

Dear Parish Councillor

About a year ago we were all made aware of the Local Development Framework (LDF) as published by Bassetlaw District Council. I am sure you know that this is a legal document which Bassetlaw, as the local planning authority, has to produce on a 16 year cycle as part of its Core Strategy. You may not know that this document is still in the process of finalisation by BDC and this final version will be put out to consultation in November before being ratified by BDC early in 2013.

In late 2011 the then Parish Council hosted a presentation by BDC of the LDF. After this presentation a number of villagers who had attended then talked at length with the two BDC officers who had given the presentation. It came out in this discussion that the village could have a greater input into the LDF strategic planning process by drawing up a Village Plan or Village Design Statement. When I returned to the Parish Council Meeting I put this point to the Parish Councillors. It was very quickly decided that, due to the election due the following May, there should be no move towards these planning strategies.

With a new Parish Council I, as a village resident, would suggest that it is now time to consider the development of a Planning Strategy for the village. As a village we should take the lead in deciding what we want here rather than relying on BDC officers to decide for us, it is, after all, our village! This Planning Strategy need not be led by the Parish Council but, as elected representatives, there does need to be an involvement from the Parish Council. Indeed, my understanding is that it is preferable that it is villagers, not Parish Councillors, who undertake the process. Further to this it is actually a requirement that all village residents are consulted as a starting point for any Plan produced as a result of the process.

The process is not an easy one but BDC Planners would advise and have already said to me that they would be quite happy to talk to a village group which may be interested in developing a Plan. I am sure that a representative of one of the villages which has already produced such a Plan (there are only four in Bassetlaw) could also be persuaded to talk to any meeting the village may hold.

In addition to this, a number of very local villages are just beginning the process of village planning. These include The Levertons, Sturton le Steeple and the Wheatleys who are hoping to produce a single plan and Hayton – surely an opportunity to cooperate here! There should be no need for all these groups to “re-invent the wheel” every time.

I will be raising this matter at the Public Session of the next Parish Council Meeting on 22 October 2012 and would be prepared to organise and publicise such a meeting for those village residents who may be interested in being involved.

I would ask you, as a Parish Councillor, to support this idea at least to the point of an information meeting with BDC.

Yours sincerely

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