

3 July 2017

To Ledbury Reporter

Letter for Ledbury Reporter

Dear Sir,

The Bovis proposal for 300 homes south of Leadon Way seems likely to be approved given the similarity to the adjacent Gladman site which was given permission at a planning appeal. 321 houses were approved for the Gladman site and 100 have been approved on the other side of Leadon Way at the Full Pitcher. The Bovis development would allow Ledbury to meet its quota of new houses set by Herefordshire Council without the viaduct development.

Much has changed since the viaduct site was chosen by Herefordshire Council for the strategic expansion of Ledbury. Vehicle access to the viaduct site was presumed to be from the Hereford Road when the site was selected in preference to others. Herefordshire Council's Core Strategy clearly said "primary vehicular access to the development will be from the Hereford Road under the viaduct" until the wording was relaxed at the very last minute in response to pressure by the developer.

The traffic assessment (para 10.14 Table 16) presented with the planning application for the viaduct development states that the proposed island at the station would be overloaded and 6% over its the capacity by 2026. This is especially serious because the development also impedes future possibilities for new roads from Ledbury to the north. The cul-de-sac design has safety implications and pedestrian and cycle access to Ledbury town centre are distant and steep with consequent doubtful integration with the town.

The developer appears not to have properly considered an access road under the viaduct even though the letter from Network Rail dated 26 May 2016 clearly says that it may be feasible. It is therefore time that Herefordshire Council considered alternative development options which are viable instead of the foundering viaduct site. Even the pedestrian route through the old canal tunnel under the railway is not confirmed.

Herefordshire Council now have an excellent opportunity to insist that the main vehicle access to the proposed viaduct development is off the Hereford Road. If the developer is unable to achieve rapid progress with detailed plans and agreement with Network Rail, Herefordshire Council should acknowledge that the site is not deliverable and instead work with Bovis on plans for an alternative high quality development and its proper integration with the town.

I fear that if Herefordshire Council don't take decisive action and make it clear that they are prepared to abandon the viaduct site then Ledbury will be see uncoordinated development to both the north and the south with around 2000 new houses, over double the quota it has been set and well beyond the capacity of essential services in the town.

Yours Faithfully

Frank Rozelaar
Chair of Wellington Heath parish council planning committee