

**CHILD OKEFORD PARISH COUNCIL**

**ACTION PLAN -**  
**THE STRATEGY FOR**  
**IMPLEMENTING THE**  
**CHILD OKEFORD & HANFORD**  
**PARISH PLAN**

January 2005

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At a meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> December 2004, this Parish Council formally adopted the **Child Okeford & Hanford Parish Plan** (Plan/Parish Plan). In so doing it took on the responsibility for overseeing the implementation of its eight basic recommendations. This document sets out to detail the **Action Plan** this Parish Council will follow, in pursuing the objectives of the Plan.
- 1.2 The role of the Parish Council is clearly defined by statute, and a number of the recommendations fall outside its direct remit. Most notable among these are matters relating to housing, planning, highways, fund raising, etc. In such cases the Council will assume the role of **facilitator**, liaising with the various organisations and agencies involved.
- 1.3 In a number of matters such as providing affordable housing and employment, the Council will use its limited powers of influence and persuasion in an endeavour to achieve the stated objectives. In this respect it is, to a large extent, dependent upon outside influences and the 'wishes' of providers, which the Parish Council can only seek to encourage and support when appropriate. As far as planning matters are concerned, the Council's only statutory powers are those conferred on it by the Local Government Act 1972, which essentially requires that it is informed of all planning matters within its parish. It is all too evident from recent experience, that the Planning Authority does, on occasions, override the views of the Parish Council. Central Government policy plays an ever-increasing part in determining applications – a factor that is likely to increase rather than diminish over the coming years. A similar situation exists over highway matters, which are all too often frustrated and exacerbated by the lack of funds. It is against this background that the Parish Council seeks to carry forward the Parish Plan. It is determined to do everything it can within its limited powers, but the outcome on a number of important issues is beyond its direct control, and in such cases is at the discretion and policies of the higher authorities and agencies.
- 1.4 When the Steering Committee prepared the Plan it set a time scale, under recommendation 7, of ten years. In addition it also makes reference to population figures in 2050, the need to consult with the DCC by April 2005, and the need to produce a realistic plan for the Village Hall and Community Centre by the end of 2005. In pursuing the recommendations of the Plan the Parish Council sets a time scale of seven to ten years - probably on a decreasing exponential scale. During this period it will inevitably be necessary to update the Plan, to take account of what has been achieved by then, as well as the changing circumstances and aspirations of the populous.
- 1.5 The policies outlined in this document expressly relate to the parish of Child Okeford. This is ostensibly because Hanford is a separate community, having its own Parish Meeting. Under the impending Review of Town and Parish Boundaries, this Council has informed the District Council that – ***This Council would be amenable for the southern parish boundary to be extended to include the entire parish of Hanford. This would entitle their residents to be represented by a Parish Council, thereby availing themselves of a greater participation in local affairs, than is currently conferred on them by their Parish Meeting status.*** Thus, it may be considered inappropriate, at this time, for this Council to extend this Action Plan, in its entirety, to include

Hanford. However, it is recognised that there is a certain commonality of interests with our neighbours, and where they exist their support and co-operation will be actively encouraged and welcomed.

## **2.0 ACTION PLAN**

Each recommendation in the Parish Plan is considered separately.

### **2.1 *Recommendation 1 – The Parishes adopt a policy of modest and steady growth in the population of the parishes and that this message is conveyed to North Dorset District Council, Dorset County Council and Central Government.***

- a **Comment** - The vision is for a population of around 1750 by the year 2050. Page 29 of the Plan specifies a **steady** growth rate with a requirement for **affordable** housing both for the young and the elderly. The perceived requirement for future housing is detailed on page 6 of the Plan. This shows that 80% of residents support the need for **smaller** and **affordable** housing provided as **infill** development and **small estates**. Over 90% of residents were against large developments. This ensures that the community is expanded in a homogenous and gradual way, thereby preventing large sections from polarising into separate communities, which has happened elsewhere when large-scale estates have been built. Providing suitable housing is the precursor to achieving steady growth.
- b **Target** – To achieve a gradual and steady growth rate through the provision of smaller and affordable housing, commensurate with planned growth, to sustain and possibly expand the existing services and amenities and to ensure that the infrastructure is compatible with growth
- c **Action** – To support and actively encourage suitable applications for this type of development. To liaise with the NDDC with a view to having relative parts of the Plan adopted as planning policy.

### **2.2 *Recommendation 2 – The Parishes seek mixed development that retains the character of Child Okeford and Hanford and will encourage the type of local job creation residents are happy to see.***

- a **Comment** - The second paragraph on page 18 aptly summarises the basic requirements behind this recommendation. To a large extent the requirements of the first two recommendations are complementary. The action plan for encouraging appropriate housing has already been detailed under paragraph 2.1, and that for encouraging employment will follow the same basic approach. However, encouraging employment will inevitably be more difficult than obtaining houses. There is an inherent propensity for people to resist industrial development in close proximity to their homes. It will be very difficult to attract viable new businesses to the village. The Parish Council will support any suitable applications and will investigate the suitability of existing sites in the village and also the use of remote farm buildings that are surplus to agricultural needs.

- b **Target** – To achieve a gradual growth in job opportunities in the village.
- c **Action** – To support and actively encourage suitable applications for this type of development to create job opportunities.

2.3 **Recommendation 3 – The Parishes actively support the plans to develop the local pre-school facility.**

- a **Comment** - The Parish Council recognises the importance of this facility being provided, which will also be used for adult education, and will complement and augment the facilities provided at the Village Hall and Community Centre. It will support and assist the appropriate organisations and authorities in achieving this aim whenever possible.
- b **Target** – For the local pre-school facility to be built, equipped, staffed and become operational.
- c **Action** – To support the appropriate organisations and authorities in achieving this aim whenever appropriate.

2.4 **Recommendation 4 – A joint meeting of the Village Hall and Community Centre Committees together with the clubs and societies using these facilities should take place to determine the best solution for the parishes' longer term social and sporting needs. It is anticipated that the meeting will take the form of a task force representing all the interests and who's brief will be to produce a realistic plan for new community facilities by the end of 2005. The same task force can also review the responses from the residents and youth of the parishes to new clubs and societies and decide which of these can be accommodated.**

- a **Comment** - The requirements for developing the Village Hall and/or Community Centre are detailed on pages 12 and 13 of the Plan, with over 80% of residents supporting some form of change. Because of the extent to which both venues are used and the inordinately high costs involved, it is difficult to foresee how the views of 20% of the respondents can be met, by providing a new building to replace both the existing ones. However, this will be a matter for the Task Force to address. The Parish Council, being a village organisation, would be represented and in addition it may be necessary for it to play some form of overseeing role, in procedural terms, to report back regularly to the Council. The recommendation does not address who should carry forward the Plan once it is formulated but, presumably, this would be a function for the existing Management Committees, who, it is hoped, would play a proactive role throughout the whole process.
- b **Target** – To set up a Task Force to address all matters relating to the Village Hall and Community Centre as contained in the Parish Plan.
- c **Action** – To enlist the co-operation of the two existing Management Committees prior to sending out invitations to all village organisations and to convene the inaugural meeting.

2.5 **Recommendation 5 – The Parish Council should develop a plan with Dorset County Council for solving the residents’ concerns about traffic in Child Okeford. The Plan, and its funding, needs to be agreed by the end of April 2005 with Dorset County Council when it can form part of the County Council’s new Local Transport Plan.**

- a **Comment** - This section is extensively addressed in the Parish Plan and extends from page 21 to 31 inclusive. To be compliant with the stipulated time scale, this matter must be given absolute priority. The Plan recognises that these measures can only be implemented with the full co-operation of the County Council, to whom the responsibility falls for all highway matters in and around the parish. It would be advantageous to enlist the assistance of any recognised local expert(s) in pursuing these aims.
- b **Target** – To enlist the full co-operation of the DCC in incorporating all the required improvements in its new Local Transport Plan.
- c **Action** – To establish an early dialogue with the County Council, with a view to achieving the aims of the Parish Plan.

2.6 **Recommendation 6 – As a continuing action the Parishes need to monitor the public transport services provided to the parishes and be active in encouraging car sharing, the use of taxis – if necessary with subsidies, and the continuation and development of the NORDCAT scheme, especially for those without access to a car.**

- a **Comment** - This item is addressed on pages 31 of the Parish Plan.
- b **Target** – To appoint a Village Transport Co-ordinator, who is familiar with the public transport systems serving Child Okeford.
- c **Action** – To advertise and actively encourage a suitable person to take on this vital role.

2.7 **Recommendation 7 – The Child Okeford Parish Council form a special ‘Funding Committee’ to establish how the necessary funds can be collected and managed for ensuring the successful completion of these projects over the next ten years.**

- a **Comment** - The Parish Council is generally not permitted to generate revenue through fund raising events. There are, however, grants available for projects identified in Parish Plans through the Community Action Fund for Dorset, that this Council will actively pursue. The amount of funding stated on page 33 of the Plan is forbidding. In reality, the funding of the Pre-school facility is already in hand, but its success is largely dependent upon outside grant aid. If the traffic measures are incorporated in the County Council’s Plan, the cost may well fall to their account. However, it must be appreciated that their funds are also very limited and have to be applied to give the *best returns* in terms of reducing fatalities. Preliminary investigations with the DCC indicate that locally generated funding would be welcome, provided it forms a very substantial part of the scheme. Any improvements to the Village Hall and Community Centre would doubtless have to be predominately funded by the villagers, but the viability of all such schemes will inevitably be dependent upon securing suitable grant

aid. To do this will probably mean a minimum 5% qualifying contribution from the Parish Council.

- b **Target** – To set up a village based fund raising committee and to accurately cost all schemes proposed.
- c **Action** – To set up a suitable fund raising committee and to convene its inaugural meeting. To actively pursue available grant funding. To financially support suitable schemes as necessary.

2.8 **Recommendation 8 – Child Okeford Parish Council should take on the responsibility of carrying forward this Parish Plan and should regularly monitor the progress against the recommendations that have been made.**

- a **Comment** - This document, in itself, is the first step in carrying forward the Parish Plan. The success in meeting the 7 – 10 years target date is, in many respects, beyond the actual control and direct responsibility of the Parish Council. It is also dependent, to no small extent, upon the good will and generosity of the parishioners. Notwithstanding this situation, the Parish Council will use its best endeavours to carry the plan forward for the benefits of the villagers.
- b **Target** – To implement, wherever possible, the full recommendations of the Parish Plan within a time scale of 7–10 years.
- c **Action** – To take all reasonable steps, as previously set out in this document, against individual recommendations. Moreover, the Council will review progress annually and change/adapt its strategy to suit as and when necessary. It will report progress annually at the Annual Parish Meeting and at as such other times as is deemed appropriate.

### **3.0 PROCEDURE & PRIORITIES**

The following are the initial steps to be taken:

- 3.1 Distribute the Parish Plan.
- 3.2 Enlist the support and co-operation of the Hanford Parish Meeting.
- 3.3 Open discussions with the DCC on Recommendation 5.
- 3.4 Open discussions with NDDC on planning policy. Mr Fagan, the Development Control Manager, has accepted an invitation to attend a Special Council Meeting to be held in the Community Centre on Monday the 31 01 05 at 7-30 pm.
- 3.5 Contact the Village Hall and Community Centre Management Committees, enlisting their co-operation in implementing the Parish Plan. (Council may also wish to consider inviting other persons, with fund raising experience, to join the team)

- 3.6 Send out invitations to village based organisations and societies, with a view to setting up a Task Force and Fund Raising Committee.
- 3.7 Appoint a Village Transport Co-ordinator.
- 3.8 Enlist the help of SturQuest and other interested agencies.

#### **4.0 DISTRIBUTION**

- 4.1 The Parish Plan was provisionally distributed by the Steering Committee to those persons listed on Appendix No 1.
- 4.2 It is suggested that the Parish Plan together with this document are distributed to the following persons:

- a **Village Organisations**

- Community Centre
- Village Hall
- The Hill
- St Nicholas PCC
- St Nicholas School Governors
- St Nicholas PTA
- Child Okeford Pre School
- Babies & Toddlers
- Homewatch
- Badminton Club
- Brownies
- Cricket Club
- Floral Group
- Football Club
- Gardener's Club
- Okeford Minstrals
- St Nicholas Wives' Group
- Sequence Dancing
- Short Mat Bowls
- Table Tennis
- Women's Institute
- Youth Club

- b **Village Businesses**

- The Surgery
- Post Office
- Cross Stores
- Bakers Arms
- The Saxon Inn
- The Oasis Health & Beauty Centre
- Oasis Plant Centre
- Hardy's Terracotta Pots
- The Green House
- Lucy Campbell Flowers
- St Nicholas School

- c **North Dorset District Council:**  
 Liz Goodall – Chief Executive  
 Joyce Guest – General Manager (Community Services)  
 Janet Rees – General Manager (Policy & Performance)  
 Kevin Morris – Policy Manager (Conservation & design)  
 Gill Smith – Policy Manager (Parish Plans)  
 Hiliary White – Policy Manager (Rural Economy)  
 Nick Fagan – Development Control Manager  
 Frank Spencer – District Councillor  
 Mike Oliver – Chairman of the Council  
 Bill Batty-Smith – Chairman Dev Control Committee
- d **Dorset County Council**  
 David Jenkins – Chief Executive  
 Mike White – Head of Highways & Transportation  
 Andrew Price – Head of Planning  
 Charles Cordy – Head of Policy  
 Patrica Neimer – Chief Executive’s Dept  
 Stephen Howard – Team Leader, Traffic Section  
 Angus Campbell – County Councillor
- e **SturQuest**  
 Mike Chapman
- f **DCA**  
 Jane Raimes – Chief Executive  
 Lois Rose – Village & Community Halls Advisor  
 Natelie Murray – Rural Housing Enabler  
 Hugh de-longh – Development Community Worker
- g **Other Interested Parties**  
 Andrew Riggs – Chairman of Hanford Parish Meeting  
 Malcolm Allen – Steering Committee COHPP  
 Richard Adkins – Steering Committee COHPP  
 Robin Bucknall – Steering Committee COHPP  
 Nikki Hooker – Steering Committee COHPP  
 Lavinia Phillips - Steering Committee COHPP  
 John Wootton - Steering Committee COHPP  
 Robert Walters – MP  
 David Webb – Chief Executive of DAPTC

**5.0 CONTACT DETAILS**

5.1 This document is issued by the Child Okeford Parish Council, who may be contacted through their Clerk as follows:

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This document was approved by the Child Okeford Parish Council at a meeting held on the 10<sup>th</sup> January 2005 ..... Presiding Chairman.