

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Portfolio Holder Housing and Planning

Date of Meeting: 23 November 2015
Report of: Executive Director of Economic Growth and Prosperity
Subject/Title: Neighbourhood Planning Grant Funding Application -
Goostrey
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Ainsley Arnold

1.0 Report Summary

1.1 The report considers neighbourhood grant funding applications submitted by:

- Goostrey Parish Council

Applications are assessed against the Policy for the Allocation of Neighbourhood Planning Grants (PANPG), included in this report at Appendix 1.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Approve funding requests for £2000 for Goostrey Parish Council

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 The PANPG sets out the approach the Council will take to allocate funding to designated bodies preparing neighbourhood plans. Up to £7000 per designated body is available to support neighbourhood planning activity. Funding applications are assessed against the criteria held in the policy and applications that seek to allocate development sites, support the Cheshire East Emerging Local Plan Strategy and demonstrate creativity and innovation are encouraged.

3.2 Request to fund items below have been considered and either rejected or subject to receipt of a lower grant offer

3.3 Goostrey Parish Council:

Amount applied for: £2000

Website development	£300
Printing, distribution and questionnaires and distribution:	£1700
Total:	£2000

Recommendation: Approve £2000

Reasons for recommendation:

- The Parish Council are proposing to use funds to engage the local community via the development and improvement of a website specifically for the neighbourhood plan. Encouraging digital engagement can reach a wide audience and offers significant cost savings in the long term

- Alongside this a more traditional approach of offering hard copies of questionnaires and other information is being adopted to ensure that those who may not have access to the internet are able to participate and that their views on the development of the plan can be taken in to account.

4 Wards Affected

4.1 Dane Valley

5.0 Local Ward Members

5.1 Councillor Les Gilbert; Councillor Andrew Kolker

6.0 Policy Implications

6.1 Neighbourhood plans, once 'made' (adopted) by Cheshire East Borough Council will form a statutory part of the Development Plan for the Borough and used to inform planning decisions.

7.0 Implications for Rural Communities

7.1 Neighbourhood plans enable rural communities to participate in the plan making process and develop policies to address those planning matters that affect their interests and well being. The neighbourhood planning process generally allows greater engagement of rural communities and for such communities to take ownership of planning policy which directly affects their lives.

8.0 Financial Implications

8.1 All of the proposed grants can be funded from within existing budgets approved as part of the Council's Budget for 2015/16 and are supported by grant funding drawn down from central government.

9.0 Legal Implications

9.1 The Council has the powers to award grants to organisations using its general power of competence in section 1 of the Localism Act 2011. In exercising the power the Council must satisfy its public law duties. In essence this means that in making the decision the Council must have taken into account only relevant considerations, followed procedural requirements, acted for proper motives and not acted unreasonably. A grant policy is a clear statement of the criteria that the Council is applying and is essential if the Council is to defend any challenge to its decision making process.

9.2 Cabinet has approved and Cheshire East Council has put in place a Policy for the Allocation of Grants to Voluntary and Community Organisations 2015/16. This Policy deals with the allocation of community grants which are awarded to defined Organisations following an application process and against set criteria. There are conditions requiring that Organisations report back to the Council upon expenditure of the grant and to enable further appropriate conditions to be imposed. The decision making process was delegated to the Portfolio Holder in order ensure that decisions can be made expeditiously and at the appropriate level.

9.3 Grant funding organisations based on the application of the Council's grant policy satisfies the Council's public law duties.

10.0 Risk Management

- 10.1 The risk is that not providing funding for neighbourhood planning activities may result in communities being prevented from producing neighbourhood plans and introducing planning policies that will benefit the community across a range of indicators.

11.0 Background and Options

- 11.1 Applications received and allocated in accordance with Cheshire East Council's Neighbourhood Planning Grants Policy.

12.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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13.0 Appendixes:

Appendix 1: Goostrey Parish Council Grant Application

Appendix 2: Policy for the Allocation of Neighbourhood Planning Grants 2014/15