

17TH JUNE 2010

Subject: Coughton Parish Plan
Lead Officer: Fiona Blundell
Contact on 01789 260333
**Lead Member/
Portfolio Holder:** Gillian Roache

Summary

This report sets out the assessment of the Coughton Parish Plan 2010.

Recommendation

- (1) That the Parish Plan is adopted as a local information source to offer advice to the relevant services of Stratford-on-Avon District Council.
 - (2) That Stratford-on-Avon District Council seek to respond to the Parish Plan Action Plan in the ways suggested in Appendix C of this report.
 - (3) That the Parish Plan is adopted by Stratford District Council as a material consideration in processing planning applications, in accordance with Policy COM.1 of the Local Plan Review.
 - (4) That the Parish Council and the residents of Coughton Parish be commended for preparing their Parish Plan and that they are encouraged to implement and review their Action Plan.
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1 Background/Information

- 1.1 Parish Plans are community-led projects identifying and surveying the assets, needs, opportunities, problems and solutions of a community. Through 'capacity' and 'consensus building', Parish Plans provide communities with a framework to take stock of the present and to plan for the future.
 - 1.2 The momentum for Parish Plans is continually increasing, with many of the communities in the district having completed or in the process of undertaking detailed Parish Plans or Appraisals with associated recommendations and Action Plans. Further background information on the process is included in Appendix B.
 - 1.3 **Background to the submitted Coughton Parish Plan**
In June 2008, initial discussions were held between Parish Councillors and Stratford District Council about producing a Parish Plan for Coughton. The Parish Council agreed to support a Parish Plan in July
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2008. The Parish Plan was launched at a residents meeting in the Coughton School Hall, supported by Warwickshire Rural Community Council, to which every household in the Parish was invited. Residents were able to actively identify their likes, dislikes and concerns. Several volunteers came forward as a result and subsequently the Steering Group was formed with an agreed Terms of Reference. The group comprised residents from Coughton village and at a later stage included Lucy Reid from the National Trust. The Plan was funded through the Lottery Grant 'Awards for All' and the SDC Community Grant.

- 1.31 Regular progress updates on the Plan were posted on the Village Notice board and reported at every Parish Council, as well as appearing regularly in 'The Link' magazine. Updates were also posted on the Parish Council website which was set up in direct response to the Plan. The findings of the survey results were presented at Public meeting in September 2009 which prompted further volunteers to come forward and special interest groups were established.
- 1.32 The Parish Plan has been prepared employing a range of community participation techniques including questionnaire surveys, and a transparent process of reporting back to the community on progress. The residents' initial feedback was used as a basis to scope the Village Plan survey. The survey was in the form of a questionnaire which was produced with the help of SDC officer, Simon Purfield. The self completion questionnaire was hand delivered to all of the 90 households in Coughton. 132 people from 68 households responded to the questionnaire. This gives a high response rate of 75.6% which is statistically sound. The responses were sent by freepost and were analysed by an independent company. As the village has relatively few children, there was not specific questionnaire for children.
- 1.33 The findings of the survey results were presented at a Public meeting in September 2009 which prompted further volunteers to come forward and special interest groups were established.

The action plan was based on the findings, clearly setting out the wishes of the village, and identifying the local priorities, and the partners who need to be involved, such as the County and District Councils. The process has generated a range of statistical and qualitative data that has informed the Action Plan and is a useful information source. The District Council's Consultation Officer considers that the consultation findings have been well used in the plan and that the actions are clear.

- 1.34 Another part of the Parish Plan comprises the Village Design Statement which was produced with assistance from Chris Lambert of The National Trust.
- 1.35 The Plan was formally adopted by the Parish Council on 13th November 2009.
- 1.37 Significant progress has already been made on a number of the actions which include the following:

Community

- Production of a Village Welcome Pack.
 - Coughton parish Council Website launched.
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- Regular article about community activities in the 'Link Magazine'.
- Community Group established.
- Joint school and residents' event held.

Ford Area

- Friends of the Ford group set up to restore the Ford Area, actions agreed and funding established. Conservation work has now started on its restoration.

Transport and Traffic

- Residents have been consulted on the speed limits plans and there has been a village walkabout on signage with the WCC Traffic Group.

1.4 Coughton Parish Plan findings

1.4.1 The findings of the Parish Plan, which have informed the Action Plan, cover:

- Executive Summary
- Summary of Survey Results
- Coughton Today
- History of Coughton
- Village Design Statement

1.4.2 **Suggested response: Endorse** – that the findings of the Coughton Parish Plan be endorsed as a true representation of the range of information sources used in the preparation of the Parish Plan.

1.5 Coughton Action Plan

1.5.1 Analysis and responses to the Action Plan are provided in Appendix C, and the following analysis and comments should be read in conjunction with the Coughton Parish Plan Action Plan.

1.5.2 The policy position of the Local Plan Review is supportive of the Coughton application of the principles set out in the Parish Plan and together with many of the actions set out in the Action Plan. The District Council and County Council can offer advice and support in undertaking some actions, and offer help in locating funding. Certain projects may be eligible for the County Council's Community Development Fund, which is administered by the Stratford Area Team. Warwickshire Rural Community Council endorses the section on Housing Needs and the supporting actions in Appendix B.

2 Options available to the Committee

2.1 A) Adopt the Parish Plan fully: This is a good, well-prepared Parish Plan that would be a valuable local information source and material planning consideration.

2.2 B) Adopt parts of the Parish Plan: If there are any concerns with certain aspects of the Parish Plan, this option would allow the District Council to use selected aspects of the Plan in its decision making and as a local

information source. No reasons have so far been identified to make this option necessary.

- 2.3 C) Not adopt the Parish Plan: The District Council would miss the opportunity to adopt a useful source of local information.

3 Members' comments

- 3.1 Cllr Kerridge commented that "I have read the parish plan and am most impressed with the way it has been researched and produced. Indeed, that it has been produced at all, considering how much effort is needed to get something like this off the ground. I support it's adoption and any help SDC can give to the people of Coughton in implementing the action plan through their "support", "action" or "endorsement". I hope that SDC and the people of Coughton can work together closely and beneficially in the future."
- 3.2 To be sought

4 Implications of the proposal

4.1 Legal/Human Rights Implications

- 4.1.1 If adopted, the Parish Plan will become a material consideration to be taken into account by the District Council when determining planning applications. The Plan does not conflict with the District Council's policies.
- 4.1.2 When considering adopting the Parish Plan the committee must have regard to the Human Rights Act.

4.2 Financial

- 4.2.1 Projects developed through this Parish Plan may need funding to take them forward and the recommendations contained in this report should be contained within existing budgets. The County Council fund a community grants scheme aimed at funding these types of projects, and the District Council's Community Leadership team may be able to help search for appropriate funding sources. It is hoped that the Parish Council and local residents will consider and pursue funding in order to develop their identified action points.

4.3 Environmental

- 4.3.1 Many of the actions within this Parish Plan aim to increase the sustainability of life within the village and reduce the need to travel to access activities and services.

4.4 Corporate Strategy

- 4.4.1 The Parish Plan is a useful source of information about local community perception of their locality. The Community Plan and District Council Corporate Strategy support the range of topic areas and policies in the Action Plan. The Parish Plan also complements and helps move forward the District Council's Environmental Policy.

4.5 Equality Impact Assessment

- 4.5.1 Everyone within the community has had the opportunity to comment on the Plan.
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5 Risk assessment

- 5.1 The actions recommended within this report are to commend those involved in the preparation of the Parish Plan, adopt the Parish Plan as a local information source and adopt it as a material consideration. There are no identified major risks associated with these actions.
- 5.2 Choosing to not adopt the Parish Plan would risk losing the chance to adopt a valuable source of local information and a useful material consideration to aid planning decision-making.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 The Parish Council and residents of Coughton should be commended and congratulated on completing their Parish Plan, and are encouraged by Stratford District Council to implement and periodically review the Action Plan.
- 6.2 The Coughton Parish Plan is a good example of how a community can prepare a Plan that is both a good source of local information and provides a sound basis through the Action Plan to address the needs and aspirations of the community.

Tony Perks

INTERIM HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICES

Background papers:

Coughton Parish Plan 2010 – Final Draft for discussion and approval

Sustainable Community Strategy – Improving the Quality of Life for Everyone – A 2026 Vision for Stratford District.

Stratford-on-Avon District Local Plan Review 2006

Appendix A - Guidance for the Assessment of Parish/Town Plans

- 1.1 In assessing Parish Plans, the following considerations should be taken into account:

Evidence and extent of research work to justify conclusions.

Evidence and extent of analysis related to conclusions.

Public involvement and endorsement at local level.

Level of implementation available to District and County Council services, (e.g. the District Council Planning Authority, Community Services etc.).

Conformity with District and County Council's policies, (e.g. Planning policies etc.).

- 1.2 The above five criteria will enable the production of recommendations regarding the acceptance of each of the Parish Plan's detailed conclusions and Action Points.

- 1.3 A response to each of the detailed conclusions and Action Points will be one of the following:

(A) ENDORSE

The specific recommendation will be accepted and taken into account in the decision making of the District Council. (For example, "Small scale development with a 'craft' emphasis should be looked at sympathetically").

(B) ACTION

The specific recommendation will be accepted in principle and, subject to financial, procedural and legal constraints, implemented by or with the support of the District or County Council. (For example, "A social housing scheme of ten units on land next to the Green should be provided").

(C) INVESTIGATE

Further information to be obtained by the Parish/Town Council or other agency may be required in order that the District or County Council may establish if the specific recommendation can be supported. (For example, "An existing Conservation Area should be extended").

(D) SUPPORT

The specific recommendation relates to a matter which is not the responsibility of the District or County Council. However, the proposal is supported and will be forwarded to the appropriate authority, where necessary. (For example, "The Water Authority should be asked to upgrade the drains and reduce the risk of flooding".)

(E) NOT SUPPORTED

The specific recommendation relates to a matter which is in contrary to the policy of the District or County Council, or is beyond the powers of the authority or that insufficient and/or unsatisfactory information has been submitted to substantiate their recommendation. (For example, "No development of any kind should take place within the settlement").

Appendix B – Further Background Information

- 2.1. Communities produce Parish Plans for a number of reasons:
 - To increase the awareness of community issues, foster community spirit and encourage a sense of pride;
 - To act as a strong basis for local action (the Action Plan);
 - To collectively represent the views of residents, to positively influence others to the benefit of the community.
 - 2.2. In the 1980s the concept and practice of Village Appraisals first emanated nationally from the Rural Development Commission in conjunction with the Countryside Commission.
 - 2.3. Nationally, Parish Plans have a role to play within the 'modernising Local Government' agenda, for example, shaping local services, public participation, decision-making and greater democratic legitimacy.
 - 2.4. One of the aims within Chapter 12 of the Rural White Paper (Our Countryside: the future – A fair deal for rural England) includes involving people living in rural areas in developing their community, safeguarding its valued features and shaping the decisions that affect them – developing a vision for the future. Parish Plans are a recognised method of achieving this aim.
 - 2.5. In line with guidance from the Countryside Agency issued in August 2000 ('Planning tomorrow's countryside', advice to local planning authorities, government and developers on how the planning system should operate and evolve), Parish Plans are a recognised community planning method to help achieve key objectives. In March 2003 the Countryside Agency produced detailed guidance for parish and town councils on the preparation of Parish and Town Plans.
 - 2.6. Stratford-on-Avon District Council is committed to the encouragement of Parish Plans as a means of identifying local issues and will respond to them positively. Much faith has been placed by the Government, the County Council and the District Council on local appraisals and their role in assisting the formulation of strategic policy.
 - 2.7. Parish Plans can now play a broader role within the production of the statutory Community Plan for Stratford District.
 - 2.8. The recommendations and Action Plans can both inform and help deliver the Rural Strategy for the Stratford-on-Avon District.
 - 2.9. Policy COM.1 of the Stratford-on-Avon District Local Plan 2006 states:

"The views of the local community as expressed preferably in a Parish Plan (or equivalent) or in its absence an alternative source of reliable evidence, will be fully taken into account in the planning process. In particular they will be used:

 - To help assess the merits of schemes promoted by communities to meet needs which they have identified;
 - As a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and to assist in identifying the scope and nature of associated planning obligations which might be sought; and
 - To identify opportunities for environmental and other forms of enhancement.
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In the case of Main Rural Centres and Local Centre Villages only, as defined in Policy STR1, small scale schemes which meet housing (particularly affordable housing) and employment needs will be encouraged in this way...”.

- 2.10. Nationally, Parish Plans are broad, holistic documents addressing local issues at a local level. Whilst in this District ‘appraisals’ have had a close association with planning, they are no longer ‘planning-led’. Parish Plans address both planning and non-planning related matters and this is reflected in their assessment at Committee.
 - 2.11. Parish Plans can and do act as a tool to assist in giving many of the services provided by the District Council greater community focus. Vice versa, many of the services provided by the District Council can and do feed into the Parish Plan process creating more informed Action Plans.
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Appendix C

Summary of key action points

Abbreviations SDC= Stratford District Council
 WCC= Warwickshire County Council
 WRCC= Warwickshire Rural Community Council

Appendix A gives an explanation of what is meant by each suggested response key word.

Coughton Parish Plan action	SDC Proposed Response
Services	
<p>Community 1. Identify appropriate content and arrange production of a village welcome pack</p>	<p>Support – Village Welcome Pack produced April 2010.</p>
<p>Parish Council Publicity: 1. Identify means of communicating to residents the areas of involvement by the PC.</p>	<p>Support - PC role identified in Parish Plan.- Permanent article about community activities 'Link' magazine Website launched.</p>
<p>Encourage greater community spirit within the Village:</p> <p>1. Investigate viability and likely support for community events in response to residents from the Village Survey Responses</p> <p>2. Consider likely venues, resources requirements and estimated costs and seek advice and guidance from service providers.</p> <p>3. Co-ordinate village events and publicise details of existing clubs, societies and community facilities.</p> <p>4. Encourage closer links with other community groups (School, Church, and National Trust) by identifying volunteer opportunities and publicising events.</p>	<p>Support/Endorse – Local Plan Policies COM.2 and 3 support the retention of existing services and the provision of new services which meet the needs of local communities.</p> <p>Support – Community Group established.</p> <p>Action – SDC Community Leadership Team may be able to advice on this matter.</p> <p>Support - Joint school and residents' event held at school in February 2010.</p> <p>Action – Voluntary Action Stratford-upon-Avon (VASA) may be able to assist with this.</p>

Coughton Parish Plan action	SDC Proposed Response
<p>Children's Activities</p> <p>1. Consider requirement for Children's Play Area or specific children's events</p>	<p>Action - The District Council's Community Leisure Team can provide advice regarding play areas.</p>
<p>Crime Prevention</p> <p>1. Resurrect Neighbourhood Watch Scheme</p> <p>2. Explore closer liaison with residents and Police Service, including greater Police/PSCO presence.</p>	<p>Support – Pass to Warwickshire Police for their information.</p>
<p>Flooding</p> <p>1. Review previous action and identify outstanding problems.</p> <p>2. Lobby relevant agencies to effect remedial action.</p> <p>3. Establish programme for regular preventative action.</p> <p>4. Contact other village flood groups.</p> <p>5. Set flood warning communication tree.</p> <p>6. Identify and circulate information on 'flood prevention' kits and Environment Agency advice for homeowners.</p>	<p>Action- Review of action undertaken April 2010. SDC Flood Defence Officer advised Coughton Parish Council to contact him to discuss any flood defence problems.</p> <p>Support – Pass to Environment Agency and Severn Trent Water for their information.</p> <p>Support– Information identified May 2010.</p>
<p>Ford Area Conservation</p> <p>1. Create local volunteer group 'Friends of the Ford'.</p> <p>2. Review work undertaken and prevent ongoing damage.</p> <p>3. Continue liaison with partners.</p>	<p>Support– Group established</p> <p>Support – Actions agreed and funding established. Work commenced on Ford Area restoration.</p> <p>Support</p>
<p>Traffic</p> <p>1. Pursue provision of speed limits and identify performance monitoring methods with relevant agencies.</p> <p>2. Consider any further changes to speed limits and signage with reference to accident hotspots.</p>	<p>Support – WCC have already looked into the speeding issue through the Village Speed Limit Review (VSLR). Residents consulted on final proposal.</p> <p>Support– Village walkabout on signage held with WCC Traffic Group.</p>

Coughton Parish Plan action	SDC Proposed Response
<p>3. Analyse suggestions for improved parking in village.</p> <p>4. Make contact with other village(s) with similar parking problems for possible solutions.</p> <p>5. Consider options to create attractive gateway feature at village approach on A435</p>	<p>Support</p> <p>Support</p> <p>Support</p>
<p>Public Transport</p> <p>1. Review comments made by residents and make contact with Service Providers to ascertain feasibility.</p> <p>2. Identify and advertise existing public transport options and any available Community Link transportation.</p>	<p>Investigate - Coughton Parish Council are advised to contact WCC to discuss this further. WCC advise that bus companies are unlikely to respond without their intervention unless service is profitable.</p> <p>Support</p>
<p>Street scene</p> <p>1. Investigate improvement to services comments made by residents and report back to PC with results for further dissemination via PCs chosen communication network.</p>	<p>Support</p>
<p>Alternative Energy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide information for residents on alternative energy to include; 2. How to obtain permission with consideration given to covenants, Listed Buildings and the Village Design Statement. 3. Types of Renewable Energy available. 4. Costs Estimates 5. Grant availability 	<p>Support / Action – The SDC Policy Officer, Social Inclusion Policy Officer and the local advice organisation ‘Act on Energy’ (www.actonenergy.org.uk) may be able to provide further advice and support regarding the implementation of these actions.</p>
<p>Housing</p> <p>1. Carry out Housing Needs Survey every 3 years.</p>	<p>Support/Action – The District Council’s Planning and Housing teams are keen to support and assist the Parish Council’s production of triennial Housing Needs Survey.</p>
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REPORT INFORMATION SHEET

Please complete and submit to Committee Services with draft report

Committee/Date	West Area Committee – 17 th June 2010	
Item No/Title of report	Coughton Parish Plan	
Consultations undertaken		
Consultee	✓	Details / Date of consultation / comments received
Ward Members		Justin Kerridge – comments included in the agenda
Committee Chairman/ Portfolioholder		John Horner Gill Roache
Financial Services		Richard Burrell –
Legal Services		Leenamari Aantaa-Collier – 2/6/10 comments included
Other Services		Housing – none received Policy and PR -14 th April 10 Environment – None received. Flooding – 17 th February 10 Leisure – 29 th December 10 – No comments Community Services –29 th December 10 No comments Warwickshire County Council Transport Planning 11 th January 10 Warwickshire County Council Stratford Area Team – No comments. All comments recd reflected in the response to the action plan
Other organisations		Warwickshire Rural Community Council – 17 th February 10 comments recd reflected in the response to the action plan
final decision by this Committee or recommendation to another committee/Council ?		FINAL DECISION
Does this report contain exempt information? If so, under which paragraph(s) ?		No <i>Delete as appropriate</i>

Does this report relate to a key decision (referred to in the Executive Forward Plan)		No <i>Delete as appropriate</i>
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