**Birdingbury Neighbourhood Development Plan – Report to Village Meeting 24.14.18**

At the Village Meeting last year the decision was made to investigate the appropriateness of Birdingbury producing a Neighbourhood Development Plan. Five people volunteered to initiate this investigation: Ian Tipton, Jackie Morton, Chris Morton, Lee Sidaway (later withdrew) and Lesley Fleming.

As part of the investigation, the following activities took place:

* Ian’s attendance a conference run by Avon Planning Service to gain greater insight into the concept, requirements and process of NDP
* A review of publications from the Government, local authority and other relevant bodies (eg CPRE)
* Contact with and research into the experience and plans of other communities
* An open presentation to the Village on 5th September outlining what a NDP is, why consider making one, the pros and cons, and the process. This was attended by around 40 people.
* An invitation for residents to contribute via the completion of ‘Mood Cards’. These gave people the opportunity to express their views on what they liked / disliked about the village and what they would like to see more / less of in the future. 49 cards were competed with 39 in favour of continuing the process. The results were analysed and fed back.
* A call for further volunteers, with 18 people expressing willingness to contribute to the process. These people formed a working group to continue the investigation, determine the way forward and make a recommendation.
* Four subsequent meetings of the working group
* The formation of a sub team of ‘fact holders’ to pursue matters with RBC (Ian, Chris and Barrie)
* Consultation meeting with RBC Planning Team Representative (Sophie Leaning, Senior Planner, Development Strategy Team)
* Information relating to the investigation continually communicated via the Village Website, Birdsong and distributed flyers

Conclusions:

Following the above, and a meeting with the Senior Planner for Rugby Borough Council, the following conclusions have been drawn:

* Birdingbury is well protected from significant development:
  + Under RBC’s Local Plan Birdingbury is designated as a rural village. There are no allocated housing sites in Birdingbury as rural villages are not contributing to RBC’s strategy although development will be allowed within the village envelope, including conversion of existing buildings. The Local Plan is due for adoption in 2018 and will run until 2030. It is not due for revision before 2025
  + The Leam Valley flood plain and green corridor form physical boundaries around the parish
  + Development of green field sites outside the village envelop would be difficult: two potential sites adjacent to the envelop have recently been refused on grounds of insufficient access / sustainability
* A Neighbourhood Development Plan is not currently the right vehicle to meet the Village’s aspirations:
  + RBC Local Plan is complete and nearing ratification – there is no need
  + There are no sites being brought forward which would be the basis for a plan: commercial sites could only be considered if there were no proven demand for continued employment use
  + Development outside the village boundary could be through the National Policy Planning Framework but RBC’s position is such that any development would need to be for affordable housing that met an identified need. A NDP would not protect against this and no such need has been established.
  + It would not prevent infill within the village envelop or conversions of existing buildings
  + There is no current identified need for future development, as distinct from the current established desire to preserve / enhance the prevailing state
* The Parish Plan produced in 2009 is out of date and as such hold little authority

Recommendations

* Not to pursue the route of NDP at present but to reconsider in 2025
* Refresh the Parish Plan:
  + Update 2009 action plan
  + Restate / revise statements regarding housing
  + Reconsider its scope, content
  + Form a new working group

Finally:

* Communications and consultation worked well in engaging residents
* The working group was representative of a good cross section of residents
* Participation and interest has been sustained with everyone working well together and learning from the experience
* The group proposes including a summary of the above for the next edition of Birdsong
* (My personal thanks to the team)