

Ward(s): Bishops Waltham; Oliver's Battery & Badger Farm; Swanmore and
Newtown; Droxford Soberton & Hambledon



Winchester
City Council

PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

INDIVIDUAL DECISION BY THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR BUILT ENVIRONMENT

TOPIC – FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY PLANS

PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

The Access to Information Procedure Rules – Part 4, Section 22 of the Council's Constitution provides for a decision to be made by an individual member of Cabinet.

In accordance with the Procedure Rules, the Chief Operating Officer, the Chief Executive and the Chief Finance Officer are consulted together with Chairman and Vice Chairman of The Overview and Scrutiny Committee and any other relevant overview and scrutiny committee. In addition, all Members are notified.

Five or more of these consulted Members can require that the matter be referred to Cabinet for determination.

Contact Officers:

Case Officer: Steve Lincoln – 01962 848 110, slincoln@winchester.gov.uk

Democratic Services Officer: Nancy Graham, 01962 848 235, ngraham@winchester.gov.uk

SUMMARY

- The Council actively encourages communities in the District to develop community plans and provides support in a number of ways to ensure that the plans are robust and effective. This is an example of the type of activity that the Localism Act is designed to encourage.
- Three of the communities currently undertaking a community plan have requested financial assistance from the Council to progress and complete their work. It is recommended that support totalling £1,500 is awarded to the communities in question.
- Community planning is one of the themes identified in the Portfolio Plans for 2015/16.

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DECISION

That funding is awarded in support of community planning activity as follows:

1. £500 to Bishops Waltham Parish Council for the production of a village design statement;
2. £500 to Olivers Battery Parish Council towards the cost of a parish plan; and
3. £500 to Soberton Parish Council for the production of a village design statement update.

REASON FOR THE DECISION AND OTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Background

For a number of years now the Council has actively encouraged local communities to produce community plans that involve large numbers of residents and inform policy development, service delivery and planning decisions in their areas. The Localism Act, which received Royal Assent on 15 November 2011, means that community-led initiatives of this nature will become more commonplace and influential in the coming years.

There are three main categories of community plan:

- Parish Plans, which address a broad spectrum of social, environmental and economic issues and identify a series of key actions or projects to enhance the quality of life.
- Village / Neighbourhood Design Statements (VDS/NDS), which are 'Supplementary Planning Documents' setting out clear and simple guidance for the design of all development in a village, or neighbourhood of Winchester, based on its local character, features and distinctiveness.
- Neighbourhood Plans, which are a new concept enshrined in the Localism Act. Neighbourhood plans are statutory planning documents so must be in general conformity with strategic policies in the development plan for the local area (i.e. core strategy policies). They will allow local communities to draw up their own development plans for the local area and, subject to an independent check and approval of local people through a referendum, allow communities to specify where they want development to take place. They cannot, however, be used to block development, or to plan for less development than the local plan requires.

The Council has a key leadership role in supporting and encouraging communities to develop robust and effective plans. This is achieved in a number of ways including officer time, provision of information such as maps or statistical data, and direct financial support.

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Support for community planning is one of the ways in which the Council delivers its priority outcome of Active Communities to ensure that people play an active role in their community and help shape how resources are used to deliver local services.

Assistance requested

Requests have been received from the following communities for financial support with the community plans that they are undertaking:

- Bishops Waltham Parish Council worked closely with local residents to contribute to the production of the City Council's Local Plan Part 2. They have now turned their attention to the production of a design statement to guide development so that it reflects local character and residents' aspirations for the new homes and infrastructure. The intention is to complete the document by the end of 2015 and a sum of £500 has been requested to support the costs associated with its production.
- Oliver's Battery Parish Council has committed to producing a parish plan and a small group of residents has come together to start the work. The sum of £500 has been requested to support the costs associated with the production of the plan.
- Soberton Parish Council is leading efforts to refresh and update the Village Design Statement that was originally adopted in 2002. £500 has been requested to support the costs associated with this work.

Officers have liaised with residents from all three communities during the early stages of the process and are satisfied that the work so far has been transparent and participative. The resulting documents will provide the Council and other service providers with valuable evidence of local need and opinion, and guidance in relation to the design of new development.

Without the requested assistance, the publication of the plans may be delayed, or alternatively may be completed but to a lesser standard.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

Traditionally up to £500 has been contributed towards the cost of developing and publishing a community plan.

A small budget of £5,000 exists to support and enable community planning activity and there is sufficient in 2015/16 to allow the recommended total of £1,500 to be met in full from this budget.

There will be local contributions towards the cost of this initiative. Local people and organisations will contribute significant amounts of voluntary time and may also contribute through financial assistance and/or free use of meeting rooms and other facilities. The Government provides funding for the production of Neighbourhood

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Plans, which has been used to fund the City Council's work on the only Neighbourhood Plan currently being produced in the District (the Denmead Neighbourhood Plan).

CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN ON THE DECISION

The participative nature of community plans means that a significant proportion of residents in the respective parishes have (or will) be actively consulted during the process of producing the documents.

FURTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED FOLLOWING PUBLICATION OF THE DRAFT PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

n/a

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY THE DECISION MAKER OR A MEMBER OR OFFICER CONSULTED

n/a

DISPENSATION GRANTED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

n/a

Approved by: (signature)

Date of Decision: 21.04.15

Councillor Michael Read – Portfolio Holder for Built Environment