

HAMBLETON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report To: Cabinet
27 November 2012

Subject: NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING FUNDING

All Wards
Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning: Councillor M Robson

1.0 PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 This report is to note Government grant funding received by the Council and to consider whether some of this money should be made available to Parish Councils to support the preparation of their Neighbourhood Plans.
- 1.2 In March this year the Council received a £20k 'Frontrunner' grant from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) for the Huby Neighbourhood Plan. This money was paid into the One-Off Fund.
- 1.3 The Council also recently applied for two additional Neighbourhood Planning grants (of £5k each) lately announced by DCLG, further to the designation of Huby and Appleton Wiske as Neighbourhood Areas. At present (in 2012/13) there is also prospect of a further £25k grant for each of these Neighbourhood Plans once they have been through the examination process (and pre-referendum). However this further payment will not be achieved in this financial year for our two plans, but funding may continue next year (to be announced by January 2013).
- 1.4 The current Neighbourhood Plan grant money received is therefore £30k and this could grow to £80k next year.
- 1.5 Planning Aid are assisting both Parish Councils free of charge as they are Government grant funded to do this work until March 2013 and therefore consultancy costs for the Parish Councils should be minimal. The Council's costs so far associated with Neighbourhood Plan preparation, other than staff time, relate only to placing a few essential adverts in the local press for just over £200.
- 1.6 Hambleton Council have to meet the costs of advertising; independent examination of the plan and the referendum at the end of the process. Advertising should be less than £500 in total. The costs of conducting the two referendums in accordance with the recently published regulations have yet to be fully calculated, but could amount to around £2k each. It is very difficult to estimate the cost of examination as it depends on what level of representation is received and whether a hearing needs to be held, but it could be in the order of £5k, giving a total cost for the District Council of about £7k.
- 1.7 Appleton Wiske have asked for some of the £5k Government grant awarded for their plan to cover costs of preparing publicity material and undertaking consultation. This seems appropriate as there is no other District Council funding available. The same should apply to Huby and also for any other Neighbourhood Plan preparation that we may support elsewhere in our plan area, as we have a duty to provide assistance and the new £5k funding this year reflects the additional costs involved with introducing, adapting to and meeting the new duty.

2.0 DECISION SOUGHT:

2.1 Cabinet needs to decide how much of the Neighbourhood Planning grant money, paid into the One-Off Fund, should be made available for Parish Councils to draw on to meet their costs of Neighbourhood Planning.

3.0 LINK TO CORPORATE PRIORITIES:

3.1 Funding for Neighbourhood Planning should assist in delivering more housing and affordable housing, which are Council Plan priorities.

4.0 RISK ASSESSMENT:

4.1 There are no significant risks in approving the recommendations.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND EFFICIENCIES:

5.1 Neighbourhood Plan grant money has been received and is unringfenced. Consideration needs to be given as to how it should be spent and drawn upon by Parish Councils undertaking such work.

5.2 The Council also needs to ensure it can meet the future costs of plan examinations and referendums, plus advertising costs. These are currently estimated to be in the order of £7k for each plan (Huby and Appleton Wiske). The grant of £25k (in 2012/13) available for each plan is to cover the examination cost but is not awarded until that stage has been completed (and is not dependent on pursuing the referendum).

5.3 It is therefore suggested that provision be made from the One-Off Fund of £7k for each Neighbourhood Plan to cover the potential referendum and examination costs and that £3k be made available to each Parish Council to support their plan preparation as it progresses. For Huby and Appleton Wiske this totals £20k.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS:

6.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 1) allocates £3k from the One-Off Fund to Huby and Appleton Wiske Parish Councils to support their Neighbourhood Plan preparation;
- 2) allocates £7k from the One-Off Fund to each plan to cover its costs.

MICK JEWITT

Background papers: DCLG letter of 29 August 2012 re Funding to Support Neighbourhood Planning in 2012/13

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