

**ARDEN AREA COMMUNITY COMMITTEE
20 January 2005**

Item No: 9
Subject: Beaudesert and Henley-in-Arden Parish Plan 2004
Portfolio Holder: Cllr Adams
Lead Officer: Andrew Ford
Contact on 01789 260332

SUMMARY	To consider the assessment of the Beaudesert and Henley-in-Arden Parish Plan 2004.	
BACKGROUND PAPERS		
CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN		
CONSULTEE	✓	DETAILS AND DATE OF CONSULTATION
WARD MEMBERS	✓	Councillor Haddon on 16/12/04 Councillor Thirlwell on 16/12/04
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN	✓	Councillor Harrison on 16/12/04
PORTFOLIO HOLDER	✓	Councillor Adams on 16/12/04
LEGAL SERVICES	✓	Director of Corporate Services (Legal) on 1/12/04 Peter Cruden
FINANCIAL SERVICES	✓	Director of Corporate Services (Finance) on 1/12/04 Richard Burrell
PERSONNEL SERVICES		
OTHER	✓	Paul Ogden, Head of Leisure and Business Services on 1/12/04 Parish Council consulted on 23/12/04 Warwickshire County Council (WCC) on 1/12/04 Warwickshire Rural Community Council (WRCC) on 1/12/04
CORPORATE STRATEGY/EMAS	✓	Rob Walsh, Head of Policy and Public Relations on 1/12/04
Summary of RECOMMENDATION		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Parish Plan is adopted as a local information source. 2. That the Parish Plan is adopted as a material consideration. 3. That the Parish Plan working committee, Parish Council and the residents of Beaudesert and Henley-in-Arden be commended and encouraged to implement their Action Plan.
FINAL DECISION SOUGHT ?	Yes	

1. Introduction and Purpose of this Report

- 1.1 This report sets out the assessment of the Beaudesert and Henley-in-Arden Parish Plan 2004, which was adopted by the Joint Parish Council in September 2004.

2. Background Information

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 The momentum for Parish Plans is continually increasing with half of the communities in the District having completed or in the process of undertaking detailed Parish Plan or Appraisals with associated recommendations and Action Plans. Further background information on the process is included in Appendix B.

3. Submitted Parish Plan – Beaudesert and Henley-in-Arden Parish Plan 2004

3.1 Background

- 3.1.1 The Parish Plan builds on two recent community initiatives, which resulted in the publication of a Parish Appraisal in 1999 and a Village Design Statement (VDS) in 2001. Both documents have been adopted by the District Council, and the Parish Plan methodology sought to test the earlier findings of these documents, as well as taking forward a sustained and focussed programme of action aimed at addressing the current primary concerns of the community.
- 3.1.2 The project received a total grant through the Countryside Agency's *Vital Villages* initiative of £3750. A launch meeting, held in October 2002 to raise awareness and to canvass local volunteer helpers, was attended by 40 people. An initial prioritising exercise allowed those attending to identify key issues and at the meeting a number of volunteers were identified, from which a Parish Plan working committee were appointed.
- 3.1.3 A subsequent public meeting was held in September 2003 that attracted 170 people, and open surgeries were held throughout the preparation process at locations within the village. Young people were engaged through a participation event at the High School and the community were kept regularly informed of events and progress on the Parish Plan via updates in each issues of the Parish Newsletter.
- 3.1.4 The Parish Plan presents an update of the needs and issues facing the community set out in the earlier Parish Appraisal and VDS. It provides an Action Plan to address them over a five-year timescale, and working parties are to be set-up to tackle the issues identified. The Parish Council has undertaken to monitor progress on implementing the Action Plan and clearly report back to the community on a regular basis.

3.2 Parish Plan findings

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

- Demographics, housing and employment
- Public transport
- Development
- Environment
- Local Information
- Services
- Education and Child Care
- Sport and Leisure

- 3.2.2 The methodology employed to produce the above findings was based on a test of the issues identified in the two previous studies, the Parish Appraisal and VDS.

Analysis of the earlier studies led to a pilot questionnaire being put to local residents, from which a shorter more focused survey was produced. It was determined that a sample of 100 residents, 5% of the original total of respondents for the Parish Appraisal, would provide a reliable indication of any changes of views raised in the earlier projects. The questionnaire was distributed on a random selection basis to residents on the electoral register during February and March 2003.

- 3.2.3 The Parish Plan has been prepared employing a range of community participation techniques, including questionnaire survey, public forums and a transparent process of reporting back to the community on progress etc. The process has generated a range of statistical data and qualitative material, that has informed the Action Plan and which provides a useful local information source.
- 3.2.3 **Suggested Response: Endorse** – That the above be endorsed as a true representation of the topics addressed by the Parish Plan Survey.

3.3 **Action Plan**

- 3.3.1 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 Parish Plan Action Plan.
- 3.3.2 Paragraph 7.3 of the Action Plan seeks to ensure that new development is need driven, with appropriate levels of social housing being encouraged in new developments. The low statistical response to the issues of housing need in the questionnaire is noted (para. 6.1). However it is suggested that undertaking a full housing needs survey might reveal the presence of a hidden need, allowing for the action points to be assessed against more specific survey findings. This information could then form an additional supporting document to the Parish Plan. The Rural Housing Enabler at Warwickshire Rural Community Council would be able to advise and assist in taking this forward.
- 3.3.3 The policy position in the Local Plan Review is generally supportive of the Action Plan points relating to planning, the environment and land use. However, the District Council is not able to support the position taken to resist further 'backland' development. Both government guidance, in PPG3 Housing, and the Local Plan Review support the utilisation of previously developed land. There may be cases where development in 'backland' locations can be accommodated without harm to the character of the settlement or the amenities of adjoining occupiers. As the local planning authority, the District Council cannot support a blanket restriction on this form of development.

4. **Corporate Strategy/Environmental/Financial/Legal Implications**

- 4.1 The following general observations on the Parish Plan are based on responses from internal consultation with the Directorates within the District Council.
- 4.2 The Parish Plan is a useful source of information about the local community perception of their locality. The Community Strategy, for the District supports the range of topic areas and policies in the Action Plan. The Parish Plan also complements and helps to move the District Council's Local Agenda 21 Strategy forward and provides some sustainability indicators.
- 4.3 Projects developed through this Parish Plan may require funding to take them forward, and the recommendations within this report should be contained within existing budgets. The District Council operates an Appraisal Capital grants scheme, aimed at funding these types of project. It is hoped that the Parish Council and local residents will consider and pursue funding in order to develop the relevant identified action points.

- 4.4 Lack of reference to the Arden Lawn facilities is surprising, although the process of preparing the Parish Plan coincided with the emergence of the agreement for community access to these facilities. Nonetheless, the Parish Council are encouraged to engage with the District Council to promote local access to the Arden Lawn and High School facilities. Realistically, provision to other leisure facilities identified in the responses to the survey, i.e. swimming and cinema would be to improve public transport to the range of existing facilities in the catchment area. It is suggested, as part of the Action Points relating to transport the Parish Council promotes a local 'dial-a-bus' scheme with the relevant partners.
- 4.5 Although the Parish Plan provides useful guidance on promoting the economy, more detail is required to how this might be achieved. The Parish Council might consider ways to attract business, for example engaging with the Warwickshire Investment Partnership. In implementing the Action Plan it is also suggested the Parish Council give careful consideration to promoting and developing facilities which attract visitors to Henley. This sector provides an important source of additional income to that of local residents.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The Parish Plan working committee, the Parish Council and residents of Beaudesert and Henley-in-Arden should be commended and congratulated for completing their Parish Plan and are encouraged by Stratford-on-Avon District Council to implement and periodically review the Action Plan.
- 5.2 The Beaudesert and Henley-in-Arden Parish Plan is a good example of how a rural community can prepare a Parish 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.

RECOMMENDED:-

- (1) That the Arden Area Community Committee adopts the Beaudesert and Henley-in-Arden Parish Plan, as a local information source to offer advice to the relevant Departments of Stratford-on-Avon District Council.**
- (2) That the Arden Area Community Committee adopt the Beaudesert and Henley-in-Arden Parish Plan as a material consideration in processing planning applications, in accordance with Policy ENV22 of the Stratford-on-Avon District Local Plan and Policy COM1 of the Local Plan Review.**
- (3) That the Parish Plan working committee, Parish Council and residents of Beaudesert and Henley-in-Arden be commended for preparing their Parish Plan and they are encouraged to implement and review the Action Plan.**

COLIN STAVES
Acting Head of Planning and Building Control

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 Council services, (e.g. the District Council Planning Authority, Leisure and Arts etc.).
 Conformity with District 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 on 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 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 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 Council. However, the proposal is supported and will be forwarded to the appropriate authority. (For example, "Traffic calming measures are required and the County Highway Authority should prepare a scheme").

(E) NOT SUPPORTED

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

COMT Wednesday 19th April 2000

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 Appraisal 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 In Planning Policy Guidance Note 7 *Countryside* (1997), the Government recognises that Parish Plans can inform development plans by identifying a local community's needs and priorities for the future.
- 2.7 Policy RA3 in the Warwickshire Structure Plan 1996-2011 encourages local planning authorities to use 'Appraisals' when establishing the views of local communities and when identifying local housing and industrial development need.
- 2.8 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 and the District Council on local appraisals and their role in assisting the formulation of strategic policy.
- 2.9 Parish Plans can now play a broader role within the production of the statutory Community Plan for Stratford District.
- 2.10 The recommendations and Action Plans can both inform and help deliver the Rural Strategy for the Stratford-on-Avon District.
- 2.11 Policy ENV22 of the Stratford-on-Avon District Local Plan states:
- " The District Planning Authority, in determining planning applications and assessing priorities for environmental enhancement will have regard to parish and

village appraisals prepared by the Parish/Town Councils or local amenity bodies, which have been endorsed by the District Planning Authority."

"When an appraisal is received by the Council it is carefully considered and assessed against consistent criteria. The assessment of appraisals includes the identification of those issues of appraisals which are planning matters and therefore relevant to development control. It is only when the assessments have been completed and the relevant aspects endorsed by Committee, that appraisals will be afforded the status of a material consideration."

- 2.12 Policy COM1 of the Stratford-on-Avon District Local Plan Review (Revised Deposit Draft) states:

"The views of local communities reflected in Parish Plans (and their equivalents) adopted by the District Council will be fully assessed 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.

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..."

- 2.13 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.
- 2.14 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.

**Appendix C
Summary of key action points**

Recommended Action	SDC Proposed Response
<p>Planning, the environment and the use of land</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resist green belt erosion as a fixed and permanent policy • Protect open space within the boundary of the town, resist further 'backland' and riverside development • Ensure new development is truly need driven • That the design criteria in the VDS are observed and applied, as far as possible, when considering planning applications • Encouragement to appropriate levels of affordable housing in new developments • Will seek to influence the content of the Local Development Framework and Regional Spatial Strategy to ensure the above criteria are incorporated. 	<p>Endorse – the Local Plan Review seeks to maintain the 'permanence' of the Green Belt designation through Policy PR.2. Policy COM.6 seeks to prevent the redevelopment of open spaces, whilst Policy EF.6, EF.7 supports the protection and management of features of nature conservation value. Policy PR.7 seeks to minimise the amount of development in areas at risk from flooding. The VDS is adopted as a material planning consideration. Local Plan Policy COM.1 allows communities to identify a local need for housing, whilst Policy COM.13 relates to affordable housing provision.</p> <p>It is recommended that further work be done to assess affordable housing need, particularly as the Action Plan refers to "need driven" development and "appropriate levels of affordable housing" without the evidence base provided by the survey.</p> <p>Not Supported – Government policy and guidance in PPG3 Housing supports the redevelopment of 'backland' plots, and the Local Plan Review Policy STR.4 expects development to utilise previously developed land. Therefore, the District Council cannot support a 'blanket' restriction on 'backland' development as circumstances may arise where the District Council, as local planning authority, might be in a position to recommend approval for development on these types of sites.</p>
<p>Employment and business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press for the retention of existing employment sites for employment purposes. • Seek to encourage and attract business and employment to the town, and to continue to support existing businesses particularly in the retail sector 	<p>Endorse/Support – the Local Plan Review seeks to safeguard local shops and services, and existing business uses (Policy COM.2, COM.3, COM.16 and MRC.1). Proposal HEN.C and HEN.D in the Local Plan Review support mixed use development and retention of existing employment use on the Cattle Market site and 'Abrasive' site respectively.</p> <p>Through its role in promoting</p>

	<p>economic development, the District Council will work with partners and organisations that support the business community to encourage economic growth in the town.</p>
<p>Security and Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In collaboration with the Police Authority the Parish Council will seek to achieve higher levels of policing in order to achieve; greater security, control of vandalism, pedestrian safety, traffic and parking management Timescales (agreed with the Police Authority) will be set to achieve a better police presence in the town 	<p>Endorse/Support/Action – the District Council supports this action point and will forward this response to the Police Authority, and Warwickshire County Council (WCC).</p> <p>The District Council has recently agreed the principles behind a parking strategy to cover the Main Rural Centres. The issues identified in the Action Plan will assist in preparing the strategy for Henley-in-Arden.</p>
<p>Public Transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To keep apprised of the community transport needs, in particular of the elderly, partially sighted and young people. To seek to ensure as far as is possible that they are met. In consultation with public transport providers press for a commitment to define and to achieve levels of improvement to match demand within the five year timescale of the Parish Plan 	<p>Support – the District Council will bring this action point to the attention of the WCC Rural Transport Officer, other key officers at the County Council and the relevant public transport providers.</p>
<p>Education, sport and leisure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and encourage the wider use of existing recreational facilities Encourage and support projects aimed at upgrading the quality and scope of existing recreation facilities 	<p>Investigation/Action/Support – the action points identified are accepted in principle and will be brought to the attention of the Heads of the relevant Services in the District Council to determine whether action can be taken to implement improvements in these areas.</p> <p>The Parish Council are encouraged to engage with the Head of Leisure and Local Economy at the District Council to encourage local access to Arden Lawn and High School facilities.</p> <p>The Parish Council should give consideration, when implementing the Action Plan, to how best to attract inward investment and promote visitor numbers.</p> <p>For information the Tourism Officer at Warwickshire County Council is now Angela Baines (Appendix 5).</p>
<p>High Profile Issues emerging from consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preserve and enhance the railway 	<p>Endorse/Investigate/Support – the adopted VDS is a material planning consideration and statements relating</p>

<p>station, in particular the Victorian façade, as identified in the adopted VDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pursue the long-term retention of the Market and to support infrastructure improvements to ensure its future viability • Support the High School in its bid for better funding and general refurbishment 	<p>to the railway statement will be taken into account should any proposals emerge for its renovation. It is suggested that every encouragement is given to the Strategic Rail Authority to consider making the station accessible to disabled users in-line with the legislation.</p> <p>Proposal HEN.C allocates the Cattle Market site for mixed-use development, to include residential, commercial and retail uses. The proposal recognises the need to reconsider the relocation of the Cattle Market and Policy CTY.15 supports alternative locations should they come forward. However, further investigation is required to establish if the action point seeks the retention of the market on the existing site.</p> <p>Support is given to identifying extra funding for improvements to the High School.</p>
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