

**DASSETT AREA COMMUNITY COMMITTEE
22 March 2005**

Item No: 7
Subject: Harbury Parish Plan
Portfolio Holder: Cllr Beese
Lead Officer: Andrew Ford
Contact on 01789 260332

SUMMARY	To consider the assessment of the Harbury Parish Plan	
BACKGROUND PAPERS	Harbury Parish Plan Surveys - Various	
CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN		
CONSULTEE	✓	DETAILS AND DATE OF CONSULTATION
WARD MEMBERS	✓	Councillor Dally; Cllr Patrick on 21/2/05
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN	✓	Councillor Williams 21/2/05
PORTFOLIO HOLDER	✓	Councillor Beese on 4/3/05 Councillor Giblin (Shadow) on 4/3/05
LEGAL SERVICES	✓	Director of Corporate Services (Legal) on 17/2/05 Peter Cruden
FINANCIAL SERVICES	✓	Director of Corporate Services (Finance) on 17/2/05 Richard Burrell
PERSONNEL SERVICES		
OTHER	✓	Paul Ogden, Head of Leisure and Business Services on 17/2/05 Parish Council consulted on 1/3/05 Warwickshire County Council (WCC) on 17/2/05 Warwickshire Rural Community Council (WRCC) on 21/2/05
CORPORATE STRATEGY/EMAS	✓	Rob Walsh, Head of Policy and Public Relations on 17/2/05
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 steering group, Parish Council and the residents of Harbury 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 Harbury Parish Plan, which was adopted by Harbury 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 – Harbury Parish Plan

3.1 Background

- 3.1.1 The Parish Council resolved to undertake the preparation of a Village Appraisal in September 2000. Early progress led to the setting up of a Review Group in February 2001. Initial work on the Village Appraisal was supported by an Appraisal Preparation Grant, from the District Council, of £2,960 in March 2001. Subsequent funding from Countryside Agency's *Vital Villages* fund of £3,700 in June 2002 has led to the completion of the Parish Plan process.
- 3.1.2 The findings upon which the Action Plan is based have been generated using an extensive approach to consultation with the community. Initial public meetings and promotional events led to the distribution of a Village Survey in September 2002. This generated a 65% response rate that is considered to be statistically very strong. At the same time the Primary School implemented their own survey and the Youth Group held a visioning exercise. The Harbury Society also conducted a landscape audit and boundary wall inspection. The findings of the survey work, where feedback to the community and became the basis for the preparation of a Parish Plan late in 2003. During 2004 an updated Housing Survey was undertaken, with the support of WRCC Housing Enabler as well as a further Youth Surveys and a Spatial Planning Day.
- 3.1.3 Given the level of information generated the Parish Plan presents a clear picture of the needs and issues facing the community and builds on the Village Design Statement produced in 1998. It provides an Action Plan to address them, 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:
- Design and Landscape
 - Community Wellbeing
 - Traffic and Transport
 - Village Amenities
 - Education and Training

3.2.2 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 in-depth 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 The policy position in the Local Plan Review is generally supportive of the Action Plan points relating to planning, the environment and land use. The identification of preferred sites for residential and business development through the strategic planning event, which have been identified on the proposals map, is welcomed. However, it is suggested that further work be undertaken to test the feasibility of these sites to establish their development potential. The Housing section provides for limited affordable housing provision, which is to be welcomed. The District Council as well as the Rural Housing Enabler at Warwickshire Rural Community Council can provide further additional help in implementing this area.

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.

5. **Conclusion**

5.1 The Parish Plan steering group, the Parish Council and residents of Harbury 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 Harbury 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 Dasset Area Community Committee adopts the Harbury Parish Plan, as a local information source to offer advice to the relevant Departments of Stratford-on-Avon District Council.**
- (2) That the Dasset Area Community Committee adopt the Harbury 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 steering group, Parish Council and residents of Harbury be commended for preparing their Parish Plan and they are encouraged to implement and review the Action Plan.**

COLIN STAVES
Acting Head of Planning & 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>Design and Landscape</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect edge of settlement and avoid sprawl. • Protect open views from the village and open spaces. • Scale and design of new buildings should respect local character. • Prepare strategy for the implementation of Policy COM.1 in the Local Plan Review. • To support the needs of and promote local businesses within the locality. 	<p>Endorse/Support – the Local Plan Review contains policies that seek to protect, and enhance landscape character and promote sympathetic design in new buildings. In addition the adopted VDS for Harbury supports the District-wide Design Guide. The District Council welcomes the preparation of a strategy for the operation of Policy COM.1.</p> <p>The Local Plan Review also contains policies to safeguard and promote services and business in rural communities.</p> <p>Through its role in promoting economic development, the District Council will work with partners and organisations that support the business community to encourage economic growth in the village.</p>
<p>Community Wellbeing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support existing facilities and future needs of young and older members of the community. • Improve access to health care and communication of local needs to the primary healthcare providers. • Improve the quality of life through reductions in crime and vandalism and develop closer links between the police, schools and youth groups. • Improve access to information for all. 	<p>Endorse/Support - the Action points as identified are accepted in principle and will be brought to the attention of the Heads of the relevant Services in the District Council, and partner service providers, to determine whether action can be taken implement improvements in these areas.</p>
<p>Traffic and Transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve appropriate levels of traffic management and create a safer environment for residents. • Seek a realistic solution to the problem of parking in the village centre. • To support and improve the available range of transport services. 	<p>Support – the District Council supports these Action points and will bring it to the attention of Warwickshire County Council (WCC) as highway authority and the WCC Rural Transport Officer.</p>
<p>Education and Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop IT tuition, modern language courses and other training opportunities, i.e. First Aid, Martial Arts Class. • Develop opportunities to improve basic literacy and numeracy skills within the community. 	<p>Support/Action – the Action points identified reflect the aspirations of the District Community Plan and will be brought to the attention of relevant Heads of Service within the District Council and stakeholder members of Stratford District Partnership.</p>

Recommended Action	SDC Proposed Response
<p>Village Amenities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment – Consult on providing bus shelter. Seek improvements to footpaths and lighting, levels of recycling and develop strategy to address litter/dog fouling. Encourage habitat and biodiversity. • Sport – Contribute to the development of sporting facilities to meet identified needs. • Rights of Way – Maintain access and quality of local footpath network. • Village Hall – Continue support for the Village Hall, recognise it as an asset and seek improvements. • Village Centre – Develop a plan for the improvement of the village centre. 	<p>Support/Action – the District Council supports the Action points with respect to providing additional bus shelter. Improvements to footpaths, lighting, and litter will be brought to the attention of 'Street Scene' within Operational Services and the relevant department within WCC with respect to maintenance of rights of way.</p> <p>Encouragement is given to the management of habitats to promote biodiversity. 'Green waste' recycling is soon to be introduced on a District-wide basis and opportunities for the improvement of sport facilities will be brought to the Head of Leisure Services.</p> <p>The District Council operates a Capital grant scheme that may support improvements to the Village community facilities.</p>