

Llangarron Ward. Representing the parishes of Llangarron, Marstow, Sellack, Peterstow, Bridstow, Welsh Newton and Llanrothal.

BIG NEWS

Not only have we managed to get the long awaited Minerals and Waste Local Plan adopted (it's way more interesting than it sounds) but we are now out for consultation with the other bits of the local plan that are at Reg 18.

As the Cabinet Member who has these policy documents within my portfolio I can tell you that this is a big deal. Thousands of hours of work goes into these plans – there is a substantial evidence base sitting underneath the proposed policies and we have done our best to ensure that the plan is sensible and sensitive. We are looking to the future and learning from the past.

This has a very different approach to the rural settlements and I recommend that everyone has a read and responds to the consultation – your voice matters – if it is in praise or condemnation we want to hear what you have to say. Don't leave it to someone else.

We are fortunate in having some very engaged parish councils in Llangarron Ward and they will, I have no doubt, respond on behalf of their residents.

[Have your say on the future of development and transport in the county – Herefordshire Council](#)

For the Llangarron Ward the proposed settlements for growth are **Bridstow** (a rural hub with environmental constraints)

Policy RURA1: Housing growth within Rural Hubs Housing growth will be directed to Rural Hubs and Hubs with environmental constraints in accordance with capacity and taking into account existing commitments and site allocations. Settlement boundaries and site allocations will be designated within Neighbourhood Development Plans taking account of existing levels of commitments within Rural Hubs and Hubs with environmental constraints and any required future growth. Existing Neighbourhood Development Plan allocations in settlements listed in Table 14 & 15 will continue to be allocated during the plan period. Rural Hubs and Hubs with environmental constraints will be required to deliver growth through strategic housing allocations and site allocations in Neighbourhood Development Plans as set out in Table 14 & 15.

and **Llangrove and Peterstow** as service settlements with environmental constraints.

Policy RURA2: Rural housing growth in Service Settlements Service Settlements and Service Settlements with environmental constraints will deliver housing growth to continue to sustain rural communities and services. Settlement boundaries and site allocations will be designated within Neighbourhood Development Plans to take account of existing levels of housing commitments and future growth requirements. Existing Neighbourhood Development Plan allocations in settlements listed in Table 16 & 17 will continue to be allocated during the plan period. Service Settlements and Service Settlements with environmental constraints will deliver the following level of housing growth through Neighbourhood Development Plans and strategic allocations within the Local Plan.

The accompanying table shows that Llangrove has delivered above previous targets and therefore this is taken into account and no further housing is proposed.

Peterstow has undelivered identified sites within the NDP which will still be expected to come forward in the plan period.

There are no strategic sites within Llangarron Ward.

All other settlements – including those previously included within RA2 as sustainable – will now fall into policy AG4 and AG5

Policy AG4: Rural settlement exceptions for affordable housing, entry level homes, self and custom build housing and community led housing.

In settlements outside of the Rural Settlement Hierarchy the provision of sites for affordable housing, including self and custom build and community led housing will be supported where they meet the following criteria:

- 1. There are at least 3 key services and facilities within 1 km from the centre of the settlement;*
- 2. The settlement is not wholly within Flood Zone 3 or access to the settlement is restricted by significant flooding of the settlement road; and*
- 3. The location of the settlement offers a choice of modes of travel for accessing employment, education and services.*

Key rural services within these policies are described as: • School; • Pre-school/Nursery; • Play area; • Village/Community Hall; • Shop; • Pub; • Doctors/medical provision; • Access to public transport; • Within 5km of an employment site; • Access to public electric vehicle (EV) charging. The criteria for the allocation of a rural exception housing site is contained within saved Policy H2 of the Core Strategy or a successor in National Policy.

This policy is designed to meet the need for affordable housing in the countryside.

AG5 is open countryside and national exemptions apply.

[Regulation 18 Local Plan Strategic Policies Document \(herefordshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/regulation-18-local-plan-strategic-policies-document)

[Local Plan Regulation 18 Place Shaping Policies Document \(herefordshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/local-plan-regulation-18-place-shaping-policies-document)

A BIT LIKE BUSES...

Not only do we have the consultation on the local plan going on but we are also undertaking early engagement on the Local Transport Plan.

Herefordshire Council is developing a new Local Transport Plan (LTP) which will cover the period 2024-2041. The LTP is a statutory document which sets out what, where and how the Council intends to invest in transport in Herefordshire. It seeks to tackle existing and future transport challenges.

The new LTP will cover the whole of Herefordshire, recognising the different characteristics of Hereford, the five market towns and rural communities. It will comprise of two key elements:

1. An overarching strategy setting out how investment in transport will help to achieve the economic, environmental, health and social ambitions of the council;
2. An implementation plan setting out a programme of schemes and projects which will include a wide range of types of transport interventions

We want to understand where you need to travel and how you would prefer to get there. We are also keen to get your views on our emerging LTP themes and supporting actions. The feedback we receive will help to shape the detail of the plan, before we hold a wider public consultation on the proposals later in the year.

How to get involved

We are encouraging everyone who would like to get involved to undertake a short online survey to share their views, which should take less than 10 minutes to complete. To access the survey, please click on the link below.

<https://online1.snapsurveys.com/ltfeedback>

For more information on the LTP and this engagement period, please visit www.herefordshire.gov.uk/ltpl.

The engagement period starts on **25th March and closes on 21st May 2024.**

And if that wasn't enough...we have the new Council Plan and Delivery Plan coming up! It's all go.

The Council Plan and Delivery Plan

I always think with any plan there has to be a why (why is this necessary) a what (what are you trying to achieve) a how (how are you going to achieve it) a when (when are you going to achieve it by) and a who (who do you shout at if it isn't achieved – only kidding)

The Council Plan covers off the first two – it is a high level vision of our sense of direction and what we are setting out to achieve. It is only when it is viewed with the delivery plan that the 'how', 'when' and 'who' swims into focus.

To be frank there are no huge surprises – we are focussed on supporting our vulnerable residents, children, young people and elders. We want everyone to live their best life, to fulfil their potential, to be safe and to prosper. We also want to protect and enhance the environment, grow a new economy for the county with higher paid, higher skilled jobs and we want to ensure that we have the infrastructure in place to support the county's future.

It's all about the money...

The other big ticket item was the budget which was finally, finally set (with all precepts) at the full council meeting. Hopefully we will start to see the money that we have put into the budget to support the lengthsman, local drainage projects and public rights of way start to take effect. There is also a substantial increase in road investment but we won't really see that take effect until it stops raining (if it ever stops raining). This more than doubles the spend allocated in the last budget of the previous administration (which is what we have been working with until now).

People can equate budget cuts with cutting services. That is not really true. We have, over several years, had to find better ways of doing things and we are still doing that but we are also increasing our spend on Children's Services (50.8m to 65.1m) and Adult Wellbeing (68.1m to 76.9m) – and, just in case you were wondering, the new council tax base is 135m (total available funding from various sources 205m) which gives you a sense of how critical social care is to council finances.

And finally...

We are moving towards re-starting the process to get a Western Bypass for Hereford. I support this because:

1. Hereford has a trunked A road bisecting the city. It is running alongside medieval city walls, it has two major pinch points and is vulnerable to congestion.
2. The local road network around Hereford needs resilience in the form of a second crossing point (at least one) so that, come the day that Greyfriars Bridge needs repairing the whole city won't grind to a total halt.
3. In order to successfully include a city wide active travel plan we need to de-trunk the A49. As long as it is a trunk road it is under the control of National Highways and they will not be willing to give up road space to buses or cycles as long as it is the only way through Hereford.
4. We need to deliver housing. Hereford is the most sensible place to deliver the larger strategic projects. They need road infrastructure.
5. It will improve the air quality in the AQMA areas of Hereford.
6. It will enable HGV traffic to go around the city and not through.
7. It is better than the going to the East because of 3,4,5 above and does not threaten the internationally rare and important Lugg Meadow.
8. The cost of the Eastern crossing is very high due to the span of the bridge required to cross the river at this point.
9. The Eastern crossing only goes to Tupsley. If it were to be a second crossing to bring traffic into or around Hereford everything would still have to either negotiate Aylestone Hill or Holmer.

The cancellation of HS2 has provided some potential funding to get the first phase underway. Make no mistake this is not an easy thing to deliver but we are going to give it our best shot!

Stop Press.

Ofsted has this morning published their findings following the fourth Monitoring Visit since Herefordshire Children's Services were judged inadequate in July 2022.

Inspectors visited the service on 21 and 22 February 2024, and focused on older young people in care aged 16 and 17 and care leavers aged 18 to 25.

Whilst there were some positive findings, overall the content of the report is disappointing. The Inspectors acknowledged that improvements continue to be made at the service, but the pace of change needs to improve and that the quality of service remains inconsistent.

The full report can be seen [here](#)

The Director of Children's Services has left the council with immediate effect.