

**AVON AREA COMMUNITY COMMITTEE
12 June 2003**

Item No: 6
Subject: Bidford-on-Avon Parish Plan
Portfolio Holder: Cllr Williams
Lead Officer: Andrew Ford
Contact on 01789 260332

SUMMARY	To consider the assessment of the Bidford-on-Avon Parish Plan 2003	
BACKGROUND PAPERS	B50 Group Action Plan; B50 Appraisal 2002	
CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN		
CONSULTEE	✓	DETAILS AND DATE OF CONSULTATION
WARD MEMBERS	✓	Cllr James; Cllr Pemberton; Cllr Slaughter on 15/5/03 Comments received from Cllrs James and Pemberton incorporated
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN	✓	Cllr Seaman (Chair) on 21/5/2003
PORTFOLIO HOLDER	✓	Cllr Williams on 14/5/03 Cllr Barnes on 19/5/03
LEGAL SERVICES	✓	Director of Corporate Services (Legal) on 15/5/03 - Peter Cruden
FINANCIAL SERVICES	✓	Director of Corporate Services (Finance) on 15/5/03 - Richard Burrell
PERSONNEL SERVICES	✓	Allison Davies on 15/5/2003
OTHER	✓	Parish Council consulted on 19/5/03 Warwickshire County Council (WCC) on 2/5/03 Warwickshire Rural Community Council (WRCC) on 12/5/03
CORPORATE STRATEGY/EMAS	✓	Rob Walsh on 15/5/2003
Summary of RECOMMENDATION		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That suggested responses to the Parish Plan be approved. 2. That the Parish Plan is adopted as a local information source. 3. That the Parish Plan is adopted as a material planning consideration. 4. That the B50 Appraisal Group be commended for producing, and the Parish Council and the residents of the B50 geographical area be applauded for supporting the preparation of, the Parish Plan. They are strongly encouraged to further develop and 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 B50 Appraisal Group Action Plan, which has been adopted by Bidford-on-Avon Parish Council as their Parish Plan. A copy of the Action Plan is attached to this report, and it is the intention of the Parish Council to produce a published version of the document. Background information relating to the preparation of the Action Plan, including a separate volume of data tables covering the B50 Appraisal 2002 are available for inspection if required.

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 and Appraisals is continually increasing with half of the communities in the District having completed or in the process of undertaking detailed Appraisals with associated recommendations and Action Plans. Further background information on the appraisal process is included in Appendix B.

3. Submitted Parish Plan – Bidford-on-Avon

3.1 Background

- 3.1.1 The B50 Appraisal Group (which includes Barton, Bidford, Broom, and Marcliff) resolved to undertake a Community Appraisal in July/August 2002. Following an open meeting held in November 2001, a steering group was formed to take the project forward.
- 3.1.2 The open day identified the key issues that would form the basis of a questionnaire survey, which was distributed to 2,200 households across the four communities comprising the B50 Group. Over 1,300 were returned producing an excellent response rate of 69%.
- 3.1.3 The results were presented at a public forum in November 2002 as a final report. This was attended by 600 people during the course of the day, including representatives from Warwickshire Rural Community Council and councillors from both the District and County. The report presents a thorough analysis of the survey results. This information provided the basis for the B50 Action Plan, which was presented to Bidford-on-Avon Council in March 2003 and adopted as their Parish Plan.
- 3.1.4 The B50 Appraisal Group has worked hard to successfully engage with the community, as well as analyse and disseminate the findings from the Appraisal. This has provided a robust basis for the Action Plan discussed in the next section. The Group will continue to operate until the end of 2003, with the aim of taking forward and supporting action on several key areas of the Parish Plan. These include the allocation of Friday Furlong for development, the future of the High Street, and location of the Health Centre.
- 3.1.5 The project received an Appraisal Preparation Grant of £3,000 from Stratford on Avon District Council and £4,500 from the Countryside Agency's *Vital Villages* initiative.
- 3.1.6 The Parish Plan document comprises:
- Introduction – including a brief section on methodology, prioritisation of action points, a number of policies highlighted as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), and a recommendation to the Parish Council.
 - Main body of the Action Plan sets out issues raised, as well as identifying policies and partners for future action.

3.2 Parish Plan findings

3.2.1 The findings of the Parish Plan cover the following issues:

- Housing
- Employment
- Religion
- Village Matters
- Transport
- Traffic
- The Environment
- Planning and Development
- Amenity and Cleansing
- Public Utilities
- Health
- Social Services
- Leisure and Recreation and Children and Young People
- Law and Order.

3.2.2 The section setting out policies for referral to Stratford on Avon District Council as SPG cover specific policies put forward on Housing; Employment; the Environment; and Planning and Development in the main report.

3.2.3 **Suggested Response: Endorse** – That the above be endorsed as a true representation of the community appraisal findings.

3.3 Action Plan

3.3.1 The recommendations are based on feedback from the following divisions within the District and County Councils: Housing, Planning and Transport Policy, Environmental Co-ordinator, Operational Services, Local Partnerships Team, Rural Transport Partnership Officer, Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy Officer, Corporate Policy Officer and Leisure and Business Services.

3.3.2 The policies relating to the need for affordable housing provision are to be welcomed. However, it is unclear from the policy if the Plan seeks to secure social, sheltered and small family housing in preference to other types of open market housing. Clarification needs to be sought on this point.

3.3.3 The Parish Council is encouraged to include reference to promoting opportunities for nature conservation and biodiversity in the Plan. The existence of the disused churchyard, for example could, with the appropriate management, make a contribution to the natural environment of the village.

3.3.4 Although the Parish Plan makes a passing reference to public open space, it would be helpful if the Plan put a stronger emphasis on the need for increased provision.

3.3.5 The actions listed within the document are precise and specific. The actions and their suggested responses have been summarised in Appendix C. However, it will be necessary to consult the Appraisal document itself for the full set of actions.

4. Corporate Strategy/Environmental/Financial/Legal Implications

- 4.1 The Parish Plan (and supporting documentation) is a useful source of information about the local community perception of their environment. The range of topic areas and policies in the Action Plan are supported in the Corporate Strategy, in particular key priority 5 and strategic objective 1. The Parish Plan also complements and helps to move the District Council's Local Agenda 21 Strategy forward and provides some sustainability indicators.
- 4.2 The Committee has been asked to consider several policies identified for adoption as SPG. These are set out on page 2 of the Parish Plan and recommended responses in Appendix C.
- 4.3 Projects developed through this Parish Plan may require funding to take them forward. Stratford-on-Avon District Council operates an Appraisal Capital grants scheme, aimed at funding these types of projects. It is hoped that the Parish Council and local residents will consider and pursue funding in order to develop their identified 'Action'.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The B50 Appraisal Group, the Parish Council, residents of Bidford-on-Avon and the wider community should be commended and congratulated for their undertaking of an appraisal and preparation of a robust Parish Plan.
- 5.2 The Parish Council is strongly encouraged by Stratford-on-Avon District Council to decide how they are going to monitor and aid the progress of turning the 'Actions' identified into reality.
- 5.3 The Bidford-on-Avon Parish Plan is a good example of how a small community can prepare a plan, which is a good source of local information and the basis of an action plan for the future.

RECOMMENDED:

- (1) That the Avon Area Community Committee, on behalf of the District Council, approves the suggested responses to the Bidford-on-Avon Parish Plan as set out in the foregoing report and Appendix C.**
- (2) That, subject to (1) above, the Avon Area Community Committee adopts the Bidford-on-Avon Parish Plan, as a local information source to offer advice to the relevant Departments of Stratford-on-Avon District Council.**
- (3) That, subject to (1) above the Avon Area Community Committee adopt the Bidford-on-Avon Parish Plan as a material planning 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.**
- (4) That the B50 Appraisal Group be commended for co-ordinating the delivery of the Parish Plan and the Parish Council and residents of the B50 geographical area be applauded for supporting the preparation of their Parish Plan and they are strongly encouraged to further develop and implement their Actions Plan.**

SIMON PAYNE

Head of Policy: Environmental Services

Appendix A - Guidance for the Assessment of Parish / Village / Town Appraisals

- 1.1 In assessing Appraisals, 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 Appraisal's detailed conclusions and Action Projects.

- 1.3 A response to each of the detailed conclusions and Action Projects 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 appraisals 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 appraisals first emanated nationally from the Rural Development Commission in conjunction with the Countryside Commission.
- 2.3 Nationally, appraisals 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. Appraisals and 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), appraisals are a recognised community planning method to help achieve key objectives.
- 2.6 In Planning Policy Guidance Note 7, the Government recognises that appraisals 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 appraisals 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 Appraisals can now play a broader role within the production of the statutory Community Plan for Stratford District.
- 2.10 The recommendations and Action Plans within Appraisals 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 proposals which meet housing (particularly affordable housing) and employment needs will be encouraged..."

2.13 Nationally, appraisals 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'. Appraisals address both planning and non-planning related matters and this is reflected in their assessment at Committee.

2.14 Appraisals 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 appraisal process creating more informed Action Plans.

Appendix C

Summary of key actions

Recommended Action	SDC Proposed Response
<p>Housing</p> <p>Adopt a policy in favour of social and sheltered housing, starter homes and small family houses as indicated by the Appraisal.</p> <p>Give favourable consideration to small developments, typically of between one and five dwellings.</p>	<p>Endorse – Local Plan Policy COM.1, COM.12, COM.13, COM.14, CTY.5 would support the provision of affordable housing where a clear local need is demonstrated.</p> <p>Endorse – Local Plan Policy COM.1 supports this scale of housing if the local community has identified a need, conferring Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) status. It would be appropriate for the Parish and District Council to monitor the future affordable housing need to ensure provision is met.</p>
<p>Employment</p> <p>Encourage the provision of small-scale craft and industrial workshops on existing sites and in new developments.</p>	<p>Endorse – Local Plan Policy COM.17 is designed to encourage these types of small-scale employment opportunities. Suggest extend to include commercial and small business uses.</p>
<p>The Environment</p> <p>Strengthen the regulations for flood prevention and ensure that all new developments in vulnerable areas are subject to them.</p> <p>Ask the District Council to join in developing proposals for increasing the recreational use of the rivers.</p>	<p>Endorse – Local Plan Policy PR.7 is intended to ensure that new development is not permitted where it would exacerbate existing flooding problems or give rise to new flooding problems.</p> <p>The District Council’s Flood Defence Officer can offer further advice as required.</p> <p>Endorse – Local Plan Policy COM.3 supports this action subject to the</p>

<p>Ask the District Council to collaborate in protecting existing allotment sites and making full use of the planning guidelines in the creation of new public open space.</p>	<p>character of the area being maintained.</p> <p>Endorse – Local Plan Policy COM.4, COM.5, COM.6 and MRC.5 support this. It is suggested that more emphasis be placed on the need for improved provision of Public Open Space (POS). It would be helpful if the local community undertake a POS audit to support this.</p>
<p>Planning and Development</p> <p>Adopt a development policy designed to retain the village qualities of the B50 area and to inhibit further urbanisation.</p> <p>Use development control measures to preserve the retail elements of Bidford High Street and to encourage the return of a wider variety of shops to the High Street.</p> <p>Assess the desirability of siting a small number of neighbourhood shops in the St Laurence Way/Friday Furlong area of Bidford.</p> <p>Encourage the establishment of a teashop/restaurant in Bidford High Street and a new tearoom and toilets on the Big Meadow.</p> <p>Clean up Friday Furlong prior to development</p> <p>Designate Friday Furlong and the former primary school site as the priority areas for new housing development, ensuring that flood prevention and water drainage regulations are met in full.</p> <p>Take account of the need for a sports and recreation resource in the parish when considering new development and potential developer contributions.</p>	<p>Endorse – Local Plan Policy PR.1, DEV.1 seeks to maintain the landscape and settlement character of local areas.</p> <p>Endorse – Local Plan Policy MRC.1, COM.2 is intended to ensure the retail viability and vitality of the Main Rural Centres.</p> <p>Endorse – Local Plan Policy COM.3 supports the provision of new shops and services that meet local need.</p> <p>Endorse - As above.</p> <p>Investigate – further information needs to be obtained on the nature of the request before further action can be taken.</p> <p>Endorse – Local Plan Policy BID.E allocates this site for residential development.</p> <p>Endorse – Local Plan Policy DEV. 3, COM.4, COM.5, MRC.5 support the provision of open space for recreation and leisure uses.</p>

<p>Transport & Traffic</p> <p>Ask the District and County Councils to arrange a review of all existing regular bus services through Bidford.</p> <p>General Transport & Traffic Policies</p>	<p>Endorse – Local Plan Policy COM.7 supports the opportunities for transport needs assessment. The Rural Transport Partnership (RTP) Information Project is intending to produce a leaflet for Bidford by the end of 2003.</p> <p>Endorse/Support – Local Plan Policy COM.11 supports a range of traffic related measures identified in this section. Otherwise, specific action points will be passed to Warwickshire County Council’s Rural Transport Officer and other key officers at the County Council. Several of these proposals would be able to receive support from the RTP.</p>
<p>Leisure/Recreation and Children/Young People</p> <p>Ask the District Council to consider local demand for a swimming pool, and how this might fit within their strategic plans for the western side of the District</p>	<p>Investigate – Pass to Leisure and Business Services for consideration.</p>
<p>Remaining topic areas and action points</p> <p>Village Matters; Religion; Amenity and Cleaning; Public Utilities; Health; Social Services; Law and Order</p>	<p>Endorse/support – the parish plan identifies a series of action points that reflect key areas of the corporate strategy and responsibilities with regard to street cleaning and recycling</p>