

Beaundesert and Henley-in-Arden
Joint Parish Council

Strategic Planning
for the implementation of the Parish Plan 2004

Our Vision

We wish Henley to be recognised as an attractive market town with clearly visible medieval origins surrounded by lovely countryside and with residents that feel satisfied with the local services provided

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18 April 05

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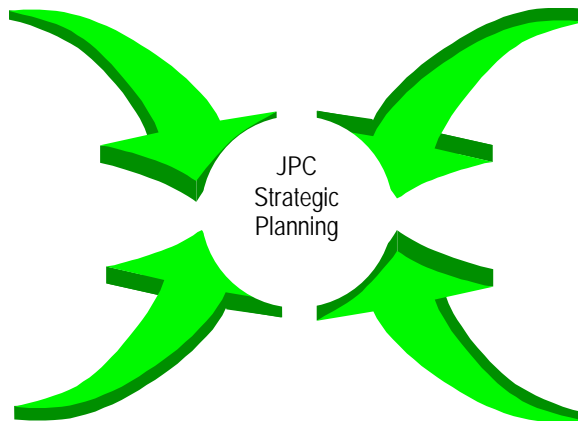
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Vision
&
Mission

Community
Expectations

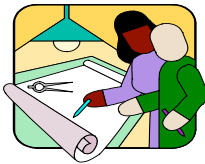


Parish Plan
Objectives and
Key Tasks

Implementation
Of Strategy

1. Introduction

Any report whether it refers to a plan, strategy or system is in essence just words. It only becomes useful when it is actually implemented, put into practice and becomes a reality. The purpose of this project is to prepare an executable plan in order to implement the Parish Plan and make it a reality. Any implementation requires certain prerequisites to exist.



Firstly, we need to have a clear understanding of the existing situation in all its facets i.e. aims, workloads, structure, systems, capabilities, timetables, strengths, weaknesses etc that may be affected by the implementation of new arrangements. (See Strategic Analysis – Section 2).



Secondly, we need a specification to tell us in some detail what we are going to implement, the objectives that we are to achieve and the key tasks to carry out. In our case the specification is the Parish Plan and its break down into objectives and key tasks. (See Strategic Choice – Section 3).



Thirdly, we need to know how we are going to implement the contents of the specification and what changes need to be made to the existing situation. (See Strategic Implementation – Section 4).



Finally, 3 to 6 months after implementation a review takes place. The aim is to check that the new arrangements operate as expected and if necessary to make appropriate adjustments for improvements. This part is not covered in this report as it would be premature to do so.

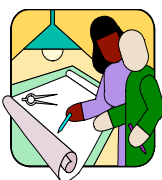
Terms of Reference

At the Parish Council meeting on 15 October 2004, JPC approved the following motion:

To analyse the Parish Plan 2004 in order to:

- Break down the requirements and Action Plan into specific objectives.
- Specify how the objectives are to be achieved.
- Ensure that the overall strategic plan is coherent.
- Propose a Strategic Plan for 2005 including priorities.

An additional important aim of this project is to provide guidelines where possible outlining the areas that need attention for obtaining the Quality Parish status. A sub committee was set up to carry out the above project consisting of Cllrs George Matheou, Gerrie Bruce and Sylvia Doyle. This report is the outcome of the work of the sub- committee.



2. Strategic Analysis - the existing position

What Vision do we have for Henley? A rational answer would be:

Vision

'We wish Henley to be recognised as an attractive market town with clearly visible medieval origins surrounded by lovely countryside and with residents that feel satisfied with the local services provided'.

If we accept the above vision statement to be fair and acceptable then the next question to ask is what is the Parish Council here to do in relation to our vision for Henley? i.e. what is the mission of JPC? We can articulate the answer as:

Mission

'to safeguard and enhance the environment of the town, continuously to improve the quality of life of its residents and to promote business and employment in the Parish'.

Everything that JPC does within its sphere of responsibility, authority and influence must be geared to make the vision for Henley a reality and to achieve its mission as a Parish Council.

Consultation with residents

Through the process of consultation the community of Henley outlined their expectations of JPC and these are shown as ACTIONS in the Parish Plan. JPC quite correctly has taken the requirements of the residents seriously and through this project is trying to assess how precisely it should go about to fulfil these expectations. However, a note of caution. Changes in economic/political environment, social tastes, fashion, technology, security and safety, influence perception and expectations. Consequently, *JPC must adopt information systems and internet technology that will allow it to maintain consultation and communication with the community on a frequent basis (This would also satisfy Quality Criteria Test No. 4). Furthermore, the same technology can be used to improve communications with other organisations and assist in marketing the Town and attract tourism.*

Resources and Capabilities



Finance: JPC receives its income from precept. The total amount is in five figures. The budget for 2005 is very tight leaving little room for manoeuvre.



Personnel: JPC consists of 12 Councillors and one part-time Parish Clerk. 11 of the Councillors have gone through the process of election giving JPC a strong electoral mandate. *(This would also satisfy Quality Criteria Test No. 1).*

The theoretical workload of a Councillor can be summarised as:

Volume of work = (Preparation for Parish Meetings + Parish meetings + work on sub-committees + time spent representing JPC on other bodies + work on special projects + communication with residents and other organisations).

All Councillors are volunteers whose aim is to serve the community. It is left up to individuals to decide the amount of time that they can give to JPC work.

The advantage of the existing arrangements is that Councillor manpower is provided free to the taxpayer. The disadvantage is that it is difficult to manage a resource that is based entirely on goodwill.

The Parish Clerk is employed by the Parish Council and as such there are legal as well as good employer obligations for JPC to fulfil.

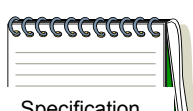
The workload of the Clerk can be summarised as:

Volume of work = (Run and manage the JPC office + provide the official contact for the Council + communicate with residents, local business, suppliers, other Councils, + carry out all official correspondence, + organise JPC meetings and some sub-committees, + prepare Agendas and Minutes, + advise JPC on rules and procedures, + prepare financial spreadsheets + prepare procurement contracts).

The total effort for the above has never been measured. The guidelines that do exist are highly questionable both in accuracy and with the fact that they do not differentiate between very active Parish Councils such as JPC and Councils that are not very active. Clearly, as a minimum JPC should:

- *Support our Parish Clerk with Office Technology and appropriate software.*
- *Provide training in all aspects of the job and support the clerk to gain qualifications in Local Council Administration (This would also satisfy Quality Criteria Test No. 2).*
- *Give administrative assistance when it is required.*
- *A contingency plan should also be prepared in the event the equipment, files and data are lost due to a catastrophic condition or theft.*

The Parish Clerk at present is working alone in a building that is locked for six months every year. We find this to be an undesirable working condition. Also, it should be noted that no cover is provided when the Parish Clerk is absent due to holidays, training or sickness.



The ACTIONS of the Parish Plan are divided into seven categories i.e.

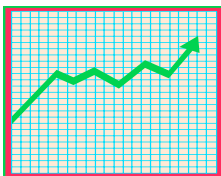
1. Planning the environment and the use of land, 2. Employment and business, 3. Security and Safety, 4. Public Transport, 5. Education, Sport and leisure, 6. Specific high-profile issues and 7. Information: monitoring and reporting to the community. In this section for each category we shall identify a number of objectives and key tasks that need to be achieved.



Planning the environment and the use of land

Aim of Policy: To preserve and improve the pleasant, green and healthy environment of our Parish.

Objectives	Key Tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We shall preserve Henley's character as a historic market town with clearly visible medieval origins. • We shall preserve, enhance and protect the countryside of the Parish. • We shall work with the District Council to ensure that pollution (chemical, noise, light, waste) in the town is strictly monitored and controlled. • We shall endeavour to ensure that a full range of services, (Medical, Emergency agencies, Transport, Waste Management etc) are available to the Town. • Any future developments should be need driven. We shall support the provision of affordable housing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We shall protect Henley's architectural and historic character. • We shall maintain our green belt and shall resist attempts to erode it by not supporting planning applications that infringe upon it. • We shall ensure that any new developments and/or architectural modifications and/or sign notices receiving consent will provide benefits to the town and shall meet the criteria of the Village Design Statement in terms of style, colour, height, density etc. Failure of the above requirements would result in not giving consent. • We shall establish a regular dialogue on planning matters with the District Council's Planning Department. • We shall take a holistic view of the local area and shall resist development pressures from the expansion of Birmingham to the South and from filling the gaps between Henley and Wootton Wawen and other local towns/villages. • We shall ask the appropriate local authority department to check the high noise level of traffic on the High Street that is caused mainly by uneven and rough road surface. We shall ask for the resurfacing of High Street. • Light pollution is expensive in electricity as well as a nuisance. We shall discuss with the appropriate local authority department how we can reduce light pollution in Henley without affecting security. • In any future housing developments we shall encourage and look for the provision of a proportion of houses to be suitable for first time buyers.



Employment and Business

Aim of Policy: No town can exist without a viable economy and employment. We aim to support and promote wealth generation in Henley.

Objectives	Key Tasks
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We shall oppose the release of employment sites

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We shall engage with bodies such as the Warwickshire Investment Partnership and other organisations such as the Tourism Officer of Warwickshire County Council and District Councils in order to establish a coherent strategy for promoting Henley for Business and Tourism. • We shall support and encourage local business. 	<p>for other uses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We shall work with local businesses and other organisations to promote Henley for Business. • We shall support the retention and improvement of the Henley Market on its present site. • We shall support the provision of the infrastructure needed to assist commercially the town. e.g. Transport facilities, improving the Railway station, promote and develop facilities that attract visitors to Henley. • We shall support the local education establishments to provide a skilled workforce to meet the needs of the town. • We shall support the development of the 'Abrasive' site for employment purposes. • We shall support community activities that enhance the attractiveness of the town and promote tourism. • We shall establish a regular dialogue with the Warwickshire Investment Partnership and Tourism Office.
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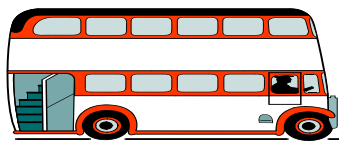
Security and Safety

Aim of policy: To maintain Law and Order in the Parish.

Objectives	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We shall establish a regular dialogue and partnership with the Police on all matters that affect the Town. • We shall support a zero-tolerance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We shall work with the police on matters of law and order affecting Henley. • JCP will have the agreement of the Police if they wish: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To inform the residents by distributing leaflets or by other means stating that the Police will take

<p>policy to reduce the level of crime and anti-social behaviour in the town.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We shall support action against illegal parking. • We shall support speed restriction on the High Street. • We shall support measures to reduce the threat of flooding. 	<p>action against antisocial behaviour. If the culprits are underage their parents/guardians will be held responsible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The public can take photographs discreetly of cars parked illegally. The date and time the photo was taken should be shown clearly. The photographs should be sent to the Police Station at Henley. The Police will take appropriate action. ▪ The Police will take measures to control the speed of vehicles on the High Street. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In principle we shall support the installation of CCTV on the High street. • In principle we shall support security measures such as closed circuit TV taken by businesses to safeguard against crime. • In principle we shall support the Neighbourhood Watch scheme. • In principle we shall support the re-development of Henley Railway Station that would include the installation of CCTV with the aim to reduce vandalism in that area.
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Note: The above were discussed and agreed with the Police at Henley Police Station on 25 March 05. Measures have already been taken to increase Police presence in Henley.



Public Transport

Aim of Policy: To promote the provision of transport facilities for commuters, residents and businesses.

Objectives	Key Tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We shall assess transport needs and take steps to meet them taking note of the needs of commuters, elderly, the disabled and the young people. • We shall ensure that the infrastructure of the Railway Station in Henley is substantially improved and the railway services are enhanced. • We shall endeavour to maintain existing transport facilities and seek to improve them where appropriate to match demand. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We shall consult with transport providers and ensure service levels match demand. • We shall support the enhancement of Railway services. • We shall support local Taxi firms that accept tokens. • We shall establish a partnership with transport operators to review periodically the level of services provided vs. requirements. • We shall promote the use of a local 'dial-a-bus' scheme. • We shall seek advice and help from experts on Transport matters at County and District Councils.



Education, sport and leisure

Aim of policy: To promote both mental and physical education and training.



Objectives	Key Tasks
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We shall encourage individual learning at all ages. • We shall support our local college and schools. • We shall encourage and support funding for sports and leisure facilities in the town where there is a definite need for such facilities and strong indication that local people will use them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We shall regularly advertise all the sports facilities available in the town. • We shall review facilities for quality and utilisation. • We shall review available facilities against new requirements. • We shall establish a dialogue with the Head of Leisure and Local Economy at the District Council to encourage local access to Warwickshire College and High School facilities.
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Specific high-profile projects

Aim of policy:

Periodically the Council has to undertake projects that arise from specific issues e.g. the Parish Plan, this Strategic Plan and The Feasibility Study for the Railway Station

Objectives	Key Tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We shall work with other appropriate organisations to encourage the refurbishment / redevelopment of the Railway Station. • We shall implement the JPC Strategic Plan for Henley. • We shall obtain a Quality Council status. • We shall enhance the Office Technology used by the Parish Clerk. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We shall implement the recommendations of the Feasibility Study on the Railway Station. • We shall implement the recommendations of this strategic plan. • We shall review and reorganise JPC's Committee structure to reflect the Policy Areas of the Parish Plan. • We shall create a new project for installing improved Office Technology for the Parish Office including a web site. • We shall undertake the steps required for the accreditation process, pass the quality criteria tests and will obtain a Quality status for the Parish Council.



Communication and Information:

Aim of policy:

To communicate effectively with the local community and other organisations for the benefit of the town.

Objectives	Key Tasks
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We shall provide electronic access to the work of the JPC and promote our town.. 2. We shall maintain the production and home delivery of the Parish Council Newsletter. 3. We shall use technological as well as administrative means to communicate, consult, and actively involve the community and local organisations in the issues affecting the town. We shall encourage the local community to articulate their needs and priorities. 4. We shall produce a JPC Annual report in May/June. <p><i>(Numbers 3, 4 and 5 above would also satisfy Quality Criteria Tests No. 4 and 5).</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We shall develop an Internet service (website) which will explain what we are trying to do, the status of our projects, our successes and failures and promote our town for tourism, business and employment. • We shall train the Parish Clerk on the new technology. • We shall continuously encourage the Public to participate in the town's activities and to give us their views on matters that affect Henley. • We shall produce an Annual report with the following structure: List of Council members and offices, contact details, annual accounts, a summary by the chairman outlining last years JPC work and achievements, failures, issues outstanding, next year's manifesto.

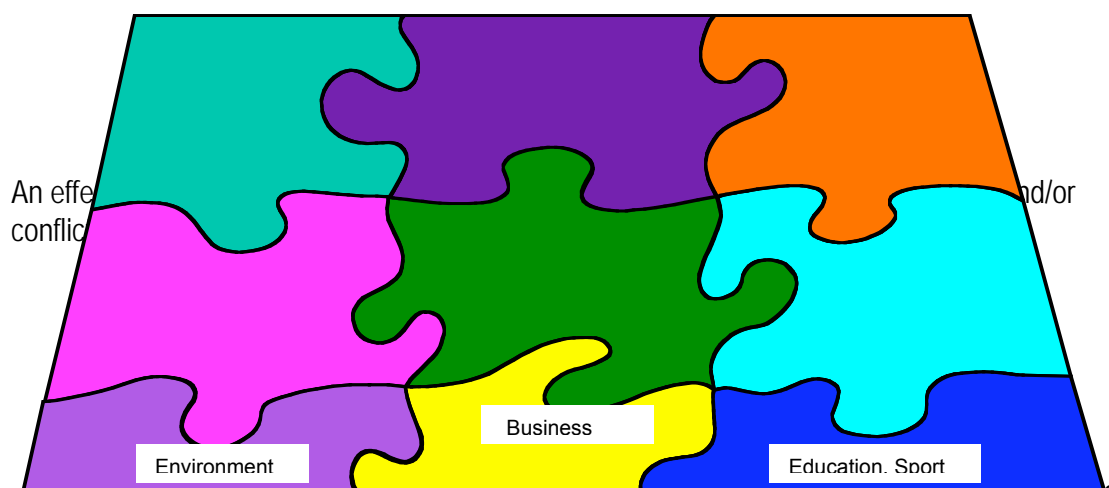
In addition to the above there are two internal JPC functional processes which must be included in the Strategic Plan if it is to be implemented successfully.



First, is the Finance function which is an essential process. It involves the preparation of budgets, accounting for income and expenditure, budgetary control, and safeguarding JPC's assets. *(Maintaining accurate and transparent financial records and accounts would also satisfy Quality Criteria Test No. 6)*



The second process involves the Administration of JPC that is also an essential activity and encompasses all the work of the Parish Clerk.



An examination of objectives and Key Tasks within each policy area shows that there are strong connections and interfaces between some objectives/Key Tasks. For example, Office Administration affects Communication equally lack of Policing affects Security. *For this reason it is important to examine decision making holistically considering the effects of decisions on all policy areas of the Parish Plan.*

Projects

Finance

Administration



4. Strategy Implementation

There are five elements to consider in implementing the proposed strategy.

1. WHAT are we going to implement? Answer: the Policy Areas, Objectives and Key Tasks outlined in Section 3 Strategic Choice.
2. WHY do we wish to implement the strategies? Answer: Because the residents of Henley have asked us to implement them via the Parish Plan, JPC has approved the Plan and the principal authorities have accepted it.
3. WHO is going to do it? Answer: the Councillors, the Council's Clerk and the sub-contractors that we use.
4. HOW is it going to be done? See below.
5. WHEN is it going to be implemented? See the Planning Cycle of Implementation below.

HOW is it going to be done?

If the Parish Plan is not going to become yet another filed report that is occasionally referred to, then it has to become an active process. Therefore, it follows that with the exception of the JPC meetings, the Policy Areas, Objectives and Key Tasks outlined in Section 3 should provide the main headings and the main focus of the work of JPC.

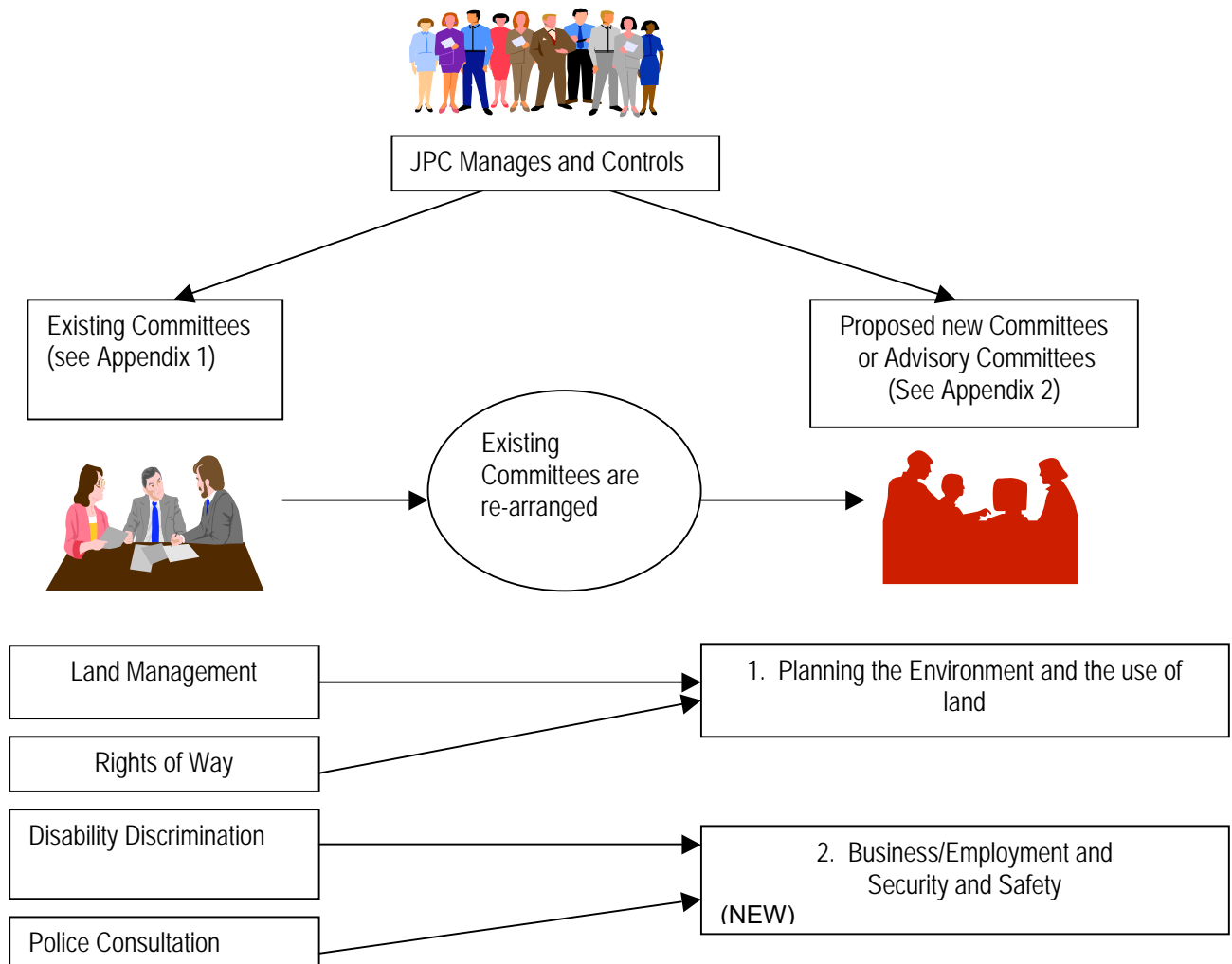


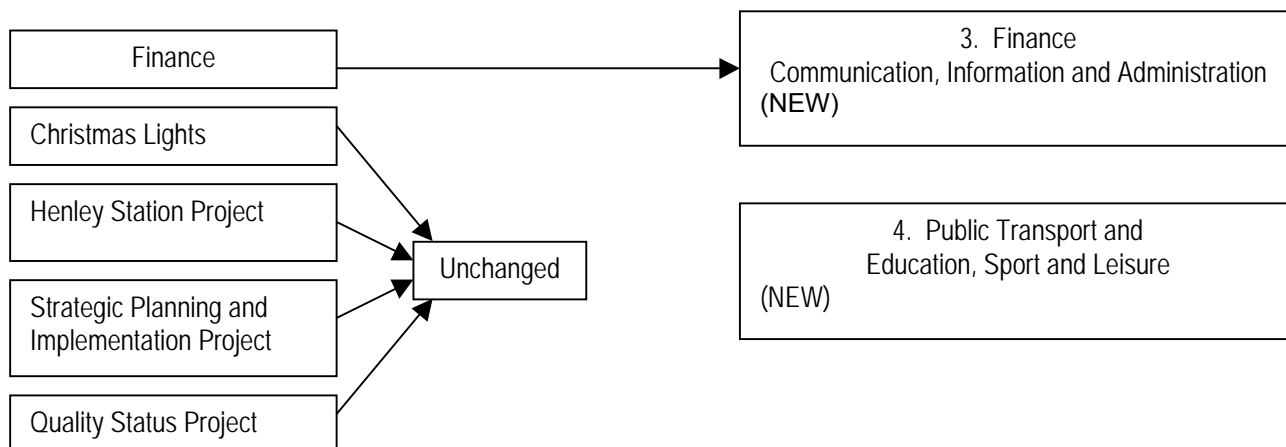
Organisational arrangements – Committees

We recognise that the existing committees are valuable and contribute effectively to the community and affairs of JPC.

Furthermore, we accept that the formation of a committee helps to share the workload of JPC, creates experience and expertise and motivates Councillors to work with a unity of purpose. For this reason we would recommend that we implement the Strategic Plan by building on and developing further the existing concept so that a new generation of Committees is created to reflect the needs of the Parish Plan and consequently also the expectations of the community.

An example of how such a re-arrangement of Committees can take place is shown below:





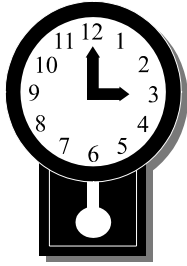
It should be noted that the Parish Plan identifies some key areas for JPC for which no formal dedicated work is currently carried out at Committee or Sub-committee level e.g. Employment and Business, Security and Safety, Public Transport, Education, Sport and Leisure.

Proposed Committee Structure

Appendix 2 outlines a proposal for allocating Councillors to specific Committees. This allocation is obviously open to discussion but the key point is to observe the following principles:

- ❑ Each Policy Area of the Parish Plan must be supported by a number of Councillors.
- ❑ A Councillor must take the role of a Team Leader for each Committee.
- ❑ Each Committee should produce a 2005 plan for achieving the objectives/key tasks for their area of responsibility. A progress report must be submitted to the Parish Council on a three monthly basis.
- ❑ The Committee should have sufficient delegated power and authority to undertake their duties. However, the full Council must approve their major recommendations.
- ❑ It must be understood that all Councillors will have to commit some of their time to one or more of the new committees.
- ❑ A Committee in certain circumstances may include members who are not Councillors as is the case with the current Rights of Way Committee.
- ❑ Committees should use the facilities and advice that is available by the Principal Authorities (County Council and District Council).
- ❑ Not all members of a Committee need to be present for a meeting to take place.

The Planning Cycle of Implementation

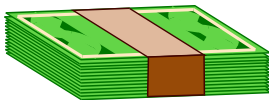


In terms of planning cycle and implementation timetable we suggest the following for consideration:

All Committees shall:

- ❑ Adopt the same annual cycle as the Finance Committee i.e. April–March.
- ❑ In October/November submit to the Finance Committee any expenditure plans for the following year. (Before the budget is finalised).
- ❑ By March produce an annual report for JPC stating what they have achieved in the current year and what they plan to do next year.

Finance Committee



In December shall submit to JPC for approval the budget for the following year.



In March/April shall prepare the JPC Annual Report for approval. (Suggested Contents: The names and contact details of the Councillors and Parish Clerk; a summary report by the Chairman stating the main events of the previous year, achievements/failures, a 5-10 point manifesto for next year and a summary of last year's Accounts). The Annual Report will be made available to Principle Authorities, Library, JPC Office, and JPC Web site. The Chairman's summary should also be circulated through the JPC Newsletter.



In March shall amalgamate all individual Committee plans and produce one JPC plan for the following year as shown in Appendix 3.

The Plan for 2005

A proposed plan for the work of JPC for 2005 is shown in Appendix 3. This plan will need to be updated in due course with the new Committees' detailed plans when they are ready. The plan excludes the work for the formal JPC's meetings that will take place as per the published timetable or any unforeseen work that derives from these meetings. *(Note our current arrangements for Council meetings would satisfy Quality Criteria Test No. 3)*



5. Recommendations

1. JPC approves the Vision and Mission statements as outlined on Page 4.
2. JPC approves the objectives and key tasks outlined in Section 3 – Strategic Choice (Pages 6-10).
3. JPC to approve that the existing Committees should be re-arranged to reflect the needs of the Parish Plan (Page 13-14).
4. JPC to adopt systems and technology that would improve communications with residents, principal authorities, businesses, suppliers, and would also market the Town for Tourism. Business and Employment. (Page 4)
5. JPC is a very active Parish Council with an Administrative workload that is substantial and has never been measured. We suggest that JPC:

- Support our Parish Clerk with Office Technology and appropriate software.
 - Facilitate and support training in all aspects of the job.
 - Provide administrative assistance when it is required.
 - A contingency plan should also be prepared in the event the equipment, files and data are lost due to a catastrophic condition or theft.
 - Examine the working conditions of the Parish Clerk.
 - Ensure that cover is arranged when the Clerk is absent due to holidays, training or sickness.
6. JPC approves the Planning cycle of Implementation (Pages 14-15) and the format of the Annual Plan as shown in Appendix 3.