



PRCC.05 16/17
Committee: Prosperous Communities
Date: 7 June 2016

E

Subject: Proposed Neighbourhood Planning 'top-up' funding

Report by:

Chief Operating Officer, Mark Sturgess

Contact Officer:

Luke Brown
Neighbourhood Planning Officer
Luke.brown@west-lindsey.gov.uk

Purpose / Summary:

To receive the report and recommend the proposed 'top-up' funding structure by WLDC

RECOMMENDATION(S): Members formally approve the proposed Neighbourhood Planning 'top-up' funding scheme.

IMPLICATIONS

Legal: This work is a duty under the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Plan Regulations 2012 (amended).

Financial: [FIN/27/17](#) Additional financial contributions are available from DCLG to support Neighbourhood Planning and this will not impact the current Council budget. These are claimed on a quarterly basis throughout the year. The 'top-up' funding would be covered by the funding claimed from the DCLG and will not impact on the Councils base budget position.

Staffing: Neighbourhood Planning officer's role is to support each NDP group in progressing through the process.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights: n/a

Risk Assessment : n/a

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities : n/a

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report: n/a

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes No

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes No

1.0 **Current Grant Funding available to Neighbourhood Plan groups**

Across West Lindsey, over 25 communities are preparing Neighbourhood Plans in order to have greater influence in the wider planning system. Each community is different and the content and level of work for Neighbourhood Plans varies widely across the District.

1.2 External grant monies are available to Neighbourhood Plan groups in order to support them in producing the necessary work, evidence and policies that make up the Neighbourhood Plan process.

1.3 There are current two external bodies that offer this funding, including:

Locality (Government grant) - provide grants of up to £9,000 (per plan area)

Big Lottery – Provide grants of up £10,000 (per plan area)

1.4 The Neighbourhood Plan grant monies have been made available to support the production of a Neighbourhood Plan and pay of items such as consultation, printing, venue costs, costs of commissioning technical reports and consultancy costs (Not all Neighbourhood Plans has do undertake all the following).

General work that is undertaken as part of the Neighbourhood Planning process and average costs attached:

- Public Consultation (£1,000 - £3,000)
- Printing costs (£500 - £1,000)
- Venue Hire costs (£150 - £250)
- Housing Needs Assessment (£2,000 - £5,000)
- Landscape character Assessments (£2,000 - £5,000)
- Local Green Space Assessment (£1,000 - £2,000)
- Allocation of Sites (£1,000 - £2,000)
- Drafting a Neighbourhood Plan (£3,000 - £8,000)
- Strategic Environmental Assessment (£4,000 - £7,000)
- Habitat Regulations Assessment (£2,000 - £4,000)
- Consultation Statement (£1500)

- Basic Conditions Statement (£1500)

2.0 Issues with Funding

- 2.1 As described above, In order to produce a Neighbourhood Plan, there are various bits of work that need to be undertaken, some work is essential to provide evidence to emerging policies and idea and others bits are statutory - so these need to be incorporated into every Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.2 On average, small communities generally produce simpler Neighbourhood Plans and tend not to allocate areas for large scale developments. This does reduce the cost of producing a Neighbourhood Plan and therefore the combined grants provided to the groups by Locality and the Big Lottery are generally sufficient.
- 2.3 For larger, more complex plans the costs are much higher and there are other statutory obligations for plans that are allocating sites for development such as a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

	Small, less complex NDP's	Larger, more complex NDP's
Typical cost of producing NDP	£8,000 - £14,000	£14,000 - £35,000

3.0 WLDC 'top – up' Funding Scheme

- 3.1 In order for WLDC to continue to support Neighbourhood Planning across the District, the Council needs to be committed financially. The Government does provide Local Authorities with some funding to assist with costs of Neighbourhood Planning such as the independent examination and the public referendum.
- 3.2 The Government Grant is typically £20,000 per plan and this does cover the cost of the Neighbourhood Plan officer, the independent examinations and the public referendums. This has also been contributing towards assisting some of our groups financially when all other grant funding has been exhausted. This 'top-up' in funding has been crucial for the Plans to progress and successfully proceed through the Neighbourhood Planning process and move towards referendum. Without this 'top-up' funding, many of the Neighbourhood Plans would have stalled.
- 3.3 Not all Neighbourhood Plans will need financial assistance from WLDC, but the

Council should be prepared to cover the costs of some Neighbourhood Planning work, through available monies given to the Council by the Government.

3.4 The Council will review each Neighbourhood Plan separately and identify areas of work and assistance that it can look to support in order to encourage Neighbourhood Plans to progress through the process. The Council will not be allocating specific fund(s) to Parish Council's, WLDC will keep any monies (identified for Neighbourhood planning) and pay for individual items when necessary.

3.5 In the 2015/ 2016 financial year, WLDC provided £11,800 in 'top-up' funding to our Neighbourhood Plan groups in order to assist them moving forward. This year (2016/2017), the Neighbourhood Plan 'top-up' funding will be limited to £25,000 between the 1st April 2016 and the 3rd March 2017.

3.6 Any application for "top up" assistance will be assessed against the following criteria:

1. Any neighbourhood plans group applying for "top up" funding should supply evidence to show that they have attempted to access all available external funding for neighbourhood planning (locality and big lottery).

2. They should demonstrate where they have used the funding they have accessed and what the "top up" funding will be used for. "Top up" funding will only be made available where it is essential to the formal adoption of the neighbourhood plan.

3. Individual "top up" grants will be a maximum of £5000 per neighbourhood plans group.

4.0 Recommendation

4.1 Members formally approve the use of the 'top-up' funding measures in order to support Neighbourhood Planning across the West Lindsey.