Heath.

G.P.'s Register still open.

Doctors attend their own patients in the Health Centre.

St. Katharine's Surgery

Number of patients: about 9000

Large catchment area extends to Tarrington, Bromesberrow, Colwall and Dymock

G.P.'s Register still open

Increased demand from temporary residents, including migrant workers.

Doctors attend their own patients in the Health Centre

G.P.'s operate a rota system, when required, to deal with minor injuries.

N.H.S. Mental Health Team: takes referrals for mental health services from G.P.'s and is based at Rose Cottage in Belle Orchard.

Ledbury Community Health and Care Centre, Market Street

1. Primary Care Trust (PCT) National Health Service
2. 14 NHS beds
3. Minor Injuries Unit (MIU): A nurse-led service, available 7 days/24 hours
4. Physiotherapy Dept.: open Mon-Fri.
5. Dental Access Clinic: open Mon-Fri.
6. Health Visitors' Office: PCT
 - a. Health Visitors for the older person
 - b. Health Visitors for the child
 - c. Office at Reception, PCT
 - d. Baby-milk tokens and vitamins available

Within the Health and Care Centre:

1. Social Services Department
 - a. Reablement advice
 - b. Access to Care Services
 - c. Assessment and Care Management
2. British Red Cross "Stay well at Home" service
 - a. Area covered: Ledbury, Cradley, Colwall and Bromyard
 - b. Offers a short-term service, up to 4 weeks, to any person during a period of ill-health.
 - c. Referrals are made by health care professionals; self-referrals have to be confirmed by a G.P.

Private Health Service

1. 36 beds Nursing Home
2. 10 beds Acquired Brain Injury Unit (A.B.I.)

Dispensing chemists

There are two dispensing chemists in the town, one in High Street and one in Bye Street. Both offer a collection service of prescriptions from surgeries and the one in Bye Street will also deliver prescribed medication to patients' homes.

Objectives

- To maintain and to increase, where possible, the services at present provided.
- To address the provision of hospital bed accommodation in view of the increasing and ageing population.



Education

Secondary

John Masefield High School: current number on roll: 964

It is likely that this figure will reduce to approximately 850 by 2011, but that the numbers will then remain stable for the next ten years. The reason for the decline would appear to be a combination of a lower birth-rate and the increase in households over retirement age.

Primary

Ledbury Primary School: current numbers 453

It is unlikely that these numbers will alter considerably in the foreseeable future.

- **Special Educational Needs Provision**

One SENCO (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator) and one Teaching Assistant cover this area in the Primary School. In addition, the school has facilities for physically disabled pupils, including access ramps to buildings.

In March 2008 a new centre opened providing support in speech and language. There will also be Health Visitor sessions, a Childminding Network, and a Young Parents Group, a play based “Happi-Kids” group caters for children under 5 with special needs.

Nursery

There are three Private/Voluntary/Independent nurseries in the town and a Local Authority nursery based at the Primary School. In total, these nurseries have a capacity of 103 children.

Staffing

In England generally rolls are falling and in Herefordshire this is exacerbated by the fact that there are fewer 20-34-year olds in the population. More 15-20-year olds move out of the county than into it. As a result, Herefordshire Council is undertaking a review of the provision of schools in the county.

Primary School: current staffing

Head Teacher + 17 class teachers (5 in Reception and Year 1 classes)

1 full-time teacher providing Preparation and Administration cover

26 Classroom Assistants, some full and some part-time

High School: current staffing

Head Teacher, 2 Deputies + Administrative staff

53 full-time teachers, 15 part-time teachers and 12 Learning Support Assistants.

- **Special Educational Needs Provision**

The High School has one SENCO in charge of pupils with learning difficulties.

There is an Access Curriculum in operation, covering English, Maths, Science, Languages and Humanities. Children with special needs in one or more of these subjects are taught in small groups by specialist teachers. At other times, SEN pupils work in mainstream. There are also 8 Teaching Assistants supporting these pupils.

Buildings.

Both schools are housed in modern buildings, with the High School retaining part of the County Secondary School which opened in 1960.

There are temporary mobile classrooms on site at both schools and, as in most schools, there are issues relating to accommodation, particularly with regard to the use of mobile classrooms. It is difficult to detail the problems encountered, and it is likely that the views of school and Authority on priority will differ.

Objectives

- To phase out the use of temporary classrooms and to replace them with purpose-built permanent structures.
- To maintain and, where possible, improve standards of education throughout the system.
- To maintain and, if possible, improve the pupil/teacher ratio.

Youth Provision

Youth Provision Report

Ledbury Youth First (LYF) was established in 1997.

The aim is to provide an information and support service for 12-25 year olds in Ledbury and the surrounding parishes.

There are 14 objectives which LYF will work towards, either as a sole charity or with partners. These are:

- To identify and respond to young people's perceived and expressed needs.
- To follow an inclusive and universal approach that is not merely problem-orientated.
- To engage with young people in a positive and friendly manner.
- To provide access to safe and secure environments for young people.
- To facilitate access to accurate and up-to-date information on issues affecting young people.
- To create opportunities that will promote the personal and social well-being of young people.
- To develop holistic programmes of health promotion.
- To plan and encourage youth-led projects that provide opportunities for personal development, leading to independence.
- To encourage young people to take on responsible roles and create opportunities for Active Citizenship.
- To develop young people's awareness of their rights and responsibilities to the wider community.
- To promote community-wide involvement in youth provision.
- To evolve programmes of activities with young people that will develop their imagination and creativity.
- To develop links and partnerships with other relevant local, regional and national agencies.
- To ensure access to relevant training for all staff and volunteers.

There are five people employed by the charity, which is currently run by three trustees. The positions are funded by the Big Lottery for a period of three years.

Over the next three years, we are looking to work with other agencies and providers, as well as youth forums in the area, to improve the youth provision and access to facilities for the young people, providing an outreach service as well as a drop-in and one-to-one advice and support service at John Masefield High School, rural youth clubs and at other local providers.

In addition we shall be working in partnership with Herefordshire Council Youth Service, JMHS, SHYP (Sheltered Housing for Young People), a single parent advisory service, the CVA (Community Voluntary Action), providing more young volunteers and getting the community involved in more youth activities, a careers convention to involve Higher Education, apprenticeships and employment.

Ledbury Youth First wants the young people to be given "tools" to work with to provide them with the means to cope with the trials and tribulations that they may experience as they grow up, and discover what people and agencies are available to help them on their journey through life.

A significant number of those responding to the survey thought current provision for young people inadequate, especially the lack of places to socialise.

Objective

- To increase and improve the current level of provision in order to cater for the needs expressed in the consultation report.

Provision for the disabled

Access

According to a report from the local Access Group, some improvements have been made, but there are still premises inaccessible to some of the disabled. The provision of dropped kerbs at street crossings and the removal of pavement drainage channels have proved of considerable benefit.

There is no wheelchair access to any dentist's surgery in town, neither is there suitable hotel accommodation. However, local banks have provided good access.

The building creating the worst difficulty is the Public Library. Herefordshire Council has plans to provide a new library, but these are in their preliminary stages. Meanwhile, there is a scheme run by volunteers who will collect and return books on behalf of disabled residents.

There are some excellent groups within the town, working to support disabled residents.

These include:

Community Voluntary Action, Ledbury and District Access Group and Age Concern. There is a Shopmobility Centre in St Katharine's car-park, providing mobility aids for disabled shoppers. Other voluntary groups offer a range of assistance for those unable to leave home.

Objectives

- The provision of a new library in the town centre.
- The provision of access for the disabled to premises providing essential services.
- Hotel accommodation to suit the needs of the disabled.
- The monitoring and up-grading of general facilities.

Churches in Ledbury

Church buildings

The Parish Church of St. Michael and All Angels

St. Katharine's Chapel

The Roman Catholic Church of The Most Holy Trinity

The Methodist Church

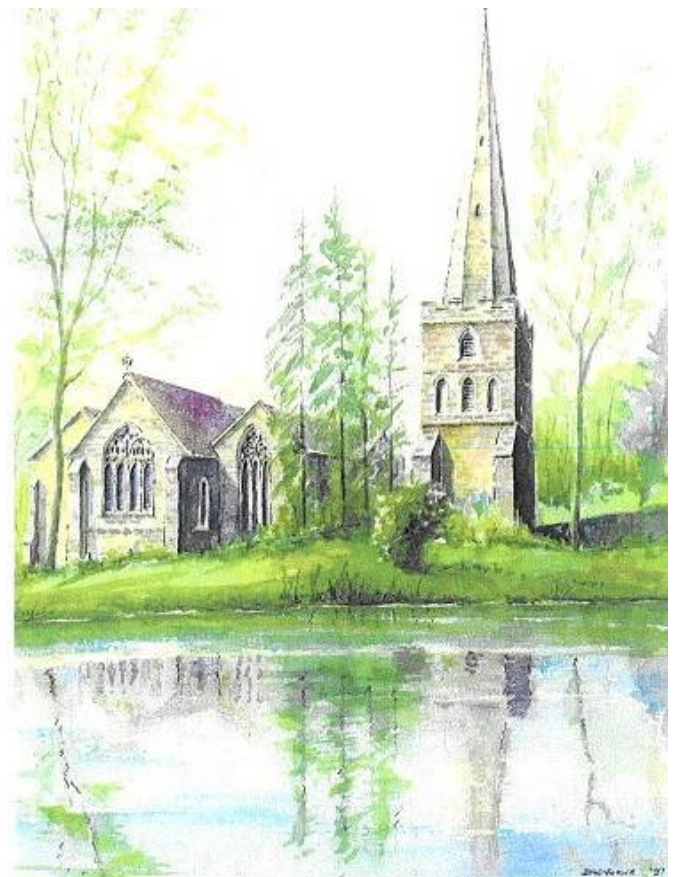
The Baptist Church

In addition, the Society of Friends (Quakers) meets in the Burgage Hall on Sunday Mornings and there is a Pentecostal community in the town.

The church communities make a considerable contribution to the well-being and welfare of the local community.

Objectives

- To encourage more diverse use of church buildings for the benefit of the community as a whole.
- To support the Churches in their endeavours to preserve and maintain their important buildings.



Transport

Trains

There are good links to Birmingham, Worcester, London, and Hereford. There are services from Hereford to Cardiff and South Wales, Shrewsbury, Manchester and the north.

(Timetables in Appendix)

The findings of the questionnaire suggest that greater reliability, lower prices and integrated services would provide the best incentives to greater use.

Buses

Various private firms operate local services and the routes of some national companies pass through the town. Survey results suggest that greater frequency and extension of routes would be incentives to greater use.



Taxis

There are three firms based in Ledbury and others are available in the adjacent towns. All have to be accessed by telephone.

Ring and Ride

This is one of the services provided by Ledbury and District Community Voluntary Services. It is available for shopping, physiotherapy, hairdressing, etc. for those experiencing difficulties with transport.

CVA also organises the “Shopmobility” scheme, mobility-aids hire service and the three CVA minibuses. It is a “not for profit” voluntary sector organisation which provides a wide range of support services to newly-formed and established voluntary organisations and groups operating within the Ledbury area.

Roads and traffic

Provision of a Northern by-pass remains in UDP: recommend early implementation.

Parking: there are more than 300 off-street parking spaces, but this is insufficient.

Ledbury’s economy relies heavily on people coming into the town from surrounding areas and the inadequacy of parking facilities for them is a problem.

Irresponsible - not to mention illegal - parking causes problems in residential areas.

60% of those responding to the survey cited traffic as a major problem, with congestion the main issue.

Cycling and motor-cycling

Encourage use of cycles and motor- cycles as an alternative to cars.

Cycle racks should be provided in the town centre as well as in the car parks.

Encourage use of Town Trail for cycle access to the town.

Provide a wider bridge across Orchard Lane.

Provide storage facilities for cycles/motorcycles at new developments.

Car-parking

Town Centre:

Free on-street parking for a limited period is currently available. However, the waiting-time is currently under review. There is a major problem in areas where older-style properties have no off-street parking facilities. Parking problems are exacerbated by the number of cars needing to park in order to carry on business in the town, i.e. the local employment force.

This puts an additional strain on the infrastructure. Areas particularly affected are Bridge Street, Lower Road, New Street, Bank Crescent and Homend Crescent. Two thirds of residents responding to the survey cited insufficient off-road parking and short-stay spaces as problems. Whilst many people walk to the town centre, most of the rest travel by car. One third use car-parks several times a week.

Car-park capacity:

St Katharine's:	130 + 6 for disabled drivers
Bye Street:	72 + 2
Lawnside Road:	58 + 3
Bridge Street:	52 + 1

Coach-parks:

Bye Street:	2
Countrywide:	6

Objectives

- Encourage the use of alternative forms of transport, by means of an integrated public service.
- Work with the Highways Department to achieve a solution to Ledbury's parking problem by providing more car-parking spaces.
- Explore the possibility of extending the Lawnside Road car-park into the site currently occupied by the redundant BT building.
- Ensure all future development includes adequate off-road parking for residents and their visitors, and in line with Herefordshire Council's current policy.
- Explore the possible use of schools' car-parks for additional parking out of school hours.



Provision for cycle storage at car-free developments

Any housing or business development should, where possible, include the provision of a secure, fully enclosed, level-accessed storage space suitable for cycles or a powered mobility vehicle (PMV). The storage space shall be large enough for at least as many cycles as there are bed-spaces in the dwelling. It shall be provided with a power-supply for the overnight charging of a PMV battery. The storage space may be integrated with the main structure or in a separate structure. For maximum security, each residential unit shall have its own separate and lockable storage space.

Any pathway access to the storage facility shall be a minimum of 1200cm wide and have a suitable all-weather surface.

Voluntary Organisations

Ledbury is blessed with an impressive range of voluntary support organisations, covering a wide field of activities and services. In common with many other areas, these are manned predominantly by residents over the age of retirement.

The wide range of services includes, to name but a few:

Meals on Wheels

Ring and Ride taxi service

Community Voluntary Action

Ledbury and District Access Group

Shopmobility

Evergreens

Day Centre provision



Economy

Ledbury's economic health depends not only on businesses located within the town, but on those of a wide surrounding area. Traditionally a market town, Ledbury has for centuries been the hub of a thriving farming and fruit-growing region. Farming has changed dramatically over recent years and profitability has been hard to sustain, but diversification has enabled many to retain their viability. Although, along with many other towns in the area, it has lost its weekly fat-stock market, Ledbury businesses continue to benefit from the rural community they serve. There is a comparatively low level of unemployment in the area and the economy is boosted by an annual influx of pickers, who service the major fruit-growers.

Ledbury is well-provided with all the services it needs and it is imperative to ensure their survival. It is essential to emphasise the importance to the town of all these types of trade and industry. These include transport services, transit warehouses, manufacturing, service industries and trades and a comprehensive range of professional services.

Retailing

Retailers in the town are represented by the Ledbury Independent Traders Association, known as LITA. After a period of inactivity, this group has been revived and plans to co-operate fully with the Town Council and the Tourist Association to represent the interests of retailers and small businesses.

There is a good balance of retailing within the town, obviating the need to travel elsewhere for shopping. There is a wide catchment area and many shoppers come to Ledbury from the surrounding area and from other small towns. Traders are satisfied that they are as viable as other comparable areas in the country. Their chief concerns are those of car/coach parking and traffic management.

Objectives:

- To support the local retailing section in ensuring a long-term, varied and successful future, an aim supported by the majority responding to the questionnaire.
- To work towards improved provision of car and coach-parking facilities.
- To monitor and, where necessary, seek to improve the flow of traffic within the town.

Industry.

The businesses are predominantly small-scale, with the largest employers being Amcor, Ledbury Welding, Haygrove Fruit, Wye Fruit, and UBL. There are two Building Supplies companies, two bus companies and five businesses serving the motorist's needs. Smaller units include: Sequani, Golden Fruit, Watson's Petroleum, ABE transport, European Aviation and The Helping Hand Company. Farming is served by three veterinary practices, an agricultural machinery repair shop, two animal feed merchants, and Hutchinson's Agrochemicals. LDA Meats supplies local butchers and also has a retail outlet.



Industry is centred on four main industrial estates: Bromyard Road, Lower Road, Homend and Little Marcle Road.

There is a major Countrywide store and a large Homebase retail outlet, supplying garden plants and equipment.

Outside the by-pass, there are three developments, one housing Meadow Cheese and Countrywide, one with a variety of smaller units, and one housing UBL.



Objectives.

- To support existing local trade and industry.
- To encourage expansion in order to provide for those people wishing to work in Ledbury.
- To support the retention of sites identified within the UDP for industrial development, as evidenced in the results of Q.69 in the questionnaire.



Tourism

As a town of European importance, Ledbury holds a strong position in regard to tourism. It benefits from the fact that tourism has overtaken farming as the most important factor driving the economy of the county, with a revenue in excess of £280 million in 2005. In a survey of October 2007, Ledbury was voted the favourite tourist venue in Herefordshire.

Objective

- Encourage the provision of facilities for tourists, a view endorsed by the results of the survey.
- Increase the provision of bed and breakfast accommodation in the area.
- Encourage the use of the public transport network by visitors

Ledbury Tourism Association

This organisation is very active and has plans to improve marketing and to participate in new web-sites in order to encourage visitors. It also liaises with local attractions, such as Eastnor Castle, Westons Cider Museum, Hellens and the Three Counties Showground, with the aim of increasing visitor numbers and their economic contribution to the town.

Ledbury Tourist Information Centre

This office lies at the heart of tourist services in the town, providing full information services to both visitors and the local community. There is a range of local collectables on sale, which are not available elsewhere.

The office runs a booking-service for accommodation in the area. While self-catering provision is adequate, low cost en-suite bed and breakfast facilities are in short supply.



There has been a noticeable increase in bookings for short breaks, some of which is generated from events held in the surrounding area.

Tourism is critical to the economic health and well-being of the town.

The TIC is now an agent for National Express, which has led to an increase in visitor numbers.

"Neighbouring Tourism" has been encouraged by initiatives such as the free bus-pass scheme for the elderly, which enables holders from Gloucester and other towns and villages to visit the town.

Staffing: Normal level is two assistants, but at peak times there are three.

In 2006 there were more than 1,500 telephone calls and in excess of 80,500 personal visits. This is in addition to contact by letter and e-mail.

Objectives

- Maintain the current excellent service to visitors and residents and to resist rigorously any cut-back in provision.

Twinning

Ledbury is twinned with Strömstad, a small town on the west coast of Sweden.

The link is intended to benefit both towns and to that end reciprocal visits are arranged. They host each others' visitors and links are particularly strong in the fields of sport and music.

Objectives

- To further friendships between the two communities.

HMS Ledbury



Ledbury has had a long association with the Royal Navy's ships which have borne the name of the Ledbury Hunt. The latest of these belongs to the Hunt class, unique in the Royal Navy for its dual functions of "Sweeping" and "Hunting" on the same platform, and capable of rolling from one function to the other in a matter of minutes.

HMS Ledbury is powered by two Deltic diesel engines and has a top speed of 15 knots.

Length: 60 metres

Displacement: 675 tonnes

Complement: 5 Officers, 9 Senior Rates and 29 Junior Rates.

On 4th July 2007, the crew visited the town and were presented with the Freedom of Ledbury by its Mayor, Councillor Kay Swinburne.



Polytunnels

“Polytunnels have their place in some rural landscapes, but it is crucial that their location and extent respect the quality of local and nationally designated landscapes, as well as the wishes of all local communities.” CPRE

Objectives:

Any proposed development involving polytunnels should, in our view, take account of:-

- any relevant policies within Herefordshire Council’s UPD/LDF, local Town or Parish Plan or Village Design Statement; (see appendix 13)
- any existing or proposed designation, such as AONB, Area of Special Landscape Value, SSSI etc.;
- any possible impact on the local community;
- any economic effect on the local community which could result in an increase in employment opportunities and/or benefit to traders.

Permission should only be granted upon proof of intent to employ best farming practices.

These include:-

1. the use of non-reflective plastic;
2. seasonal use, where practicable, with removal of covering during dormant periods;
3. rotational use within the area of development, where possible;
4. use, where applicable, of natural predators/fungicides/herbicides for pest/fungus/weed control;
5. where possible, catchment and re-cycling of water for use in irrigation.

Advertising

The Herefordshire UDP policy on advertising is as follows:-

“Consent for the display of advertisements will only be granted where they do not adversely affect public safety or amenity, having regard to the architectural, historic and visual character and appearance of the area and to both individual and cumulative effects.”

Guidelines concerning the use of “A-boards” in Ledbury:-

1. The outer edge of the board should not exceed 1.2 metres from the front of the shop.
2. There must be no less than 1.8 metres of footway available for the public. Therefore a pavement must be at least metres wide for a board to be used.
3. Boards must be placed adjacent to the premises concerned.

(Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992 SI 992/6, plus Section 43 of the anti-social behaviour act of 2003. (see appendix 14)

Lighting and light-pollution

Refer to UDP DR14 (in appendix 16) for policy and objectives. Domestic lighting will not be covered.

Objectives

1. When lighting needs replacement, or when new lighting is proposed, systems should:-
 - a. project light downwards,
 - b. employ the latest technology and
 - c. be in keeping with ambience of area.
 - d. care should be taken to avoid intrusion.
2. Encourage the adoption of CPRE Hereford's "Night Blight" project which has produced recommendations for Herefordshire Council and Parish Councils.

Summary of Objectives identified through consultation

NB: Figures in parenthesis indicate the section of the Action Plan relevant to this issue.

Landscape, environment & pattern of development (1)

Protect the landscape setting

Prevent the spread of development beyond the by-pass

Preserve & enhance remaining open spaces

Protect river floodplain from development and enhance wildlife corridor

Protect and enhance Ledbury's character as an historic market town.

Development (3)

Ensure that any development reflects the character of the area in which it is built

Avoid visual intrusion of development into and from the surrounding landscape

Avoid light-pollution

Preserve and protect the Conservation Area, including the natural environment

Housing (3)

Use existing housing to maximum potential

Resist development in gardens and open spaces

Give priority to provision of social housing

Recreation and leisure (5)

Ensure the retention of existing facilities and encourage extension where practicable

Open spaces & cycle routes (5)

Preserve and maintain existing provision

Monitor, & improve provision, where possible

Services (6)

Ensure adequate provision

Healthcare (6)

Support existing services

Increase services, where possible

Increase provision of hospital beds

Education (6)

Phase out use of temporary classrooms

Improve standards throughout the system

Youth Provision (6)

Increase provision

Churches (7)

Encourage diverse use of buildings for benefit of community in general

Support churches in efforts to preserve their important buildings

Transport (8)

Encourage use of alternative forms of transport through provision of an integrated public service

Work with Highways Dept. to find solution to parking problem

Expand Lawnside Road car park into site of redundant BT building

Economy (4)

Support local trade and industry

Encourage expansion, to provide for those seeking to work locally

Ensure the retention of sites currently identified for industrial development

Tourism (9)

Maintain current level of service

Resist any cut-back in provision

Increase provision of bed and breakfast accommodation

Twinning (10)

Promote social, cultural and economic links

Appendices

Copies of appendices are available to view at the following locations:
Ledbury Town Council Offices, Herefordshire Council Offices.

1. Results of consultation:
 - a. List of organisations invited to inaugural meeting.
 - b. “Planning for Real” Open Day material and analysis.
 - c. Residents’ questionnaire and analysis
 - d. Business questionnaire and analysis
 - e. Primary School: “Our Town”: project results
 - f. Ledbury Area Youth Provision: Project Progress Report, August 2004
 - g. Town Centre Consultancy Service: Youth Consultation Project
 - h. Executive Summary (Ledbury)
2. Area Profile “Ledbury Market Town” (HC) April 2006
3. Action Plan, 2000-2003: Ledbury Town Centre Forum
4. Strategic Implementation Plan, 2005-2011 (HC)
5. The Community Strategy for Herefordshire: “A sustainable Future for the County” (The Herefordshire Partnership) 2006
6. Quarterly Economic Review, February 2007 (HC)
7. Feedback from Community Forum: June 2007
8. “Policing West Mercia”: West Mercia Constabulary, 2007
9. Healthcare: information on GP surgeries
10. Primary Health Care: information on clinics
11. CVA information leaflet and guide to accessible premises.
“Ring and Ride” leaflet.
12. Bus and train timetables.
13. Polytunnels Supplementary Planning Document, July 2007
14. Statement of current policy on advertising and “A” boards. (HC)
15. Guidelines for provision of cycle-storage at car-free developments:
Ledbury Town Plan
16. Lighting and light-pollution.
17. Paint schemes for the Conservation Area.
18. Field surveys: (3) (Ledbury Naturalists and Field Club)
19. Local footpaths guide.
20. HMS Ledbury

Acknowledgements:

The team thanks the following for their contribution to the Plan.

Ledbury Town Council: Karen Mitchell, for the compilation of the Plan and for countless cups of supportive coffee.

June McQuaid for help in initiating the public consultation process.

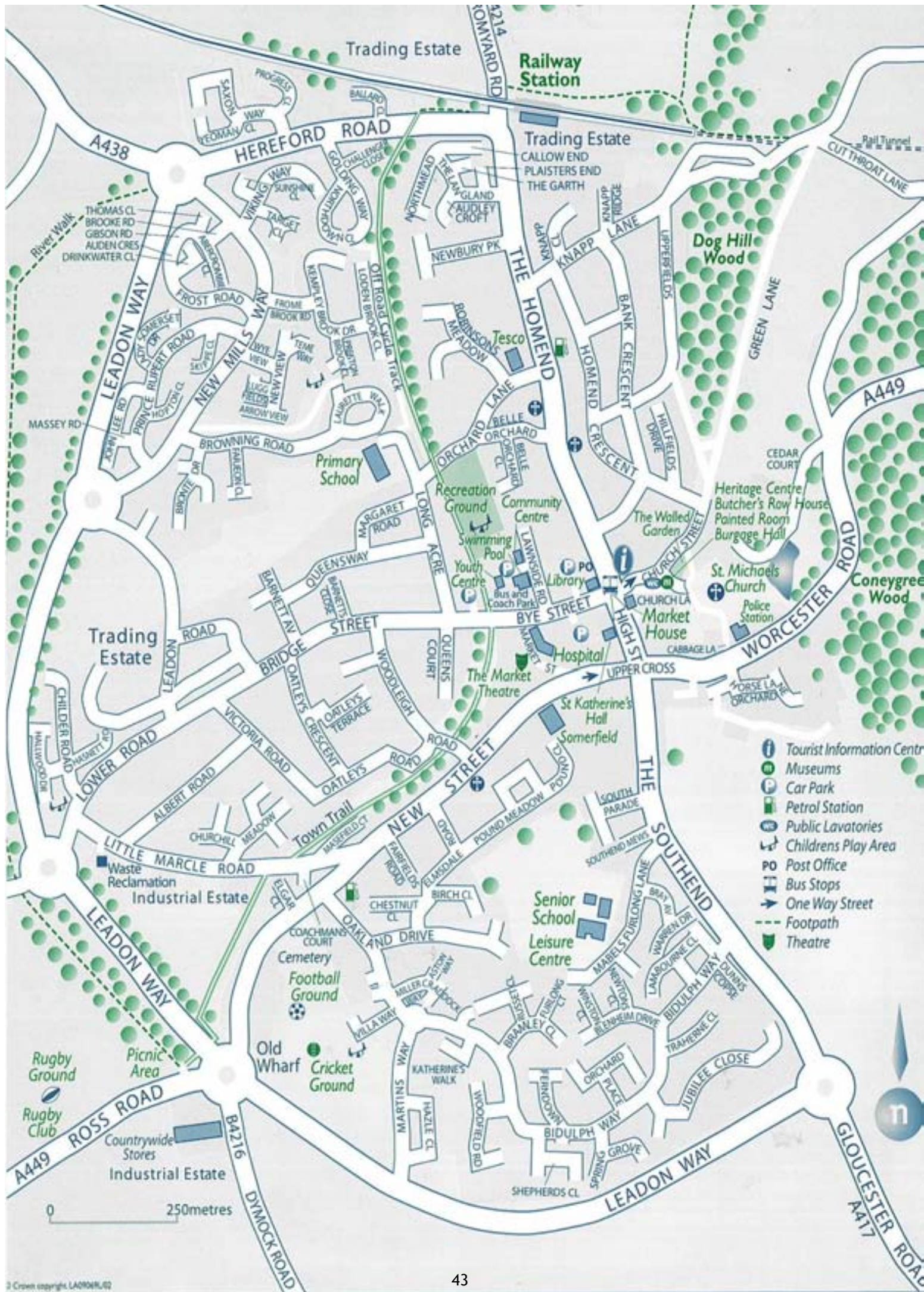
Amanda Nicoll for the analysis and presentation of the results of the surveys.

Pauline Striplin of Community First for invaluable advice and support.

Ledbury Naturalists and Field Club for their surveys of local woodlands.

Don Yorke for original artwork.

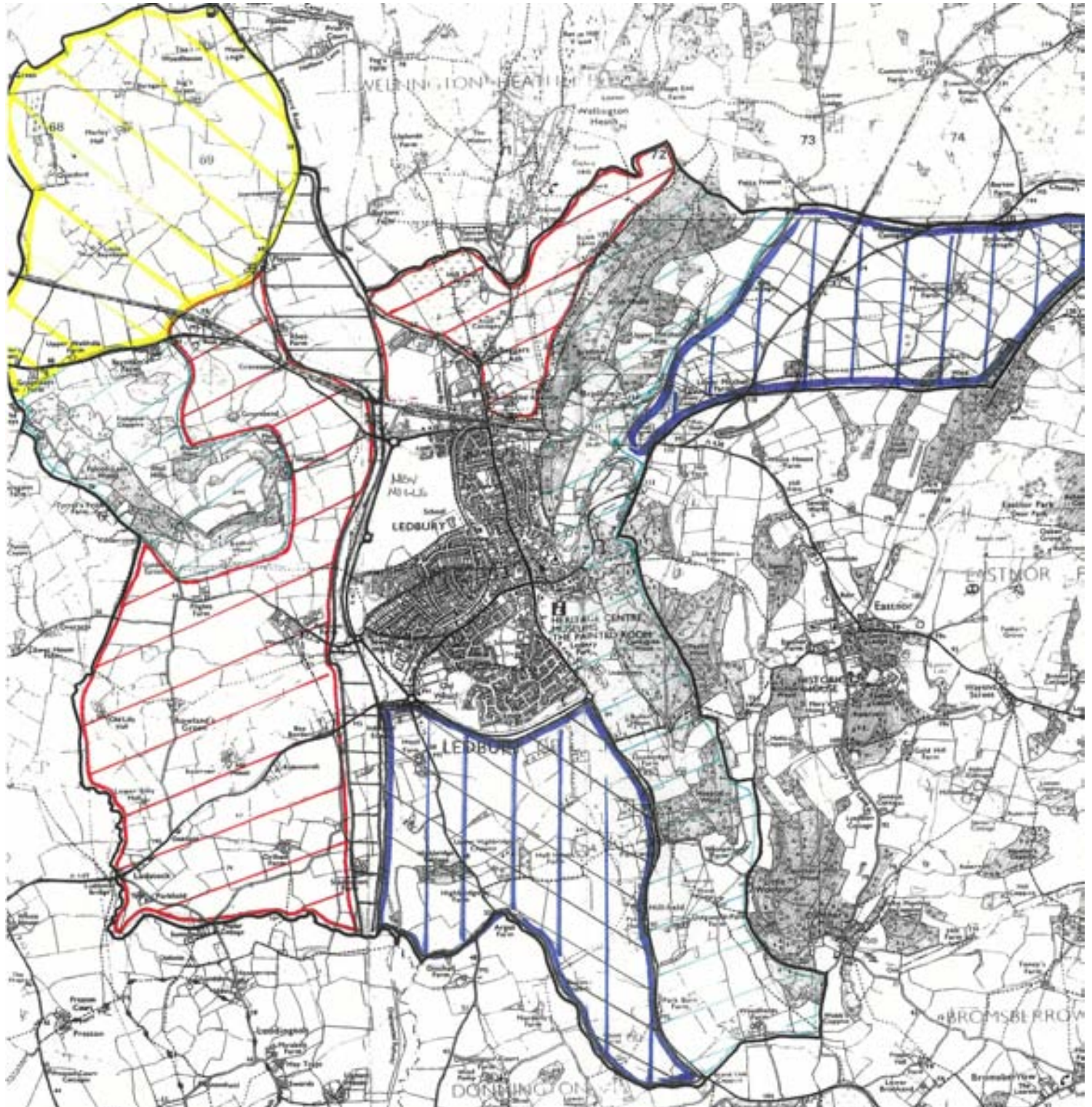
Andy Ward , (Chairman, Ledbury Tourist Association) for additional photographs.







Ledbury Landscapes



Key

	PRINCIPAL TIMBERED FARMLANDS
	SETTLED FARMLANDS ON RIVER TERRACE
	PRINCIPAL WOODED HILLS
	ESTATE FARMLANDS
	RIVERSIDE MEADOWS

