

# PARISH PLANS FOR MIDDLETON ON THE HILL AND LEYSTERS, PEMBRIDGE AND THE BORDER GROUP

Report By: Chief Forward Planning Officer

## Wards Affected

Mortimer  
Pembridge and Lyonshall with Titley  
Upton

## Purpose

1. To consider the Middleton on the Hill and Leysters, Pembridge and the Border Group Parish Plans for adoption as interim Supplementary Planning Guidance to the emerging Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.

## Financial Implications

None.

## Background

2. The Government's White Paper 'Our Countryside, the future' (2000) proposed that all rural communities should develop 'Town, Village and Parish Plans' to identify key facilities and services, to set out the problems that need to be tackled and to demonstrate how distinctive character and features could be preserved. Parish Plans form one of the four initiatives of the Vital Village programme. They should address the needs of the entire community and everyone in the parish should have an opportunity to take part in its preparation. Local Planning Authorities are encouraged to adopt the planning (land use) components of Parish Plans as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

## Support for Parish Plans

3. In response to the Parish Plans initiative a Parish Plan Steering Group has been formed consisting of representatives from Herefordshire Council (Forward Planning and Policy and Community), Herefordshire Partnership, Community First, Hereford Association of Local Councils, Hereford Voluntary Action and West Midlands Planning Aid to assist parishes and oversee their development as a whole.
4. Within the Council, a protocol is being developed to provide clear, concise guidance on how Herefordshire Council will respond to Parish Plan enquiries from local community groups. This should be used together with the Parish Plans guidance produced nationally by the Countryside Agency and local guidance produced by the Herefordshire Partnership.
5. A list of key Herefordshire Council contacts has been identified to enable Parish Plan groups to receive support in developing their plans and receive quick and consistent

responses to the plans upon their completion. There are 32 key contacts including Forward Planning, Conservation, Transportation, Housing and Environmental Health.

In addition to these three Parish Plans which have been completed, there are a further 31 parishes which have been awarded a grant from the Countryside Agency to produce a plan with another 12 Parish Council's having registered an interest in the scheme.

### **Adoption by Herefordshire Council**

6. Parish Plans will not have any statutory powers. They will however be a definitive statement about local character and issues. For a Parish Plan to be adopted as SPG, it must be consistent with planning policy and prepared in wide consultation with the community and interested parties. Only elements of Plans relevant to land use and development can be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Adoption will enable the Parish Council and local community to draw the attention of the Local Planning Authority and others to its context whenever it is pertinent to planning decisions within the village / parish. The Parish Plan will be used as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and be of assistance at their earlier compilation and pre-application stages.

Given the publication of the Deposit Draft UDP, it is now more appropriate to consider, wherever possible, Parish Plans as SPG against the emerging UDP rather than existing local plans, where they are broadly consistent with the UDP policies and to adopt them as such. The adoption of Parish Plans as Supplementary Planning Guidance, albeit in interim form, will confirm their status in the Council's overall planning policy framework and is in line with Government and Countryside Agency guidance and UDP policy.

### **Border Group Parish Plan**

7. This Plan refers to the parishes of Brampton Bryan, Buckton and Coxall, Adforton, Walford, Letton and Newton, Lingen and Willey. It was prepared by a steering group made up of representatives from each of the parishes with the final document being approved by the Group Parish Council in September 2003.

The Plan has been produced following a questionnaire sent to all parishioners, which gained a 30% response rate and a number of public meetings. The initial draft was distributed to all households in the parish and copies circulated to the Council's key contacts for comments. Officers of the Council's Forward Planning section have commented on several draft versions of the Plan to enable a final version which is now before Members.

The aim of the document is to identify parish needs, provide a guide to the Parish Council for future work and provide more detailed local information to aid planning decisions.

The planning issues raised within this Plan mainly concern the availability of affordable housing for local people and the possible housing opportunities that exist (pg.6). The Border Group have objected to the Deposit Draft UDP requesting the inclusion of Adforton as a smaller settlement. This is being dealt with separately through the development plan process. Within the Parish Plan this issue is identified as ongoing action. Notwithstanding this, the Parish Plan conforms with the emerging

Unitary Development Plan and contains sufficient detail to be used as a material consideration in planning decisions and issues.

### **Pembridge Parish Plan**

8. Work on the Pembridge Parish Plan started in October 2001. Seven steering groups comprising of local people were set up to cover various topics such as housing, traffic, leisure and environment. A questionnaire was distributed to 453 households within the parish to assess residents' options of which 52% of forms were returned. Separate surveys were also undertaken for the youth and businesses within the village. A draft version of this Plan has been distributed to the Council's key contacts for comments.

The Plan describes the features and surroundings of Pembridge and expresses the residents' concerns regarding its appearance, economy and social community with the aim that future development and change will protect and enhance the special characteristics of the parish.

From the information within the Plan it can be seen that there are few planning related issues currently causing major concern within the village. This reflects the Conservation Area status and the relatively defined architectural style of the village. The main issue raised is that relating to traffic; the volume, speed and effects on the architectural heritage and rural ambience of the village. Once again, the need for affordable rented housing for young people was highlighted as one of the major housing issues. Actions and guidelines related to planning are contained on page 34 of the Plan. These conform with the emerging Unitary Development Plan.

### **Middleton on the Hill and Leysters Parish Plan**

9. The Middleton on the Hill and Leysters Parish Plan began in May 2002 and was subject to parish consultation via the parish magazine, a questionnaire, which returned 65% completed forms and public meetings. Drafts of this Plan have been to the Council's key contacts for comments to enable a final version which is now placed before Members.

The aim of the document is to identify measures by which the community aim to improve and enhance the quality of the built environment and to provide a mechanism to inform and influence the decisions of statutory bodies about community priorities and local needs.

Similarly, the main planning issues raised within the Parish Plan were affordable housing for young people and a wish to see any new development designed with a traditional style. The planning related elements of this Plan are contained on pages 8 and 9 and these are in conformity with the emerging Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT it be recommended to the Cabinet Member (Environment) that the planning elements of the Middleton on the Hill and Leysters, Pembridge and Border Group Parish Plans be adopted as interim Supplementary Planning Guidance as an expression of local distinctiveness and community participation.**

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Border Group Parish Plan.

Middleton-on-the-Hill and Leyster Parish Plan.

Pembridge Parish Plan.

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Further information on the subject of this report is available from S Banks on (01432) 260126