

SUBJECT: **WELFORD-ON-AVON PARISH PLAN**

LEAD OFFICER: **KAREN JOHNSTONE**
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**LEAD MEMBER/
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:** **COUNCILLOR S THIRLWELL**

SUMMARY

This report sets out the assessment of the Welford-on-Avon 2007 Parish Plan. Welford-on-Avon Parish Council have confirmed that they will adopt this Plan on 5 June 2007 subject to consultation with the District Council.

RECOMMENDATION

- (1) That the Parish Plan is adopted as a local information source to offer advice to the relevant departments of Stratford-on-Avon District Council, subject to a final version being agreed following the public presentation as detailed in paragraph 1.3.5 of this report.**
 - (2) That the Parish Plan is adopted as a material consideration in processing planning applications, in accordance with Policy COM.1 of the Local Plan Review, subject to a final version being agreed following the public presentation as detailed in paragraph 1.3.5 of this report.**
 - (3) That the Parish Plan steering committee, Parish Council and the residents of Welford-on-Avon Parish be commended for preparing their Parish Plan and that they are encouraged to implement and review the proposed Actions.**
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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.
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1.3 Background to the submitted Welford-on-Avon Parish Plan

- 1.3.1 The Parish Council agreed in February 2006 to create a Parish Plan. The initiative was launched at a public presentation, promoted by invitation letters sent to all residents, and posters displayed around the village, on village noticeboards and in pubs and shops. People were invited to volunteer in the letter and at the public launch, and a Steering Committee was formed in June. The initiative received a Parish Plan preparation grant and a further Community Grant from SDC, funding from the Parish Council and contributions in kind from many volunteers. Throughout the process, progress was reported in the Parish News and at Parish Council meetings, and the Steering Committee minutes were posted on the Parish notice board.
- 1.3.2 A Preliminary Questionnaire was distributed to all households to establish the topics of greatest importance to local residents, and 60% were completed and returned. From the responses a Survey was compiled, together with separate questionnaires for businesses, young people and children. The survey was distributed to houses in the Parish and achieved an excellent 83% response rate, which can be considered statistically sound.
- 1.3.3 The completed survey forms were sent unopened to be analysed and presented by Warwick Network, a professional independent firm. The Steering Committee drafted a Parish Plan and Actions based on the results of the survey. This has been presented to the Parish Council and District Council for approval.
- 1.3.4 The agreed Parish Plan will be presented at a public meeting and any final amendments agreed. The Plan will then be printed and distributed by hand to every household in the Parish. A detailed working Action Plan to implement the actions within the Parish Plan will be drawn up with input from the community, partners and volunteers willing to help on specific subjects, and the Parish Council. The Parish Council will be responsible for putting the changes and initiatives in the Plan into effect. The Parish Council has decided to address traffic matters (especially speeding) and housing first.
- 1.3.5 The presentation of the survey results and draft Plan to the community is an essential part of the process of preparing a representative Parish Plan. Residents must be given the opportunity to agree or suggest actions, and request amendments. Unfortunately, timing means the public exhibition and opportunity to comment will be held after this report is considered by Avon Area Community Committee. It is therefore suggested that the Plan is adopted subject to the presentation of the Plan to the community, opportunity being given for comments to be made, and any subsequent amendments considered necessary being made to the Plan. The Parish Plan Steering Group should write to the District Council to confirm public presentation of the Plan and inform of any comments received. The two councils can then work together to agree any changes to the Plan that are considered necessary to reflect the feedback received, while of course acknowledging the need to place great weight on the statistically sound processes already undertaken. This suggestion is reflected in the recommendations of this report.

1.4 Welford-on-Avon Parish Plan findings

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

- Traffic
- Transport
- Housing
- Access to health services
- Recreation and leisure
- Public utilities
- Crime and disorder
- Local environment
- Young people
- Children
- Local business

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. The process has generated a range of statistical data and qualitative material that has informed the Actions and which provides a useful information source.

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

1.5 Welford-on-Avon Parish Plan Actions

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

1.5.2 The policy position of the Local Plan Review is generally supportive of the Action points relating to planning, the environment and land use. The District Council can offer assistance in taking forward several of the action points such as increasing the use of flexible transport schemes and supporting funding searches for community projects. 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 local needs housing, which is to be welcomed. The Rural Housing Enabler and District Council can provide help in this area, and encourage the community to treat this as a high priority.

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 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.

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 MEMBERS' COMMENTS

- 3.1 Cllr Barnes supports the Plan and looks forward to working with the parish to implement actions wherever possible. However he is concerned that the steering group has not yet held an open meeting to present the analysis and give residents the opportunity to request changes to the final version of the Plan. He encourages the community to undertake an independent Housing Needs Survey as a high priority. He notes that the District Council scheme to put a footpath at the top of Headlands Rise should be addressed to support actions to encourage walking to school.

4 IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSAL

4.1 Financial

- 4.1.1 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.

4.2 Environmental

- 4.2.1 Many of the actions within this Parish Plan could increase the environmental sustainability of life within the Parish by reducing local people's dependency on the private car. Other actions aim to improve the local environment of the village and its surroundings.

4.3 Corporate Strategy

- 4.3.1 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 proposed Actions. The Parish Plan also complements and helps move forward the District Council's Agenda 21.

5 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 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. 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 Plan Steering Committee, the Parish Council and residents of Welford-on-Avon 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 Actions. It must be noted however that before the Plan is finalised and published, it is essential that the Plan is presented to the community and that residents are given the opportunity to comment (see paragraph 1.8).

- 6.2 The Welford-on-Avon 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 Actions to address the needs and aspirations of the community.

PAT REID
HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICES

Background papers:

Welford-on-Avon Parish Plan 2007

Stratford District Community Plan; the future to 2015

Stratford-on-Avon District Council Corporate Strategy 2005-8

Stratford-on-Avon 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 Council services, (e.g. the District Council Planning Service, Sports and leisure 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 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 COM.1 of the Stratford-on-Avon District Local Plan Review 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.

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..."

- 2.11. 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.
- 2.12. 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

Abbreviations WCC= Warwickshire County Council

SDC= Stratford District Council

Parish Plan action	SDC Proposed Response
Traffic	
<p>Introduce 30mph speed limit (or lower on selected areas) on all roads in Welford.</p> <p>Determine if certain roads qualify for speed enforcement measures.</p> <p>Raise awareness of traffic issues with parents of school children</p>	<p>Support – these actions will help to achieve the Community Plan aim of reducing the number of road accidents.</p>
<p>Parish Council to work with partners (including Welford school) to determine feasibility of options including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementing traffic calming - Introducing cycleways, - Reducing number of cars dropping off at school - Reducing number of HGVs using village roads etc. 	<p>Support – this action will work towards several Community Plan aims including encouraging sustainable travel and reducing road accidents.</p> <p>Cycling schemes could be discussed with the WCC cycling officer and Sustrans.</p>
Transport	
<p>Review all transport schemes to improve existing arrangements, and investigate grant aid opportunities</p>	<p>Action and support – SDC is a partner in the 'Community Links' 'Back and 4th' and 'Volunteer Centre Medical Journeys' community transport schemes. The SDC Social Inclusion team can support the implementation group in giving more targeted publicity in the village.</p> <p>The Community Links transport scheme is available 9.30am to 2.30pm to help those who are 'stuck for transport'. Phone Community Links 9am to 4pm weekdays on 01789 264491 for details.</p> <p>The District Council Community Grants team offer help locating funding, and can advise if this project may be eligible for the Council's Community Grants scheme.</p>
<p>Work with bus companies to improve bus service and publicity.</p>	<p>Support – this action will help achieve the Community Plan aim to support individuals' access to services.</p>

Parish Plan action	SDC Proposed Response
Housing	
<p>Parish Council, in consultation with community, District and County Council, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Arrange for independent housing needs survey - Identify suitable land for local need housing development - Ensure housing meets identified need, is restricted to local people and that affordable housing is genuinely affordable - Secure involvement of appropriate housing associations. 	<p>Action and endorse – Policy COM.1 of the Local Plan Review allows 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>
Health	
<p>Review existing transport schemes used by those with travel problems to identify where it is feasible to make changes to meet their requirements.</p>	<p>Action and support – SDC is a partner of the Volunteer Centre Medical Journey scheme which may be able to provide help.</p> <p>For further information phone Clarissa Roberts on 01789 262886.</p>
<p>Investigate and determine the feasibility of introducing some health services in the village.</p>	<p>Endorse – Local Plan Policy COM.2 encourages the provision of new shops and services which meet the needs of the local community, subject to locational criteria.</p>
Recreation and Leisure	
<p>Determine feasibility of providing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All weather multi-sports surface - Visiting mobile cinema - Additional children’s playground equipment - Open spaces dedicated to wildlife/nature and other uses - Adult education classes - Additional arts/ crafts clubs - More information about recreation and leisure activities. 	<p>Support and action - These options would help achieve several Community Plan aims including to increase the number and variety of natural habitats and increase the number of residents participating in local leisure and cultural activities.</p> <p>The District Council Community Grants team offer help locating funding, and can advise if this project may be eligible for the Council’s Community Grants scheme</p>
<p>Review with village committees the usage and potential of local existing facilities.</p>	<p>Support – the Community Plan seeks to maximise the use of existing community facilities.</p>
Public utilities	
<p>Work with service providers to improve and upgrade water and electricity supply and investigate provision of gas</p>	<p>Support – this action point can be supported. It should be noted that domestic or community-scale</p>

Parish Plan action	SDC Proposed Response
supply.	renewable energy generation can also provide good savings on energy bills in areas not connected to mains gas. Independent advice is available from WEEAC, 01789 842898.
Consult community on street lighting options	Support – this action point can be supported.
Crime and disorder	
PC to work with police and community to investigate options to increase police presence, enforce speed limits and collaborate against crime.	Support – these actions should help achieve the Community Plan aim of reducing fear of crime.
Local environment	
Work with District Council to improve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - local re-cycling facilities - standard of pavements - gully/drain cleaning service. 	Action - the District Council's Corporate Strategy sets a target to recycle 40% of household waste collected by April 2008 and actions are being taken to achieve this. SDC are looking to introduce door-to-door plastic collection in 2008. The Highways Authority (in this case Warwickshire County Council) are responsible for pavements and drains, and can be contacted at County Highways: 01926 412515.
Young people (11-18)	
Work with young people, parents and youth organisations to determine feasibility of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating youth committee - Establishing a number of activity and social clubs - Constructing a multi-sports surface - Forming a youth social club - Improving facilities and equipment in the park - Arranging a visiting mobile cinema. 	Support and action – The Community Plan seeks to increase the number of young people participating in leisure activities. The District Council Community Grants team offer help locating funding, and can advise if this project may be eligible for the Council's Community Grants scheme.
Children (up to age 10)	
Work with parents, children and appropriate children's organisations to determine feasibility of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishing a number of indoor/outdoor activities - Improving facilities and equipment in the park - Constructing a multi-sports 	Support and action – The Community Plan seeks to increase the number of young people participating in leisure activities. The District Council Community Grants team offer help locating funding, and can advise if this project may be eligible for the Council's Community

Parish Plan action	SDC Proposed Response
surface.	Grants scheme.
Local business	
Parish Council to work with appropriate organisations to determine feasibility of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating a business directory/ website - Organising access to a range of business advisory services - Providing solutions to various recruitment problems. 	Support – this action point can be supported.

REPORT INFORMATION SHEET

Please complete and submit to Committee Services with draft report

COMMITTEE/DATE	AVON AREA COMMUNITY COMMITTEE – 21 ST JUNE 2007	
ITEM No/TITLE OF REPORT	WELFORD-ON-AVON PARISH PLAN	
CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN		
CONSULTEE	✓	DETAILS / DATE OF CONSULTATION / COMMENTS RECEIVED
WARD MEMBERS	✓	CLLR PETER BARNES/22 ND MAY 07/ SUPPORTIVE, COMMENTS DETAILED IN SECTION 3 OF REPORT
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN/ PORTFOLIOHOLDER * <i>*Required</i>	✓	CLLR VINCE SEAMAN/ 22 ND MAY 07 CLLR STUART BEESE/ 22 ND MAY 07
FINANCIAL SERVICES * <i>*Required</i>	✓	RICHARD BURRELL/ 22 ND MAY 07
LEGAL SERVICES * <i>*Required</i>	✓	DAVID SWEETING/ 22 ND MAY 07 SERINTHER ATKAR/ 22 ND MAY 07
OTHER SERVICES	✓	HOUSING/ 2 ND MAY 07/ WELCOME HNS ACTION AND ENCOURAGE IMMEDIATE ACTION. EXPRESS CONCERN THAT THERE IS NO IDENTIFIED MECHANISM TO IDENTIFY SUITABLE SITES FOR LOCAL NEED DEVELOPMENT. LEISURE AND LOCAL COMMUNITY/ 2 ND MAY 07
OTHER ORGANISATIONS	✓	WELFORD-ON-AVON PARISH COUNCIL/ 22 ND MAY 07 WARWICKSHIRE RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL/ 2 ND MAY 07/ WELCOMES THE APPROACH TAKEN IN THE HOUSING SECTION, INCLUDING THE INTENTION TO UNDERTAKE A HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY. WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL/ 2 ND MAY 07
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>