

DECISION NOTICE

Notice is given that the following decision has been taken under the Provisions set out in the Council's Constitution

Decision maker: Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning

Date: 13 December 2016

Decision in the matter of: Closure of the Neighbourhood Planning Grant Scheme

Decision: That the Neighbourhood Planning Grant Scheme be closed.

Background: The Neighbourhood Planning Team was originally established to be self-funding through the receipt of Government grants. At the time, the level of Government grant available also allowed the Council to set up a local Neighbourhood Planning Grant Scheme offering financial support to groups preparing neighbourhood plans.

In April this year, the Government reduced funding to local authorities in respect of neighbourhood planning by 30%, from £30,000 to £20,000 per plan. This reduced funding means that the Council can no longer provide direct support for neighbourhood planning and provide the Grant Scheme without incurring additional costs to the base budget of the Council.

Via the Grant Scheme the Council currently offers grants of up to £7,000. To date, three communities have applied for funding. In total £16,638 was applied for and £8,500 has been awarded.

The low uptake of grants is likely, in large part, due to the investment the Council has made in direct officer support. The continued operation of the Grant Scheme exposes the Council to a potential financial commitment and, on the basis of providing £3000 (rough average of grants awarded to date) per group, across the 38 groups currently preparing Plans, this could be in the order of £114,000 on top of the base budget.

There is one outstanding application for funding yet to be decided, from Disley Parish Council, and it is proposed that this is dealt with under existing policy for Neighbourhood Planning Grant Scheme.

The reduction in Government funding to support neighbourhood

planning means that outside of this application, it is necessary to close the Neighbourhood Planning Grant Scheme. It is important to communicate the closure of the Grant Scheme effectively and ensure that communities are made aware that continued support from the Council will remain in place.

Background Documents: The background documents for this decision can be inspected by contacting the report author.

Approved:

Signed.....
Councillor Ainsley Arnold, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning

Date: 13 December 2016

Advising Officer:
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Tom Evans, Neighbourhood Planning Manager