

WEOBLEY PARISH PLAN

Report By: Forward Planning Manager

Wards Affected

Golden Cross with Weobley

Purpose

To consider the Weobley Parish Plan for adoption as interim supplementary planning guidance to the emerging Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.

Background

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 components of Parish Plans as supplementary planning guidance.

Adoption by Herefordshire Council

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 Revised 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.

This Parish Plan is the seventh to be presented to Members for consideration as SPG.

The Weobley Parish Plan began in June 2003 with an open meeting that was attended by 10% of the village. This was the start of a project which involved over 2000 volunteer hours by 112 residents across a range of activities including a village survey with an 80% response rate, a childrens' event and an exhibition at the local carnival. The core of the plan is based on two surveys undertaken in October 2003 (residents survey) and February 2004 (youth survey). Drafts of the plan have been forwarded to the Council's key contacts, including forward planning to enable input and advice to be incorporated into the final version, which is now placed before members.

The Parish Plan highlights 3 key findings, namely:

1. The need to address traffic and parking issues
2. In order to sustain a healthy mixed community, more support to provide activities for young people is required
3. Future development needs to balance maintenance of the character of the village and a working local economy with the need for limited new housing for local young people.

Key recommendations are included within the Parish Plan on traffic and policing, planning, sports and leisure and trade and amenities. In terms of planning the parish plan recommends that development must be limited in nature and in keeping with the local character whilst protecting the commercial core. It supports the Unitary Development Plan settlement boundary and policies in relation to Weobley. It also promotes affordable homes for local people, especially the young and seeks to maintain a balanced sustainable community. The planning related elements are mainly found on pages 44 – 49 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 Weobley Parish Plan be adopted as interim Supplementary Planning Guidance as an expression of local distinctiveness and community participation.

Background paper

Weobley Parish Plan