

SUBJECT: STOCKTON PARISH PLAN
LEAD OFFICER: KAREN JOHNSTONE
CONTACT ON 01789 260332
**LEAD MEMBER/
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:** CLLR BEESE

SUMMARY

This report sets out the assessment of the Stockton 2006 Parish Plan. Stockton Parish Council also hopes to adopt the Plan, and the Action Plan within it, at their meeting on the 17th June.

RECOMMENDATION

- (1) That the Parish Plan is adopted as a local information source.**
 - (2) That the Parish Plan is adopted as a material consideration, subject to the amendments detailed in paragraphs 1.5.4 to 1.5.6 of this report.**
 - (3) That the Parish Plan steering group, Parish Council and the residents of Stockton be commended and encouraged to implement 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 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.
 - 1.3 **Background to the submitted Stockton Parish Plan**
 - 1.3.1 Stockton Parish previously prepared a Parish Appraisal, which was adopted by the District Council in June 2003. A newsletter and public meeting resulted in volunteers forming a Steering Group in September 2003 to take forward the issues identified through the Appraisal. The preparation of the Plan has been supported through a Vital Villages Grant and many contributions in kind. Throughout the project newsletters have been sent to all houses in the Parish to keep people informed of progress.
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- 1.3.2 The Plan is informed by a number of sources. A detailed questionnaire was sent out to all households in the Parish in 2000 as part of the Appraisal process, achieving a 58% response rate. The Parish Plan Steering Group took on the issues and topics identified through this and other community exercises during the preparation of the Appraisal. To develop and update the Appraisal's ideas, the Steering Group sent a questionnaire to a randomly selected 200 people within the Parish, with around 100 returned. They also held a drop-in day to discuss the survey results, and held discussions with primary and secondary school children. A Housing Needs Survey was undertaken in partnership with the Warwickshire Rural Housing Association and the results published in January 2005.
- 1.3.3 The original Appraisal questionnaire response was statistically robust at 58%, but could not have been considered necessarily valid 6 years later. The second survey's sample and response is sufficiently robust to update this outlook, particularly as this was supplemented with feedback from other community engagement events and the newsletter. The Housing Needs Survey received 98 household responses and gives useful information on attitudes to new housing in the parish, although a further Needs Survey would be required to determine the precise form of local need.
- 1.3.4 The Parish Plan presents a clear picture of the needs and issues facing the community. The Parish Council will adopt the Action Plan and will be responsible for overseeing its implementation with volunteers and partner organisations. Follow-up information gathering will also take place over the next few years, including a more detailed Housing Needs Survey.

1.4 **Stockton Parish Plan findings**

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

- Housing and housing need
- Existing community groups
- Health and mobility
- Traffic
- Safety
- Local Environment
- A clean and tidy village
- Leisure in Stockton
- Community

1.4.2 The Parish Plan has been prepared employing a range of community participation techniques, including questionnaire surveys, 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 information source.

1.4.3 Suggested response: Endorse – that the findings of the Stockton Parish Plan be endorsed as a true representation of the topics addressed by the Parish Plan.

1.5 **Stockton Parish Plan 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 Parish

Plan Action Plan.

- 1.5.2 The policy position of the Local Plan Review (as proposed to be modified) is generally supportive of the Action Plan points relating to planning, the environment and land use. Many of the actions identified can be undertaken entirely by the village itself.
- 1.5.3 The Housing section encourages the further investigation of the need for affordable housing, which is to be welcomed. The Plan states the intention to work with the Rural Housing Enabler for Warwickshire to undertake the detailed follow-up Housing Needs Survey, and the District Council can provide additional help in this area.
- 1.5.4 This Parish Plan is likely to play an important role in guiding any future development of housing to meet an identified local need. There are small inconsistencies in the Plan which may prove misleading and problematic in this process, and which were unfortunately not changed before the Plan was printed. It is strongly recommended that these sections are amended. The Parish Steering Group has agreed to these changes in any electronic version or future print of the Plan. The outstanding issues are detailed in the next two paragraphs.
- 1.5.5 The description on p.6 of Policy COM.1 of the Local Plan Review (as proposed to be modified) does not accurately reflect the policy, and needs to be amended. Appropriate wording could be;
"In the Stratford Local Plan Review, Policy COM.1 states that only housing 1.) Based on local needs, 2.) Intended to meet these needs in perpetuity and 3.) At a location acceptable to the community, will be encouraged. The Policy also requires that any scheme maximises the use of previously developed land, and follows other general location and design principle."
- 1.5.6 The Housing in Stockton section on p.10 states that "there is support for small-scale housing within the current boundary of the village". This could therefore form the area of search for a future development site. However, there is no definition of what the "current boundary" includes. The inclusion on the map on p.4 of a 1993 village boundary line is confusing. Instead, a line could be included labelled clearly as the area within which the Parish community consider it appropriate to search for any future local-need development site. The text of the Plan should be revised to clarify this.

2 OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO THE COMMITTEE

- 2.1 A) Adopt the Parish Plan with no conditions: This is a good, well-prepared Parish Plan which would be a valuable local information source and material consideration. The vast majority is fine but a few issues are likely to cause future problems due to internal inconsistencies and inconsistencies between the Parish Plan and the District's Local Plan Review (as proposed to be modified).
- 2.2 B) Adopt the Parish Plan subject to amendments: This would result in the same advantages while removing concern over the inconsistencies detailed above.
- 2.3 C) Not adopt the Parish Plan: The District Council would miss the opportunity to adopt a useful source of local information, and a material consideration to aid planning decision-making.

3 IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSAL

3.1 Financial

3.1.1 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 District Council operates a Community Grants Scheme aimed at funding these types of projects, and the Community Grants 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.

3.2 Environmental

3.2.1 Many of the actions within this Parish Plan aim to improve the local environment of the village and its surroundings. A few actions could increase the environmental sustainability of life within the Parish by reducing local people's need to travel for work and leisure.

3.3 Corporate Strategy

3.3.1 The Parish Plan is a useful source of information about local community perception of their locality. The Community Plan and Corporate Strategy for the District 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 Agenda 21.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The actions recommended in this report are to commend those involved in the preparation of the Plan, adopt the Parish Plan as a local information source, and adopt it as a material consideration subject to the amendments detailed in paras 1.5.4 to 1.5.6. There are no major risks associated with these actions, provided that the Parish Plan Steering Group ensures that the amended version of the Plan is publicised and made available wherever possible.

4.2 Choosing to adopt the Parish Plan as a material consideration without conditions would risk causing problems and confusion in the future due to the inconsistencies, particularly in the functioning of Local Choice Policy COM.1 of the Local Plan Review when determining any future local-need housing scheme.

4.3 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.

5 CONCLUSION

5.1 The Parish Plan Steering Group, the Parish Council and residents of Stockton 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 Stockton 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.

5.3 As discussed in paras 1.5.4 to 1.5.6, some small amendments are necessary to the Plan to avoid confusion when it is used to steer any future local-need

housing scheme. It is therefore recommended that the Parish Plan is adopted subject to the incorporation of these amendments to the electronic version and any further printed copies.

HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICES

Background papers:

Stockton Parish Plan 2006

Stockton Housing Needs Survey 2005

Stockton Parish Appraisal 2003

Stratford District Community Plan; the future to 2015

Stratford-on-Avon Local Plan Review (as proposed to be modified)

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 their commendation. (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 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. 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.
- 2.7. 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.
- 2.8. Parish Plans can now play a broader role within the production of the statutory Community Plan for Stratford District.
- 2.9. The recommendations and Action Plans can both inform and help deliver the Rural Strategy for the Stratford-on-Avon District.
- 2.10. 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."

2.11. Policy COM.1 of the Stratford-on-Avon District Local Plan Review (as proposed to be modified) 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.
- 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..."

2.12. 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.

2.13. 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
Traffic	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic calming on Napton Road • Accident prevention measures at A426 crossroads • Monitor accidents on A426 and pressure WCC for action • Investigate prevention of parking on pavements and verges, and trial mesh surfacing on verges. 	<p>Support – The Community Plan supports these Action Points as it seeks to improve road safety.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate alternative bus routes through village to avoid congestion 	<p>Support – The Community Plan supports this Action Point as it seeks to encourage use of public transport.</p>
Housing	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PC to adopt principles in Housing sections, and respond to planning application consultations accordingly. 	<p>This response is subject to amendments to the Parish Plan (see paras 1.5.4 to 1.5.6).</p> <p>Endorse – Policy COM.1 of the Local Plan Review allows for the consideration of views expressed within adopted Parish Plans. The principles do not conflict with the policies of the Local Plan Review.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out stage 2 housing needs survey • PC to explore opportunities for building affordable homes on suitable sites in the village 	<p>This response is subject to clarification of the preferred site search area (see para 1.5.6 of report).</p> <p>Endorse and Action – The policies of the Local Plan Review (COM.1 and CTY.5) allow for the provision of local occupancy housing on a basis of identified need.</p> <p>The District Council will work with the Parish Council and Rural Housing Enabler to develop a clear picture of local need.</p>
Facilities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue redevelopment of playing field with emphasis on facilities for youths. 	<p>Support and Action – The Community Plan supports this Action Point as it aims to increase young people’s participation in activities.</p>

	The District Council Community Grants team offer help locating funding, and can advise if a scheme may be eligible for the Council's Community Grants scheme.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate use of Tree Preservation Orders for specimen trees 	Support and Action – SDC Landscape section will be able to advise on the most appropriate methods for protecting valued trees.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and preserve open spaces in village Preserve identified historic frontages and features in village 	Endorse – Policy PR.1 of the Local Plan Review aims to protect landscape and settlement character, including the protection of distinctive local features, especially those valued by the local community.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue programme of providing street furniture Maintain and improve access to public footpaths Employ village handyman for general maintenance 	Support – the Community Plan supports these Action Points as it seeks to improve the built and natural environment of the District and encourage people to enjoy the countryside.
Services	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue financial support for village hall, playing field, graveyard maintenance Continue general support for village organisations and redevelopment of church 	Support and Action – The Community Plan supports these Action Point as it aims to increase voluntary and community activity in the District. The District Council Community Grants team offer help locating funding, and can advise if a scheme may be eligible for the Council's Community Grants scheme.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue PC newsletter and website, explore use of information board and prepare information sheet for new villagers 	Support – this Action Point can be supported.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate access to volunteers drivers scheme and Ambulance Passenger Transport Service. 	Support and Action – The Community Plan supports this action as it seeks to develop transport initiatives to help people access services. SDC is a partner of the Community Links and the Volunteer Centre Medical Journey schemes that may be able to provide transport.

REPORT INFORMATION SHEET

Please complete and submit to Committee Services with draft report

COMMITTEE/DATE	DASSETT AREA COMMUNITY COMMITTEE – 27 JUNE 06	
ITEM NO/TITLE OF REPORT	STOCKTON PARISH PLAN	
CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN		
CONSULTEE	✓	DETAILS / DATE OF CONSULTATION / COMMENTS RECEIVED
WARD MEMBERS		CLLR NIGEL ROCK/ 25 TH MAY 06
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN/ PORTFOLIOHOLDER * <i>*Required</i>		CLLR JOHN APPLETON/ 25 TH MAY 06
FINANCIAL SERVICES * <i>*Required</i>		RICHARD BURREL/ 25 TH MAY 06/ NO COMMENTS TO ADD.
LEGAL SERVICES * <i>*Required</i>		DAVID SWEETING/ 25 TH MAY 06
OTHER SERVICES		HOUSING/ 22 ND MAY 06/ DISAPPOINTED THAT PLAN WAS PRINTED BEFORE HOSUING SECTIONS FULLY RESOLVED, OTHERWISE SUPPORTIVE. LEISURE AND LOCAL ECONOMY/ 22 ND MAY 06/ SUPPORTIVE. POLICY AND PR/ 22 ND MAY 06/ SUPPORTIVE, COMMUNITY LINKS SCHEME COULD HELP.
OTHER ORGANISATIONS		STOCKTON PARISH COUNCIL/ 25 TH MAY 06 WARWICKSHIRE RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL/ 22 ND MAY 06/ GENERALLY VERY SUPPORTIVE OF PARISH PLAN. WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL/ 22 ND MAY 06
FINAL DECISION BY THIS COMMITTEE OR RECOMMENDATION TO ANOTHER COMMITTEE/COUNCIL ?		FINAL DECISION RECOMMENDATION TO : EXECUTIVE / COUNCIL COMMITTEE <i>Delete as appropriate</i>
DOES THIS REPORT CONTAIN EXEMPT INFORMATION? IF SO, UNDER WHICH PARAGRAPH(S) ?		No YES, PARAGRAPHS : <i>Delete as appropriate</i>
DOES THIS REPORT RELATE TO A KEY DECISION (REFERRED TO IN THE EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN)		No YES, FORWARD PLAN ITEM – SCHEDULED FOR (date) <i>Delete as appropriate</i>