
REPORT TO:	FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 7
DATE OF MEETING:	23 APRIL 2015	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	IAN HEY Ext 8741, ian.hey@south-derbys.gov.uk	DOC:
SUBJECT:	NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING GRANT	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE: E&DS07

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 That Members note the grant support available for the development of neighbourhood development plans from the Department for Communities and Local Government and agree to pass on the element of grant support that relates to the designation of a neighbourhood area.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 This report identifies the level of grant support from Central Government to support neighbourhood planning and the stages of the process at which elements of support become available. It identifies that additional costs to the Council will be met through the grant available and recommends that Members agree to pass on the element of grant support received in respect of neighbourhood area designation to Parish Councils / Neighbourhood Forum to help them defray costs accrued during the development of the plan.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 Neighbourhood planning was introduced as a result of the Localism Act 2011 to encourage local areas to engage with planning and development within their own neighbourhood. A neighbourhood development plan establishes general planning policies for the development and use of land in a designated area, it can be detailed or general, depending what local people want.

Neighbourhood development plans allow local people to get the right type of development for their community, but the plans must still meet the needs of the wider area. A neighbourhood development plan has to be in general conformity with the strategic policies identified within the District's Local Plan, but add additional depth and understanding from grass roots knowledge from within the designated area.

- 3.2 The local planning authority has a duty to support communities making their neighbourhood plan. It will organise the independent examination of the neighbourhood development plan to check that the plan meets certain basic conditions. The local planning authority is also responsible for organising the neighbourhood planning referendum. The referendum ensures that the local community has the final say on whether a neighbourhood development plan comes into force in their area.
- 3.3 To support their role, local planning authorities can claim funding of at least £30,000 per completed plan.

Payments will be staged as follows:

- The first payment of £5,000 will be made following designation of a neighbourhood area. For authorities designating several neighbourhood areas, each local planning authority can claim up to a maximum of £100,000 for area designations within the year.
- The second payment of £5,000 will be made when the local planning authority publicises the neighbourhood plan prior to examination. This will contribute towards the costs of the examination as well as other staff costs incurred at this stage. There is no cap in 2014/15.
- The third payment of £20,000 will be made on successful completion of the neighbourhood planning examination. This is to cover costs for that examination and any other further steps that may be needed for the neighbourhood plan to come into legal force, including referendum. There is no cap in 2014/15.

- 3.4 Staff costs associated with the designation of neighbourhood areas have been absorbed within the duties of the posts involved. It is therefore recommended that the first grant payment of £5,000 be passed on to the body within the neighbourhood area leading the process (Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum) to help them defray costs incurred during the development of their neighbourhood development plan. Based on plans completed nationally it is anticipated that the cost to the Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum of developing the plan to completion will be £15-25,000 dependent upon the level of complexity.
- 3.5 Second and third grant payments totalling £25,000 will be used to cover costs associated with examination and referendum.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 Expenditure towards the development of neighbourhood development plans is revenue expenditure. Each plan is anticipated to take 18-24 months to complete from outset.
- 4.2 Staff costs associated with area designation are to be absorbed within existing roles.

Additional costs associated with publicity, examination and referendum will be covered, quarterly in arrears, by grants from the Department for Communities and Local Government.

5.0 Corporate Implications

- 5.1 The completion of neighbourhood development plans contribute towards the corporate theme of Sustainable Growth & Opportunity, specifically GO3 Sustainable Planning and GP 08 Supporting our communities in neighbourhood planning (GO3).

6.0 Community Implications

- 6.1 The completion of neighbourhood development plans also contributes towards the South Derbyshire Partnership's Sustainable Community Strategy. The Sustainable Development theme identifies that we want to see communities that address local needs. Neighbourhood plans give communities the opportunity to influence development within their own locale to address local development needs.

7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 There is a duty placed upon the local planning authority to support the development of neighbourhood plans. Passing on an element of the grant funding available will provide local communities additional capacity to engage with the process to address the needs of their own community.