

**COMMITTEE: DASSETT AREA COMMUNITY COMMITTEE****DATE: 09/10/2007**

**Subject:** Avon Dassett Parish Plan  
**Lead Officer:** Karen Johnstone  
*Contact on 01789 260332*  
**Lead Member/  
Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Stephen Thirlwell

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**Summary**

This report sets out the assessment of the Avon Dassett Parish Plan. Avon Dassett Parish Council adopted the Plan on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2007.

**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.**
  - (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.**
  - (3) That the Parish Plan steering group, Parish Council and the residents of Avon Dassett Parish be commended for preparing their Parish Plan and that they are encouraged to implement and review 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 many of the communities in the district having completed or in the process of undertaking detailed Parish plans 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 Avon Dassett Parish Plan**
  - 1.3.1 A small Parish Plan steering group of volunteers was established in March 2006 after a meeting organised by Warwickshire Rural Community Council (WRCC) gave local residents the opportunity to meet representatives from other villages which had already completed the

process. The Parish Council funded the initial stages, and later grants from Stratford District Council Community Fund and Awards for All supported the Results Day event and final production. Updates on the progress of the Parish Plan were reported in the Compton Chronicle, the local villages' monthly magazine.

- 1.3.2 A draft questionnaire was discussed with local groups including the Parish Council, local vicar, Men's Club, Gardening Club, and with a sample of local residents of all ages and housing types including younger and older residents and those with a disability. Following this initial consultation stage the questionnaire with introductory letter was finalised. It was delivered to all 100 households in the parish, and 92 households completed and returned it. This gives a 92% response rate and is statistically sound. The responses to the questionnaire were analysed by Warwick Networks. All families with children over four years old were given a single-use camera and asked to take photographs of what they liked and disliked about the village, and then add their comments to the resulting prints. Housing for local people was raised as an issue through the questionnaire response, and the Parish Council and Steering Group agreed to work with WRCC to conduct a Housing Needs Survey which was distributed in May 2007. The results are reported within the Plan.
- 1.3.3 All the information gained was displayed in the Reading Room and all the parishioners were invited to attend and give further comments. 45% of households were represented on the day, and many more suggestions were put forward for inclusion in the Parish Plan. Following this, an Action Plan was drawn up by the Steering Group in consultation with the Parish Council to address the issues raised through the process. The Parish Plan and its Action Plan presents a clear picture of the needs and issues facing the community.
- 1.3.4 The Parish Council adopted the Plan on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2007. Further working groups will be established to implement the Action Plan, reporting back to the Parish Council who will keep the Action Plan under regular review. The Parish Council and others have already put in place several of the actions suggested in the responses to the Questionnaire.

#### 1.4 **Avon Dassett Parish Plan findings**

- 1.4.1 The findings of the Parish Plan, which have informed the Action Plan, cover:
  - History, features and activities of the village
  - Avon Dassett residents
  - Employment
  - Village matters
  - Transport and traffic
  - The environment
  - Crime
  - Housing
  - Housing Needs Survey
- 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 and qualitative data that has informed the Action Plan and is a useful

information source.

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

## **1.5 Avon Dassett 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 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. Good progress has already been made with several actions such as improving facilities at the Reading Room and working with police. The District Council can offer assistance in taking forward several of the action points, in particular by supporting funding searches for community projects.
- 1.5.3 The preparation of a Housing Needs Survey is welcomed, and the District Council and Rural Housing Enabler can continue to provide support in taking the project forward.

## **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. No reasons have so far been identified to make this option necessary.
- 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 Legal/Human Rights Implications**

- 3.1.1 There are no legal implications of the recommendations.

### **3.2 Financial**

- 3.2.1 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.

### **3.3 Environmental**

- 3.3.1 Many of the actions within this Parish Plan aim to improve the local

environment of the village and its surroundings. Some may increase the sustainability of life within the village by reducing the need to travel to access activities and services, and by investigating the use of renewable energy.

### **3.4 Corporate Strategy**

3.4.1 The Parish Plan is a useful source of information about local community perception of their locality. The Community Plan and Corporate Strategy 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 within this report are to commend those involved in the reparation of the Parish 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.

4.2 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.

## **5 Conclusion**

5.1 The Parish Plan Steering Group, the Parish Council and residents of Avon Dassett should be commended and congratulated on completing their Parish Plan, and are encouraged by Stratford District Council to implement and periodically review the Action Plan.

5.2 The Avon Dassett 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.

Pat Reid

HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICES

Background papers:

*Avon Dassett draft Parish Plan and Action Plan August 2007*

*Stratford District Community Plan; the future to 2015*

*Stratford-on-Avon Local Plan Review 2006*

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

*Officers Consulted*

*Head of Service: 14/09/2007*

*Monitoring Officer: (date of report consultation)*

*Chief Executive: (date of report consultation)*