

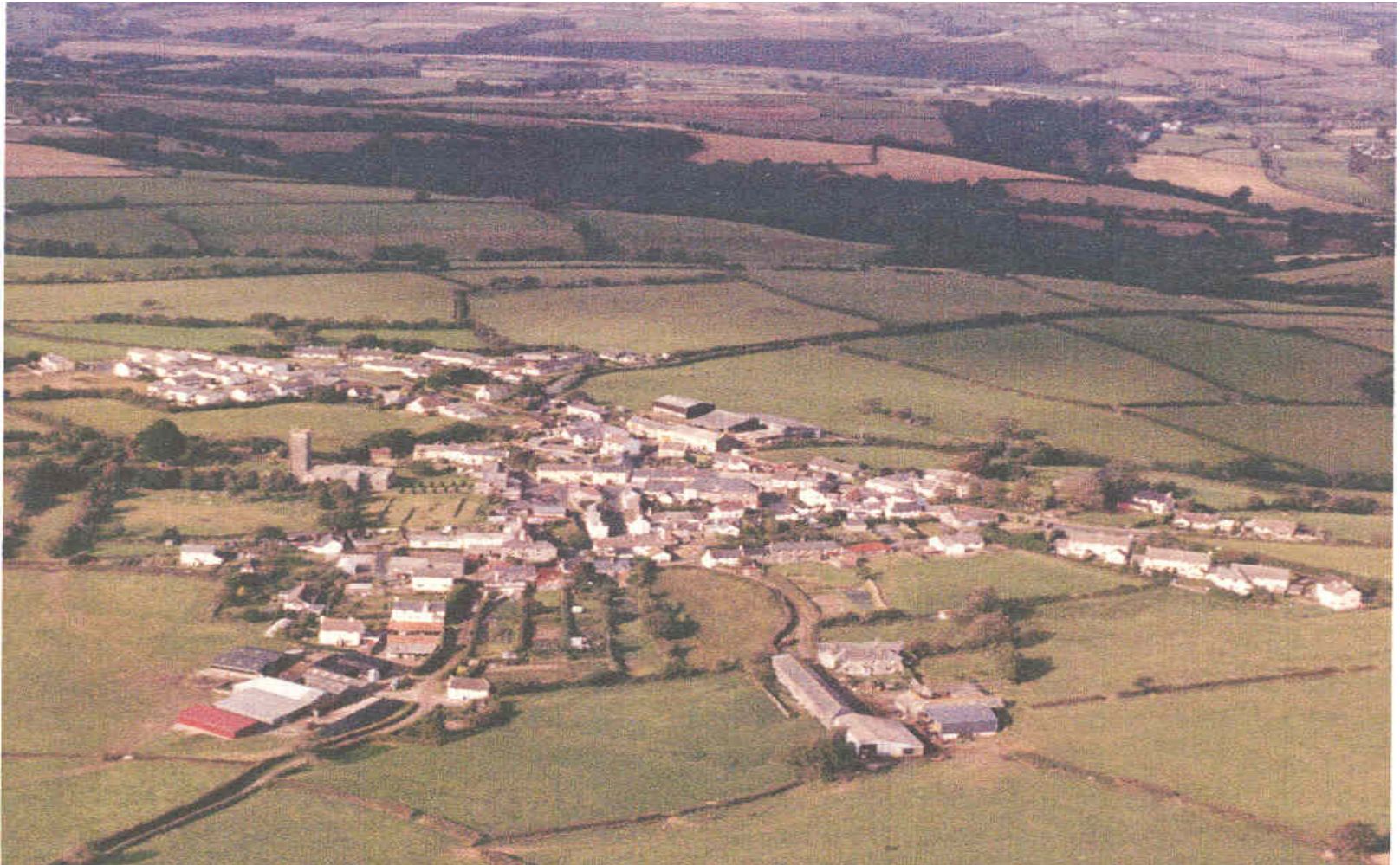
Involving Communities in Planning
A Community View - the High Bickington Experience

Presentation to
Devon Towns Forum Conference
Tuesday 21st March 2006

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High Bickington

- Rural parish in Torridge District, North Devon
- Population: 672 (2001) rising to c.1000
- 'Local Centre' in District Local Plan
- Primary school, doctor's surgery, post office
- High house prices, relatively low incomes
- Badly affected by 'Foot and Mouth' in 2001

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Our Starting Point

- Approach by DCC - redundant county farm
- Parish/public meetings: Autumn 2000
- Pilot scheme for retaining benefit from land disposal in community
- Capturing/enhancing value of development (20:1 uplift)
- Win/Win (DCC and community)

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Our Mission

- To identify immediate and future needs for regeneration post 'Foot and Mouth'
- To build a sustainable community
- To base development on sustainable building methods and renewable energy
- To involve the community in all aspects of the development
- To ensure a whole parish approach is adopted in identifying and meeting needs

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A Partnership Approach

- High Bickington Parish Council
- Torridge District Council
- Devon County Council
- Devon & Cornwall Housing Association
- Wessex Reinvestment Trust
- EU/DEFRA/LEADER+ (funding)
- Included in the Great Torrington and District MCTi Community Action Plan November 2003



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Parish Appraisal

- Conducted by volunteers
- 295 questionnaires issued, 72% returned
- Aimed at over 11s, so 95% of target reached

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Appraisal Results

- Strong support for affordable housing, new school, health, sports and other community facilities, workspace, farmers market, countryside & traffic improvements.
- Business survey: 85 small businesses operating in or from parish
- Linked to emerging MCTi Community Planning Process

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The Key Message!

Local Community Involvement

- Parish/public meetings (2000)
- Voluntary Group – Project 2000 formed
- Parish Appraisal conducted (2001)
- ‘Planning for Real’ event (2001) – 300 people
- Consultation weekend (2002) – 250 people

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Local Community Involvement

- Other community assets identified and valued (2003)
- High Bickington Parish Plan: 2003 - 2023
- Advisory Groups – 40 residents worked with professionals to assist in production of Master Plan
- Consultation/Exhibition of Master Plan (2004) attended by c200 people
- Exhibition of Revised Master Plan (2005) – 75 people

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High Bickington Parish Plan - 2003 to 2023

Phase One (Two further Phases follow)

- Affordable and market sale homes
(15 traditional social houses, 17 'Tenancy Plus' and 'Equity Purchase' homes, 4 self build, 16 open market)
- New primary school with integrated community, sports and recreation facilities
- Managed workspace
- Community woodland and other open space

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Community Property Trust formed (2004)

- To manage facilities on community's behalf
- Not-for-profit, exempt charity
- Industrial & Provident Society Rules
- 182 shareholders – residents or people with local connection
- County and Parish Councils are members

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The Planning Policy Context

- Too late for Local Plan, too early for Local Development Framework
- Government says it wants a 'Bottom Up' 'Community Led' approach, but...
- Regional Spatial Strategy is 'Top Down' approach
- RSS housing targets based on urban areas
- TDC quota exceeded with existing permissions
- Where does rural affordable housing fit in?

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Outline Planning Application (Nov.2003)

- Approved by District Council in April 2004
- Called in for First Secretary of State to determine at Christmas 2004

Local Planning Inquiry (January 2006)

- Two and a half days, including evening session
- Held in village
- Inspector's Report with ODPM
- First Secretary of State's decision expected by mid May

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***Community involvement in the
Planning Process***

Some of the Pros and Cons!

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Well Planned and delivered Local Involvement will mean that...

- Local People will be less threatened by development and change
- Provision should become more sensitive to identified needs
- Asset based community planning is a bonus that can help sustain community involvement
- The capacity and experience available in local communities will have been harnessed
- The Local Community will have taken a real stake in shaping its future **BUT...**

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- Community involvement is time-consuming – prepare for a marathon!
- Early engagement and real ‘Partnership’ between Local Communities and Official Bodies has to be worked at if it is to succeed
- Participation in building Local Development Frameworks must be seen to lead to long-term benefits for all concerned
- Planning delays are a cause of great frustration and might lead a Local Community to withdraw from the process

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And Finally... Remember that

***Well Evidenced Community Plans and
Projects Developed in a Partnership
between Local People and Planning
Professionals will help ensure that Local
Development Frameworks really can Deliver
the Hopes and Aspirations of both Parties***