

Minutes of meeting of Whitchurch Village Plan Steering Group

Tuesday 24th September 2019

Present: - Charlotte Lincoln, Karen Smethurst, Keith Armour, Helen Armour, Diane Cox, Mel Perry, Caroline Heron

Apologies; - Gordon Pell, Lucy Tallyn, Matthew Smethurst, Jane Holliday , John Southwood

Communications:

Communications received; - None

Public website – No update required

Updates from PC

Charlotte had contacted Jeremy and Caroline and offered to meet with the Chair of the PC to outline our future plans. Both rejected the idea and Caroline advised that she felt it would be better for her and Jeremy to be the conduit of information from the Steering Group to the Parish Council as necessary.

Caroline reiterated that the Steering Group had been given a mandate to develop a Neighbourhood Plan by the Parish Council, and by the overwhelming results of the questionnaire which confirmed strong support amongst residents.

Caroline advised that the Parish Clerk had confirmed that she would administer any grants received on behalf of the Steering Group

Neighbourhood Plan Costings and Road map

Karen reported back on her conversations with two planning consultants:-

Sally Chapman

Working on plans for North Marston and Granborough

Agreed with AVDC's advice to prepare a simple plan which can be adopted quickly and then develop a plan allocating sites in the village, once variables like the Unitary Authority and the Expressway are more developed. She felt this would protect us from unwanted further development in the short term.

She would be happy to develop the plan and would expect a simple plan to take 2 years to be ready for adoption.

She would suggest we based the initial Neighbourhood Plan on protecting the historic characteristics of the village, address property density, protect views from the village and address parking requirements.

She confirmed that we would receive the £9000 grant and once we proceeded to the Site Specific Funding we would be entitled to a further grant of £8000. This is payable in tranches per financial year once budgets have been submitted.

She felt that costs for the initial Neighbourhood Plan using full consultancy services would be within the initial £9000 grant and for the Site Specific Plan within the further £8000. She advised the Neighbourhood Plan for Worminghall cost approximately £11,000 with 2 sites specified.

There is also technical support grant funding available to develop a Neighbourhood Plan.

O'Neil Homer

Developed plans for Waddesdon, Winslow, Great Horwood, Stewkley, Mursley and Newton Longville.

Works nationally.

Would take a different approach and prepare a full plan including site selection as soon as possible. He has worked with communities in other counties other which have become Unitary Authorities and he would strongly advice that another call for sites from the Unitary Authority could be sooner than AVDC have suggested. He advised that he felt North Bucks could be required to have considerable housing allocations in the next few years, as within the County considerable areas of South Bucks and Chiltern were designated Green Belt and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and development was harder to allocate. South Bucks does not have a 5 year supply of land and Bucks Unitary Authority will have to address this in the next couple of years He would advise that a full plan including site selection is necessary as soon as possible to help protect the village from unwanted development and revised housing allocations.

He also thought that the AVLDP housing allocation for Whitchurch classified as a "large" village was very generous and a Unitary Authority could look at that and increase the requirement in the next couple of years.

He would be happy to develop the plan and would expect to have the full plan including site selection ready for adoption by December 2020.

He estimates that the grants available £17000. (£9000 plus £8000) would be sufficient for consultancy fees to develop the plan. In his experience the cost of 90% of Neighbourhood Plans are within this figure. Higher costs are usually incurred for specific unusual factors that he does not anticipate in Whitchurch.

His costs are £550 per day plus vat. He would anticipate 28/29 days of consultants time to complete the plan. The VAT is recoverable by the Parish Council

He would also be happy to work with the Parish Council as to the adoption of the plan and also advice then on Statutory Orders needed to access funding.

What we have learnt

The funding available should be sufficient for professional consultants to develop the plan.

Both Consultants would be happy to work with us

Both Consultants would prepare the plan and provide us with a route map and budget after initial consultation.

There is considerable technical support available including extra funding for a Strategic Environmental Assessment, which is necessary for site allocation plans. The funding for this is extra to the initial grants.

Nearly all our neighbouring villages have or are creating Neighbourhood Plans, which leaves Whitchurch unprotected.

A discussion followed and it was agreed that a decision would not be made as to what type of plan and then subsequently the Consultant we approach first, until further information is received. Karen will contact other Consultants for further advice prior to the next meeting. She will also contact Cheddington PCC to see who they used as members had been impressed by their Neighbourhood Plan.

Neighbourhood Plan Matrix

Helen and Keith presented the Neighbourhood Plan Matrix which focused on a two stage plan. All members were very appreciative and thought it was an excellent document and will be a very useful tool. It was agreed that it will be reviewed at the next meeting once decisions in regard to the style of Neighbourhood Plan had been made. It was also agreed that the document will be submitted to Alan Bennett at AVDC to confirm that our understanding and information is correct before it is circulated beyond the Steering Group.

Presentation to Parish Council

It was agreed that once further decisions had been made and a strategy agreed, the Neighbourhood Plan Matrix would be amended as necessary and approved at the next meeting. It was hoped that this document could then be submitted to Parish Councillors prior to their next meeting on Monday 14th October.

Community Plan

This agenda item was deferred until the next meeting.

Whitchurch News Submission

Diane presented some ideas for the October edition using data drawn from the questionnaire data. It was agreed that it should include positive data. Diane and Charlotte will liaise and produce the submission by 14th October.

AOB- None

Date of next Meeting

Tuesday 8th October – Whitchurch Methodist Hall