

13 ALMELEY PARISH PLAN**Report By: Forward Planning Manager****Wards Affected**

Castle

Purpose

To consider the Almeley Parish Plan – Appendix 1 for adoption as further planning guidance to the emerging Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (UDP).

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 Villages Programme. They should address the needs of the entire community and everyone in the parish should have an opportunity to take part in their preparation. Local Planning Authorities are encouraged to adopt the planning components of Parish Plans as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 has recently come into force. It introduces a new system of development plans, which at local level will require Local Planning Authorities to replace UDP's (or local plans) with Local Development Frameworks (LDF's). Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's) will supplement policies and proposals in the LDF's and provide additional guidance to applicants and developers. Herefordshire Council is in the final stages of the production of the UDP. The next step will be to prepare a LDF in accordance with the requirements of the new Act. During this transitional period (UDP to LDF), Parish Plans are to be adopted as further planning guidance to the UDP, since old style Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) can no longer be formally adopted. The further planning guidance should, however, be afforded the same weight by both the Herefordshire Council and the Government's Planning Inspectors since they will be produced in the same way as former SPG's.

Adoption by Herefordshire Council

Parish Plans will not have any statutory powers. They will however be definitive statements about local character and issues. For a Parish Plan to be adopted as further planning guidance, 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 further 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 further planning guidance 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 further planning guidance 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 ninth to be presented to Members for consideration as further planning guidance (or SPG).

Almeley Parish Plan

The Almeley Parish Plan was initiated by the Parish Council and the Parish Plan Steering Group first met in May 2003. This group was set up to manage the process of producing the Almeley Parish Plan, which included the setting up of several suggestion boxes, the circulation of questionnaires, the gathering of other relevant local information and discussions at local meetings. The final version has been produced following consultations with the Herefordshire Council's key contacts and the Countryside Agency.

The purpose of the Almeley Parish Plan is:

- To set out the hopes and concerns of parishioners and proposals for meeting them over the next ten years;
- To guide the policies of the Parish Council in its work for the residents and in its dealings with outside bodies and individuals.

Appendix 1 of the Almeley Parish Plan (Guidance for Future Planning of the Parish) is the section of the plan submitted for adoption as further planning guidance by Herefordshire Council. Its purpose is to show how the policies of the Herefordshire UDP can best be applied to Almeley Parish.

This guidance first sets out the context of the Parish Plan guidance within the statutory planning system of Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands and the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan. It then goes on to discuss both the landscape and built form of Almeley parish and lists the UDP policies that are relevant. The desires of the parish for future development are set out for different parts of both Almeley village and other parts of the parish. These cover various aspects of development including housing, open spaces, landscape, design and community facilities. The appendix identifies the parish needs and provides a guide for future work and more detailed local information to guide planning decisions.

Appendix 1 of the Parish Plan conforms to the emerging UDP and contains sufficient detail to be used as material consideration in planning decisions and issues.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT It be recommended to the Cabinet Member (Environment) that the planning elements of the Almeley Parish Plan (in Appendix 1) be adopted as further planning guidance to the UDP and as an expression of local distinctiveness and community participation.

Background Paper

Almeley Parish Plan – Appendix 1